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**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND OF ITS
INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2(a) AND (b), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION**

**Consideration of additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the
Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention,
including the review referred to in paragraph 4 of decision 1/COP.5**

Note by the secretariat*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. By its decision 1/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to establish the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) as a subsidiary body to assist in its function of regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention. The mandate and functions of the Committee as stated in paragraph 1 (b) of its terms of reference, contained in the same decision, shall be subject to renewal at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 7), in the light of lessons learned during the overall review of the Committee.
2. Three sessions of the CRIC have been held thus far: the first, from 11 to 22 November 2002, in Rome, Italy; the second, from 26 to 29 August 2003, Havana, Cuba, and the third, from 2 to 11 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany.
3. By its decision 7/COP.6, the COP decided that the criteria against which the terms of reference, operations and schedule of meetings of the CRIC will be reviewed at COP 7 will be its relevance, impact, effectiveness, appropriateness of format and cost-effectiveness. Likewise,

* The submission of this document was delayed in order to include consideration of the last submissions received by Parties.

Parties were invited to submit written proposals to the secretariat before 1 January 2005, but not later than six months before COP 7, to review the terms of reference of the Committee, its operations and its schedule of meetings, with a view to making any necessary modifications, including reconsidering the need for, and modalities of, the Committee as a subsidiary body.

4. Chapter II presents the background information and describes progress made in reviewing the implementation of the Convention and the evolution of the work and proceedings of the Committee at its three sessions held since its establishment in 2001.

5. A synthesis of submissions as well as an analysis of the views of Parties is contained in chapter III. Section A deals with comments expressed on various aspects regarding the review of the implementation process. Section B addresses the issue of the review of the terms of reference of the CRIC, its operations and its schedule of meetings, which constitute the core of discussions on the possible modalities that the CRIC should have, once the COP deems appropriate to renew its mandate as a subsidiary body.

6. In view of the fact that all the submissions agreed that the CRIC has played a key role in the review of the implementation of the Convention, it is recommended that the mandate of the CRIC as a standing subsidiary body to the COP should be renewed. Its future modalities, operations and schedule of meetings should be determined in conformity with the views expressed by Parties and in accordance with the evolution of this body at its intersessional sessions so far.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 – 3	3
II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	4 – 22	4
III. SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED	23 – 59	7
A. Principles guiding the review of the implementation process.....	23 – 31	7
B. Review of the terms of reference, operations and schedule of meetings of the CRIC.....	32 – 59	8
IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60 – 61	15
<u>Annex</u>		
Reference documentation		16

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its decision 1/COP.5, the COP established the CRIC as a subsidiary body of the COP, to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention.

2. By its decision 7/COP.6, the COP decided that the criteria against which the terms of reference, operations and schedule of meetings of the CRIC will be reviewed at COP 7, would be as follows:

“(a) Relevance: the extent to which the Committee’s overall objectives, purpose and results have been in line with the needs and expectations of the Parties;

(b) Impact: the extent to which there has been progress towards achieving the overall objectives of the Convention which can be attributed to the CRIC, *inter alia*, through relevant action taken by the COP on approaches, policies and strategies to strengthen the implementation of the Convention;

(c) Effectiveness: the extent to which the Committee has responded to its mandate and functions as defined in decision 1/COP.5, and in particular in paragraph 1 (a) and (b) of the annex to that decision;

(d) Appropriateness of format: the extent to which the format of CRIC sessions is conducive to interactive discussions and learning-based interaction leading to a transparent and flexible review of implementation;

(e) Cost-effectiveness: the extent to which the outcomes of the Committee are commensurate with the resources invested, in terms of both the quantity and quality of its deliberations.”

By the same decision, Parties were invited to submit their views on the review before 1 January 2005, but not later than six months before COP 7.

3. Ten submissions were received from Parties, namely Algeria, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Germany, Morocco, Norway on behalf of the JUSSCANNZ, the Council of the European Union on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, and the United States of America (two submissions). This note records the contributions received from country Parties as at 10 August 2005, and also provides a synthesis and analysis of proposals by Parties in two sections pertaining to the principles guiding the review of the implementation process and the review of the terms of reference, operations and schedule of meetings of the CRIC. Due to United Nations rules concerning the preparation of official documents by the secretariat, submissions by Parties are not incorporated in this document. The submissions are, however, reproduced in their entirety, as submitted to the secretariat, on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) website at <http://www.unccd.int/cop/cop7/COPsubmissions.php>.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

First, second and third sessions of the CRIC

Sessions held since the establishment of the CRIC

4. Since its establishment in 2001, the CRIC has met twice at sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP (CRIC 1 took place in Rome, Italy from 11 to 22 November 2002; CRIC 3 took place in Bonn, Germany from 2 to 11 May 2005) and once during a COP session (CRIC 2 took place during COP 6 in Havana, Cuba from 26 to 29 August 2003). The fourth session of the CRIC is scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 18 to 21 October 2005, during COP 7.

5. At its intersessional sessions, the Committee convened 420 participants from 149 country Parties, and 360 participants from 130 Parties (CRIC 1 and CRIC 3, respectively). At CRIC 2, held in conjunction with COP 6, there was a larger attendance, with 170 Parties present.

6. CRIC 1 was hosted by the Government of Italy, at no additional cost to the secretariat. Since the secretariat did not receive any offers to host CRIC 3 and meet its additional costs, the core budget and supplementary fund were used to cover the logistics costs of that session, although the secretariat faced constraints in funding participants.

Preparation

7. Decision 1/COP.5 requested the secretariat to compile, synthesize and provide a preliminary analysis of the reports submitted by Parties and observers, and to give Parties the opportunity to review such documentation in reasonable time prior to the session. The same decision provides that the secretariat should disseminate information stemming from its preliminary analysis at the regional and/or subregional levels, and seek to obtain feedback with a view to facilitating the preparation of regional inputs for the review process.

8. In preparation for CRIC 1, the secretariat convened four regional meetings¹, which provided input to the Committee. Four official documents, containing the regional input as requested by decision 1/COP.5, were transmitted to CRIC 1 for consideration.

9. A similar process could not be established in preparation for CRIC 3, mainly owing to the lack of financial resources. Preparatory work was undertaken by the secretariat in Africa, mainly through its Regional Coordination Unit, and regional consultations of affected country Parties of the Convention's regional implementation annexes were convened at the beginning of CRIC 3 (2 and 3 May 2005). Input to the process was therefore transmitted orally to the Committee. Outcome of three subregional workshops in Africa², organized in the context of the

¹ The African Regional Conference of Windhoek, Namibia, 15–19 July 2002; the fifth regional meeting of Asian focal points, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, 8–12 July 2002; the eighth regional meeting of Latin American and Caribbean country Parties, Bridgetown, Barbados, 29 July–1 August 2002; the regional meeting for Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties, Geneva, Switzerland, 23–26 July 2002.

² Subregional workshops on the lessons learned and best practices within the context of the national reports on the implementation of the UNCCD: for North and West Africa in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 9–11 February 2005; for

medium-sized Global Environment Facility (GEF) project (see below), was transmitted to CRIC 3 through an official document.

Timing

10. CRIC 1 took place approximately 10 months before the following session of the Committee. This allowed reasonable time for Parties to undertake wide consultations on draft decisions to be prepared on the basis of the Committee's report.

11. A major part of the funding for the African reports in preparation for CRIC 3 was secured through a medium-sized GEF project. This was the first time that support to national reports was availed through a multilateral project and the finalization of the related arrangements took more time than expected. For this reason, CRIC 3 took place in May 2005 instead of in Autumn 2004, some five months before the forthcoming session of the COP.

Agenda and programme of work

12. Pursuant to decision 1/COP.5, CRIC 1 reviewed updates to reports already available and/or new reports from all regions. It also considered reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of all regions. CRIC 1 reviewed 48 reports from affected African country Parties, 44 reports from Asia, 33 from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), 17 from Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern Europe and other affected country Parties, and 22 reports from developed country Parties, 10 from United Nations organizations and 8 from intergovernmental organizations. The secretariat transmitted a total of 35 official documents to CRIC 1.

13. In accordance with the provisions of decision 1/COP.5 and the timetable outlined in paragraphs 13 to 15 of decision 11/COP.1, CRIC 3 focused on implementation in Africa. The session reviewed 49 reports from affected African country Parties, 20 reports from developed country Parties, 10 from United Nations organizations and 11 from intergovernmental organizations. The secretariat transmitted a total of 31 official documents to CRIC 3.

14. The programme of work of the CRIC sessions was proposed by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson of the CRIC, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the COP. The format proposed for CRIC sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP took into account the relevant provisions of decision 1/COP.5, and in particular the fact that the review of the implementation is to be conducted thematically (along the key thematic topics defined in that decision), with due regard to geographic regions and subregions. The format was also designed to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties in the implementation of the Convention.

15. At CRIC 3, in accordance with its programme of work as established by the COP, the review of reports on the implementation of the Convention in Africa was undertaken jointly with

certain global issues: necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes; review of available information regarding the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions; consideration of ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification, and consideration of ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP.

16. Two global interactive dialogues were organized at CRIC 3 (mainstreaming of NAPs and their contribution to overall poverty eradication, land degradation and its impact on migration and conflicts) in order to enrich the deliberations of the Committee. Similarly, the format of CRIC 3 also included four panel discussions.

Duration of the sessions

17. Decision 1/COP.5 provides that sessions of the Committee held between ordinary sessions of the COP should not be longer than two weeks. The first intersessional session of the Committee lasted 10 working days. The Bureau of the COP decided that the second intersessional session (CRIC 3) would be convened during 8 working days, including two half-day meetings dedicated to regional consultations.

18. For CRIC sessions held during the ordinary sessions of the COP, a duration of 3 days (or six half-day meetings) has been proposed. At its second session, the Committee held four meetings (26-29 August 2003).

Preparation of draft decisions for submission to the COP

19. The Chairperson of CRIC 1 established a wide consultative process to translate the Committee's recommendations into draft decisions. Prior to COP 6, two draft decisions were referred to the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and six draft decisions were finalized and transmitted to CRIC 2 for consideration. At its second session, the Chairperson of the CRIC submitted six draft decisions to the COP, which took action accordingly.

20. A similar process was initiated in the aftermath of CRIC 3 and is being conducted through the representatives of the regional groups of the UNCCD, in consultation with the CRIC Bureau. The process also involved the Chairperson of the CST on cross-cutting issues and matters pertaining to its mandate.

Deliberations

21. At its intersessional sessions, the Committee is to submit a comprehensive report to the COP regarding its programme of work, including conclusions and recommendations. The report contains the outcome of the review process and the related policy dialogue. At sessions held during the COP, the Committee's work is finalized by elaborating draft decisions, where necessary, for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the Conference.

22. The COP decided that the review of the implementation should focus on seven specific thematic topics, up to and including COP 7. These topics are reflected in the deliberations and conclusions and recommendations of the CRIC sessions held in between ordinary sessions of the COP (see ICCD/CRIC(1)/10 and ICDD/CRIC(3)/9, respectively).

III. SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

A. Principles guiding the review of the implementation process

23. The submissions referred to various aspects of the review of the implementation process and the secretariat summarized and analysed these views with regard to the key criteria against which the terms of reference, operations and schedule of meetings of the CRIC are to be reviewed. The format of this report follows the pattern of previous COP reports in an effort to facilitate the comprehension of, and discussions on, this matter. The report also draws major trends from the views and comments expressed by Parties since the CRIC began its review of the implementation of the Convention.

24. As recalled by most Parties, the review of the implementation should be conducted in accordance with decision 11/COP.1 (Procedures for communication of information and review of implementation), decision 1/COP.5, containing the terms of reference of the CRIC and decision 7/COP.6 containing the criteria against which the mandate and functions of the CRIC should be reviewed. There is general agreement that the CRIC is an important means for the COP to review the implementation of the Convention. This body has, in its three sessions, to a considerable degree reached its goal of identifying issues, constraints and responses through the review of the implementation process of the affected country Parties, facilitating a global and thematic dialogue and exploring solutions which contribute to an enhanced implementation of the Convention.

25. Several submissions affirmed that comments and deliberations at CRIC meetings focused appropriately on the modalities, structure and criteria of the implementation review process in order to ensure its efficient performance. This process has been enriched by the lessons learned, the dynamics of the CRIC sessions and the exchange of ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by various participants during CRIC 3. Through the review of implementation carried out by the CRIC potential action was identified, which could be undertaken at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.

26. As expressed by one comment, the review of the implementation should concentrate on, and aim at, assessing the elements that have contributed to improving the implementation of the Convention from political, socio-economic and biophysical points of view and whether the results of the first three sessions justify the continuation of its existence. It should therefore assess to what extent the first, second and third sessions of the CRIC have contributed to improving the implementation of the UNCCD and, based on this analysis, come up with recommendations as to how best to review and improve the implementation of the Convention in the future.

27. According to several submissions, the review of implementation at CRIC sessions has produced concrete results regarding exchange of information and experiences among country Parties. Thus the work done has enabled the decisions adopted by the COP to be more effective in combating desertification and drought.

28. One comment stressed the fact that the work of the CRIC still falls short of the high expectations of the Parties with respect to a comprehensive review of the Convention implementation process and the establishment of a platform for transparent and comprehensive

information exchange. In particular, there is an imbalance in the current CRIC review process between the review of reports of affected developing country Parties and those of developed country Parties and relevant agencies. The affected developing country Parties have exchanged their experiences and lessons learned in all seven thematic topics (decision 1/COP.5), while developed country Parties have only exchanged information on a small number of collaborative projects they have undertaken in developing country Parties. An overall illustration of financial and technical support by developed country Parties to developing country Parties is thus missing. Such an imbalance in the review process is not helpful to addressing the financial and technical challenges faced in the implementation of the Convention. As a result of this situation, another contribution proposed that affected developed country Parties should submit their report in a manner similar to the format of the report of the affected developing country Parties, especially in such areas as their experiences in facilitating the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), enhancing inter-agency coordination and promoting synergies with other conventions.

29. As reiterated by several participants at CRIC 3, the emphasis on scientific and technical information sharing should be strengthened. Greater involvement of the Group of Experts (GoE) of the CST in the proceedings would expand the effectiveness of the meetings. Fuller involvement by NGOs is also vital to fulfilling the Convention mandate to include civil society. In this regard, one Party proposed that the ways and means of ensuring better geographical representation of NGOs should be explored further for future sessions of the CRIC.

30. In view of the fact that the GEF has become a financial mechanism of the Convention, it was suggested that future review for the implementation should focus on the review of the status of support for the implementation of NAPs by this organization and its implementing agencies, and provide recommendations on improving fund-raising and fund-managing.

31. Another submission stressed the need for the efficiency of the implementation review process to be improved by having the intersessional CRIC meetings centred on those thematic approaches that foster a swifter implementation of the UNCCD. As stated in decision 1/COP.5, the review should be conducted thematically with due regard to geographic regions and subregions. These key thematic topics should be analysed and reassessed according to the results achieved after the three CRIC meetings. The establishment of early warning systems should be better dealt with by the thematic topic on drought and desertification monitoring and assessment. It was also put forward that measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land should be further elaborated, as was the case in the past. This topic should show the outcome of projects and programmes on the implementation of the Convention.

B. Review of the terms of reference, operations and schedule of meetings of the CRIC

32. There is general agreement that the criteria against which the terms of reference, operations and schedule of meetings of the CRIC, as contained in decision 7/COP.6, are reviewed, are pertinent for this exercise. However, a number of submissions believe that there is a need for considering additional thematic topics in order to broaden the scope of the implementation review.

1. Relevance

33. There is ample recognition that the *raison d'être* and mandate of the CRIC are in line with the objectives of the Convention. The CRIC has strengthened information sharing and exchange of experiences among the affected country Parties and promoted better understanding among different regions. It has also highlighted the need for improved transparency of the funding provided by developed country Parties, relevant international organizations and financial mechanisms, which would increase efficiency of the resources allocated and invested for the implementation of the Convention.

34. Several Parties are of the opinion that addressing the following questions could assist the COP in the assessment of the degree of relevance of the implementation review process:

- (a) To what extent have the results and conclusions of the first three sessions of the CRIC responded to the expectations of Parties and other stakeholders in terms of an improved implementation of the Convention?
- (b) Do the terms of reference of the CRIC sufficiently target an improved and faster implementation of the Convention?
- (c) What are the expectations and needs of Parties that could still be addressed by the CRIC process?
- (d) To what degree do Parties feel that the CRIC process has addressed those needs?
- (e) Could the relevance improve if clearer priorities were set with regard to those perceived needs?

35. Similarly, one comment suggests that the criteria to evaluate the relevance, as well as the effectiveness, of the CRIC should include the degree to which the CRIC provides a synthesis of those practices, lessons and initiatives that promote implementation and scaling up in other countries or regions and identifies ways and means to exchange such information and promote technology transfer.

36. A proposal stressed the relevance of the CRIC and the discharge of its objectives to be effectively addressed only through the implementation of the measures contained in the NAP, and identify the specific added value of CRIC sessions to the extent that the exchange of information with other country Parties is important to implement the Convention.

2. Impact

37. According to several submissions, the three CRIC sessions have provided a platform for the affected country Parties to learn from experience and share information among them. The exchange of experiences has enabled a better formulation and implementation of NAPs, subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs), including the regional thematic programme networks (TPNs), and promoted their implementation. Through the CRIC, communication and understanding between developed country Parties, international organizations and affected country Parties have been strengthened. In particular, the CRIC has

played an important role in promoting the integration of NAPs into national overall development strategies, incorporating NAPs with poverty alleviation, and promoting synergies between NAPs and national sustainable development strategies. The CRIC has also provided a platform for the exchange of successful cases for developing countries to cooperate with international research institutions and developed countries in using advanced space and remote sensing technologies to conduct desertification monitoring and assessment and demonstrated a sound prospect for further cooperation.

38. Another comment suggests that it will only be possible to evaluate the impact of the CRIC on the implementation through an ongoing evaluation of the impacts of NAPs, especially regarding the processing of information on biophysical, socio-economic, institutional and behavioural changes.

39. Yet another proposal brings to light the question whether the 35-odd recommendations on a wide variety of subjects and directed to all stakeholders taken during the first cycle of the implementation review process (the first and second sessions of the CRIC and COP 6) would tackle the issues considered to be at the heart of a more efficient and effective implementation of the Convention.

40. The content and comprehensiveness of the review process stimulate, among other things, an awareness of the underlying causes of desertification: to what extent the review has managed to translate into clearer approaches, policies and strategies able to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and respond to expectations and urgency, and the relevance of recommendations for the concrete actions that the COP is supposed to decide upon as far as approaches, policies and strategies are concerned, are queries that one Party poses with regard to this criteria.

41. The same comment further raises the question whether the COP 6 decisions have been followed up primarily by Parties and to what extent political adoption was achieved. If this is the case, how have these recommendations been translated into local, national and regional policies, strategies and actions and which have been the resulting impacts on the ground?

42. Furthermore, one Party asserted that the review at the intersessional CRIC should not only focus on the process of reviewing national and subregional reports, but should also assess whether the review of such reports has contributed to improving implementation of NAPs and SRAPs by Parties. Based on such analysis, recommendations should address whether the results of the intersessional CRIC sessions justify the continuation of its existence, and how best to review and implement the Convention in the future.

43. In the opinion of another Party, it is difficult to conduct a direct and clear assessment on the extent of implementation by both affected and developed country Parties owing to the lack of concise criteria to review the implementation of the UNCCD.

3. Effectiveness

44. One comment affirms that, in accordance with the terms of reference of the CRIC contained in decision 1/COP.5, the Committee cannot attain the desired effectiveness in terms of implementation, considering the large number of activities mentioned in that decision. The operation of the TPNs will facilitate the exchange of information between country Parties. Hence, the implementation of the TPNs could make the CRIC sessions more effective.

45. Another submission indicates the documentation on which the review should be based and calls for the identification of key issues, such as efficiency and effectiveness of measures, best practices, adjustments to NAPs, implementation challenges, information on funding, procedures for communication of information, promotion of know-how and technology transfer, experience sharing and information exchange, conclusions and recommendations, and reporting.

46. Other Parties raise open questions with regard to the following issues:

- (a) Does the current reporting format provide for efficient information sharing, cross-fertilization of experiences and comparison to build analysis upon for assessing the impact of policy and activities? If there is scope for improvement, how would that affect the national reports and other inputs?
- (b) Has the CRIC fulfilled its mandated activities at sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP, especially when it comes to the identification of key issues?
- (c) To what extent have measures taken by Parties and stakeholders been identified and analysed as to their capacity to enhance desertification combat, mitigate drought impact and meet the needs of people living in affected areas?
- (d) To what extent have best practices and lessons learned been identified, synthesized and shared among Parties and stakeholders?
- (e) Has the CRIC fulfilled its mandated activities at ordinary COP sessions, and has it formulated recommendations that are sufficiently relevant and realistic for the COP to follow up with concrete decisions that improve the implementation of the Convention?

47. Although the CRIC has made many valuable suggestions and recommendations with regard to experience of the exchange and dissemination of good practices, it should make more effort to raise the awareness of the international community of the global impact of desertification, especially its impact on poverty alleviation and of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It should also strive to encourage developed country Parties to increase their financial and technical assistance to affected developing country Parties. It is expected that the CRIC strengthens dialogue and exchange on the above-mentioned issues in the future.

4. Appropriateness of format

48. One contribution proposes that, since the issues regarding desertification are different from those of other processes due to socio-political, demographic, cultural, and other factors,

focusing the agenda of CRIC sessions on geographical review limits the format of CRIC meetings.

49. It was suggested that in order to accomplish more effective and productive work CRIC sessions should be held independently and, when possible, at least six months before an ordinary session of the COP. In this respect, another Party affirms that the dates for the sessions of the COP and CRIC should be fixed well in advance and remain unchanged. The intersessional sessions of the CRIC should ideally take place one year before the COP sessions if they are truly to play a role of intersessional sessions.

50. As decided by decision 7/COP.6, the format of the CRIC should be conducive to learning-based interaction leading to a transparent and flexible implementation review. To this effect, one contribution sees in the following questions potential solutions for the determination and configuration of the terms of reference of the Committee:

- (a) Is the format chosen for the first, second and third sessions of the CRIC considered adequate to facilitate an open and fruitful exchange of experiences, including the identification of good practices and barriers for the implementation of the Convention. Did the organization of the non-intersessional CRIC debate lead to a dynamic predominantly centred around the preparation of COP 6 decisions?
- (b) Did the review format followed generate meaningful assessments and recommendations concerning good practices and barriers influencing the implementation of the Convention, among others?
- (c) Could the format profit from the clarification of objectives, identification of results to be achieved, activities and means? Could the results be more operational if the objectives are more specific, measurable, realistic, and acceptable and time bound?
- (d) Is the current open-ended composition of the CRIC adequate for the task mandated and are all stakeholders sufficiently represented? Is there enough room for input from the relevant stakeholders? Is the frequency of sessions (during the COP and once between each of the ordinary sessions of the COP, with its alternating geographical coverage), adequate for the review cycle?
- (e) Is the current organization of work of the CRIC sessions adequate for the intended results? Is there enough focus on key issues with operational value for the implementation of the Convention? Does the current organization of work through plenary sessions allow for this focus or should parallel working groups be contemplated? Are modern techniques and professional moderation being employed to focus the discussions?
- (f) Does the comprehensive report of intersessional CRICs reflect the discussions and results in an adequate and relevant manner?
- (g) Have the key thematic topics been sufficiently addressed so far? Are they still relevant for future work or should they be replaced, changed or increased?

51. As a corollary to the above-mentioned questions, it is proposed that the review should also take into account the composition, frequency of sessions and organization of work of the CRIC.

52. In accordance with views expressed at CRIC 3, it is proposed that the arrangement for CRIC meetings should aim at addressing problems in the implementation process and converting the working modality of the CRIC from the format of “progress-reporting” to “action-taking”. In view of this proposal, the following considerations concerning future CRIC sessions are put forward:

- (a) The consistency of the timing of the data for the review of the implementation by Parties is kept in all regions (paragraph 1(a) of decision 1/COP.5), the CRIC should, after its review of the implementation of the Convention by Parties in regions other than Africa, review the implementation by Parties in all five regions at the same time, so as to compare different regions in the implementation process, to identify common problems, to make an overall evaluation, and to achieve the goal of promoting implementation in all of the regions;
- (b) Each CRIC session must ensure sufficient time for the deliberation of all key topics. At CRIC sessions during COP, at least two days should be allocated to reviewing the reports of relevant agencies and of the intersessional session of the CRIC, and for preparing draft decisions. Meanwhile, regional meetings and forums should be convened prior to each CRIC session, so as to provide useful information for discussions in the CRIC session;
- (c) The CRIC should conduct more interactive dialogues. The United Nations Sustainable Development Commission introduced the formats of the “Learning Centre” and “Partnership Fair” in 2004 and since then has achieved good results. The CRIC should consider the possibility of introducing more flexible working formats such as the “Learning Centre” and “Technique Transfer Expo”.

53. Another submission stressed the need for countries’ presentations to be oriented towards the identification of successful impacts and not merely reports on initiatives, policies and programmes. Rather, they should build on those experiences in ways similar to those used for capacity building and transfer of information between Parties.

54. In addition, it was stated that by clearly organizing the content and items of the CRIC interactive sessions well in advance, participants could be better prepared to achieve the objectives of the CRIC within five days. The programme of work would then be restructured to meet its needs within five working days. This would require limiting formal statements and increasing facilitated interactive sessions among technical and policy participants.

5. Cost-effectiveness

55. Cost-effectiveness remains an issue at the heart of Parties’ concerns. A number of proposals considered that having an eight-day intersessional CRIC session was adequate and gave the opportunity to discuss all issues regarding the review implementation process, including interactive dialogues and other useful information exchange and lessons learned activities.

56. One contribution proposes that the CRIC could be held effectively and efficiently in one week. Limiting of regional consultations to a maximum of one morning or one afternoon would facilitate this process. CRIC 3 devoted a great deal of time to regional consultations with few tangible results for the session itself. In addition, preparation of the report absorbed considerable time owing to the introduction of additional items not explicitly covered in the session.

57. Another submission recommends a number of actions be undertaken to improve the effectiveness of future sessions. These actions include keeping formal statements and presentations to a minimum to allow for interactive dialogue among participants, and having more details on the content of interactive sessions ahead of time to enable participants to prepare accordingly.

58. Criteria to assess the cost-effectiveness of the CRIC process are put forward as follows:

- (a) How can the reporting process leading up to the CRIC sessions and the sessions themselves be judged in terms of workload, time efficiency and cost effectiveness? Could opportunities to rationalize time and resources be identified?
- (b) Is the information made available by Parties (national reports) and other stakeholders at the various CRIC sessions considered useful in terms of reaching the objectives of the CRIC? Did the information effectively present progress achieved in ongoing activities and on new initiatives, while mentioning finalized projects? Would an enhanced utilization of existing databases improve the situation?
- (c) Are all CRIC-related reports readily available and accessible, e.g. in the UNCCD database?
- (d) Has the Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation (FIELD) of the Global Mechanism (GM) been fully developed and could it be used to generate new or updated reports in the future?
- (e) Could intersessional CRIC sessions, once focused on key operational issues, be limited to five working days?

59. Several Parties believe that due to the heavy workload of the CRIC and its remarkable progress in promoting the implementation of the Convention, the current cost and duration of the CRIC at intersessional sessions is reasonable. CRIC sessions held during COP are cost-effective with regard to participation of representatives from developing country Parties.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

60. The COP may wish to take into account the following:

- (a) Article 22, paragraph 2 (a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention, on the review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements;
- (b) Decision 11/COP.1 on the procedure for the communication of information;

- (c) Decision 1/COP.5 and its annex on the terms of reference of the CRIC;
- (d) Decision 7/COP.6 on consideration of additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention;
- (e) The decisions of the COP proposed by the CRIC and the conclusions and recommendations contained in its comprehensive reports;
- (f) The relevant background on additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention;
- (g) The written proposals submitted by country Parties and the present report prepared by the secretariat;
- (h) The views expressed by Parties as a result of the evolution of the process due to the experience gained and the exchange of information and lessons learned throughout the CRIC sessions.

61. The COP may wish:

- (a) To renew the mandate of the CRIC as a standing subsidiary body to the COP, as all Parties expressed their conviction that the CRIC fulfills an important and irreplaceable role in the implementation review process;
- (b) To review the terms of reference of the CRIC, its operations and its schedule of meetings and to provide guidance on global and thematic focus;
- (c) To advise on enhanced procedures for the communication of information as recommended by CRIC 3.

Annex

REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
ICCD/COP(6)/11	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixth session
ICCD/COP(6)/11/Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixth session – Addendum – Action taken
ICCD/COP(6)/3	Review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2 (a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention – Consideration of additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention
ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.1	Implementation of the Convention – Addendum – Consideration of additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention
ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.2	Implementation of the Convention – Addendum – Synthesis of the report on ways of improving the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology
ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.7	Implementation of the Convention – Addendum - Consideration of additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention
ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/6	Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties
ICCD/COP(3)/6	Arrangement for the functioning of the permanent secretariat - Medium-term strategy of the secretariat
ICCD/COP(3)/17	Implementation of the Convention - Consideration of additional procedures and/or institutional mechanisms to review the implementation of the Convention
ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its first session
