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**Convention to Combat  
Desertification**

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF EXISTING NETWORKS,  
INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES AND BODIES**

Note by the secretariat

1. By its decision 13/COP.4, the Conference of the Parties (COP) took note of the final report of Phase 1 of the survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on behalf of its consortium members.
2. The COP also took note of the relevant documents produced for the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) at its fourth session, containing the mandate for Phase 2 of the survey and evaluation which was to take place in the Southern African subregion, and of the proposal put forward by UNEP on behalf of its consortium members.
3. Recalling the recommendations of the CST, the COP accepted the proposal by UNEP<sup>1</sup> on behalf of its consortium members. The interim report of UNEP<sup>2</sup> was submitted to the CST for consideration during its fifth session.
4. By its decision 13/COP.5, the COP requested the secretariat to enter into the necessary contractual arrangements with UNEP for the implementation of Phase 2 of the survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies. Notwithstanding the requests of the Bureau of the CST and the Bureau of the COP, the secretariat could not obtain the funding arrangements necessary to conduct Phase 2. The interim report of UNEP contained in

<sup>1</sup> ICCD/COP(4)/CST/3/Add.1.

<sup>2</sup> ICCD/COP(5)/CST/3.

ICCD/COP(5)/CST/3 was then submitted again for consideration at the sixth session of the COP in Havana, Cuba.

5. By its decision 14/COP.6, the COP requested the Global Mechanism and other funding agencies, in close collaboration with the secretariat, to mobilize resources for this initiative. The COP also encouraged Parties to the Convention, and donors and institutions in particular, to volunteer contributions towards this initiative.

6. In collaboration with the secretariat, UNEP has prepared a medium-sized project on this initiative which UNEP has submitted to the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for consideration.

7. By its decision 14/COP.6, the COP also requested UNEP on behalf of its consortium members to submit to the secretariat an interim progress report for presentation to the CST Bureau at its inter-sessional meeting, and to submit a final report to the CST at its seventh session. The interim progress report prepared by UNEP on behalf of its consortium members is submitted herewith, and the Committee may wish to adopt any recommendations to the COP that it deems appropriate.

**INTERIM REPORT PREPARED BY UNEP ON BEHALF OF ITS CONSORTIUM  
MEMBERS TO THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF  
THE UNCCD ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION 14/COP.6**

1. In accordance with article 25 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the CST was to undertake a survey and evaluation of relevant existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies willing to become units of a network to support the implementation of the Convention. This survey and evaluation was to be carried out in three phases, namely: (1) a global survey to identify the principal potential units, particularly networks, (2) a pilot in-depth survey and evaluation of potential units in a particular region and subregion, and (3) replication of the in-depth survey and evaluation of units in other regions and subregions. In all three phases, the units (networks, institutions, organizations, agencies and bodies) surveyed and evaluated include governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental, academic and other private sector entities.

2. After approval of the report on the survey's Phase 1, undertaken by a consortium of partner agencies, led by the UNEP, the fourth Conference of Parties (COP 4), by its decision 13/COP.4, accepted the proposal put forward by the UNEP-led Consortium<sup>3</sup> to undertake implementation of Phase 2 of the survey, which includes an in-depth survey of networks and units in Southern Africa, maintenance, quality control and further development of the web site/interactive database developed during Phase 1, and operationalization of the global network of networks.

3. COP 4 also requested Parties signatories to the Convention and interested organizations including the GEF, to contribute to funding of the work contemplated by this decision. The fifth COP in 2001, by its decision 13/COP.5, accepted the revised proposal of the UNEP-led Consortium to undertake the pilot survey in Anglophone countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The sixth session of the COP in 2003, by its decision 14/COP.6, re-endorsed this decision and further requested the Global Mechanism and other funding agencies, in close collaboration with the secretariat, to mobilize additional resources for this initiative, and encouraged Parties to the UNCCD and in particular donors and institutions, to volunteer contributions towards this initiative. UNEP on behalf of its Consortium members was requested to submit to the secretariat an interim progress report for presentation to the CST Bureau at its inter-sessional meeting, and to submit a final report to the CST at its seventh session.

4. In the absence of donor support coming forward for the implementation of the Phase 2 of the survey, UNEP has put forward a Medium Size Project (MSP) proposal entitled: "Building Capacity for Networking among Desertification Institutions in Southern Africa" and submitted it to the GEF. This proposed enabling project on land degradation relates to the GEF's Operational programme OP 15: Sustainable Land Management. The project is in line with the support to

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<sup>3</sup> The Consortium is composed of: Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN), German NGO Working Group on Desertification / RIOD-NFP, the International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC), Environment and Land Management Sector of the Southern African Development Community (SADC-ELMS), Drylands Development Centre of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the University of Arizona and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

capacity building under OP 15 at local, national and regional level and will contribute to the strengthening of participatory institutional mechanisms and capacity for integrated land-use planning throughout the southern Africa region. It will also lead to the strengthening of information management systems to support decision-making from local to national and regional levels with regard to stakeholder involvement and public participation.

5. In addition it has relevance to the Operational Programme OP 1: “Arid and Semi-arid Ecosystems” and OP 12: “Integrated Ecosystem Management”, and thus crosscuts through the GEF focal area(s) of biodiversity, international waters and climate change. Furthermore it addresses objectives of the “Action Plan for Enhancing GEF Support to Land Degradation,” adopted by the GEF Council in December 1999, by contributing to the creation of an enabling environment for addressing land degradation and identifying key stakeholders with capacity to combat land degradation from local, national and subregional to international levels. The project also has potential to support the implementation of the “GEF Land and Water Initiative for Africa” by identifying and operationalizing networks in the Southern Africa region as well as by developing tools and methodologies that could be replicated elsewhere in Africa.

6. The proposed project also responds to the concerns and priorities expressed in general by GEF eligible countries, and in particular, by the UNCCD Parties at the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), held in November 2002 in Rome, Italy. The countries, while recognizing the crucial role of UNCCD national focal points in the implementation of the Convention, in servicing the national coordinating bodies (NCBs) and in fostering a greater coherence in strategic planning for sustainable land management, underlined the importance of strengthening human resources mobilization. They emphasized the potential benefits to UNCCD implementation to be derived from synergies, especially the efficient use of resources, exchange of information and coordinated action among the different actors, at both national and international levels. As better communication and exchange of information is a prerequisite for cooperation between technical and scientific actors and decision makers and natural resources users, partners were asked to support activities such as the exchange of expertise, technology transfer, training in desertification and land degradation, and networking of scientific institutions.

7. The project will also contribute to the realization of the objectives of the Bali Strategic Action Plan on Capacity Building as well as those of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), which has identified combat against land degradation, drought and desertification as its first priority issue.

8. At the time of submitting this report, the response from the GEF Secretariat was yet to be received.

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