UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(7)/CST/3/Add.2
10 October 2005

Original: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Committee on Science and Technology
Seventh session
Nairobi, 18-20 October 2005
Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda

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

Interim report of the Group of Experts

Addendum

Report of the fourth meeting of the Group of Experts

Note by the secretariat*

1. By its decision 15/COP.6, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the Group of Experts (GoE) to transmit the results of their work as they become available. Pursuant to this request, the following interim report is the outcome of the GoE meeting in September 2005.

2. The fourth meeting of the GoE, held in Ispra, Italy, from 19 to 23 September 2005, was hosted by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The main objective of the Group was to develop and complete concrete proposals as a product to be forwarded to the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) at its seventh session for consideration, bearing in mind the mandate of the GoE established by the COP. Following further consultations, and in an effort to identify the best way for a feasible process to take place, a number of topics were selected that would enable the GoE to produce tangible products. The terms of reference (ToR) were based on the proposals and recommendations of the third GoE meeting held in Beijing, China, in October 2004, which identified concrete outputs and products. In accordance with the

* The submission of this document was delayed owing to the late date of the fourth meeting of the Group of Experts, at which the report was agreed upon.

agenda of the fourth meeting of the GoE (see appendix VI below), the work of the meeting focused on three priority issues, namely:

- Development of a clear communication strategy between the activities of the GoE, end-users and the research community, including a web-based glossary of terms, as well as a mechanism for an interactive and thematic data/metadata network (through a UNCCD-hosted server)

- Development of an integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation

- Proposing of effective methodologies for the assessment of desertification at the global, regional and local levels, in order that the Convention may be implemented in consultation and interaction with other related ongoing efforts.

3. The fourth meeting of the GoE, while focusing on all the above issues, drew up proposals regarding the first two issues for consideration by the CST. The relevant recommendations and conclusions are contained in the following report. The list of participants at the meeting is given in appendix VII to the report. This report is also available on the UNCCD website at http://www.unccd.int.

4. The Committee may wish to take note of the report and give further guidance with respect to the conclusions and recommendations of the Group.

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Appendices

SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS

Development of a communication strategy: web glossary, thematic network THEMANET (an Internet-based system of exchange of data and information)
(Item 3)

(Coordinator: Mr. Maurizio Sciortino)

1. The proposal was presented by the coordinator and was well received by the GoE. After further deliberations, four main topics were defined: (i) improvement of living conditions in drylands; (ii) natural resource management; (iii) technology development application and transfer; and (iv) monitoring and assessment. These topics were intended to represent the uniqueness of the UNCCD process in addressing issues relevant to desertification. It was suggested that:

(a) THEMANET should be a high profile database with cutting edge technology and be as user-friendly as possible;

(b) the system should be interactive and thus constitute a strong tool for empowerment;

(c) an appropriate strategy needed to be developed in order to put onto the Internet the vast amount of information (including knowledge and databases) contained within most of the topics;

(d) separate pages for glossary, methodology and tool kit may be considered;

(e) THEMANET may have GoE members as editors. It was agreed that an expert in programming was also required to contribute to its development and that a request be put before the Committee for the provision of support for engaging a programmer.

2. It was agreed that the website should be designed for an audience of decision-makers but that it should not be restrictive in its use and participation should be open to all stakeholders. An important part of the added value will be the empowering of participants. The tool could also be used to implement decisions of the COP.

3. The budget that had previously been developed for this proposal by the GoE during its third meeting is annexed to the present report for consideration by the Committee.

4. It was agreed that THEMANET should be presented to the seventh session of the CST. A presentation would also be organized as a side event in order to promote this initiative to country Parties.

Development of an integrated assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation
(Item 4)
(Coordinator: Mr. Anders Hiort-af-Ornas)

5. In the discussions that followed the presentation made by the coordinator, it was agreed that the approach taken by the GoE was the appropriate one, that is, to focus on concrete suggestions for activities that individual country Parties may wish to undertake in developing their country-specific integrated assessments. This proposal targets the Convention, promoting local-level action and community participation. It recommends Parties carry out literature reviews on the eight activities requested from the GoE by the COP. The proposal was reviewed and approved by the GoE for presentation to the CST.

6. The proposal identifies "actionable" tasks to be performed by Parties. The end product is a recommended methodology to be used by Parties for assessing the link between poverty and land degradation. The recommendation is therefore that Parties should use an approach in preparing a consistent methodology dealing with land degradation and poverty reduction that will lead to the formulation and maintenance of an interactive manual.

7. The following suggestions were made taking into account this perspective. They should be read together with the table contained in the relevant section of the annexed report (see pages 20 and 21):

Activity 1: Review literature which addresses social, economic and natural driving forces and pressures on land and the impacts of land degradation on society (poverty).

Activity 2: Assess the knowledge gaps and systematize existing research on stakeholders at different levels, connecting their activities with land use.

Activity 3: Analyse case studies to test proposed methodology of filling the gap based on an interaction process (different stakeholders and decision-makers).

Activity 4: Develop criteria assessment for stakeholders at community level listing priorities regarding desertification and poverty issues.

Activity 5: Suggest ways of reaching community level stakeholders and local decision-makers, and strategies for building consensus, understanding vulnerability and risk, and defining priorities and solutions.

Activity 6: Carry out a review of the scientific and technical tools that have been used for poverty assessment.

Activity 7: Analyse the interrelationships/interlinkages between poverty and land degradation in the country.

Activity 8: Develop a training manual/handbook on lessons learned (from workshops, pilot experiences, recommended actions) which addresses interlinkages between poverty and land degradation.

8. Furthermore, the GoE suggests that in carrying out the above activities Parties may wish to take into account the following points:

- Deliverables should be listed along with outlines of the methodology.
- Criteria for defining priority should be properly reflected in the methodology because poverty cannot be defined based on income alone but must also take into account the interlinkage between poverty and land degradation which evolves over time.
- Poverty charts for different regions in the country may be given.
- More emphasis should be given to local level assessment in specific areas.
- Access to markets should be considered as an important driver of poverty and therefore of land degradation.
- Both qualitative and quantitative indicators of poverty should be considered.
- Not only success stories but also failures should be considered as lessons learned.
- Poverty/land degradation is a nexus. Poverty is both a cause as well as a consequence of land degradation, and thus creates vicious circle that needs to be taken into account.
- The target audience should be well defined.
- Community action and community participation are vital for concretely addressing the land degradation-poverty relationship.
- Work done by the benchmarks and indicators (B&I) subgroup of the GoE on B&I for assessment of land degradation may be considered for analysis and use in the assessment of the poverty-land degradation relationship.
- A simple and concise document should be prepared on the methodology and deliverables. The design should be simple and easily understood by the stakeholders.

9. The Committee may wish to encourage Parties to consider the above suggestions for application at the country level, in developing individual country-tailored methodologies.

Annex

[ENGLISH ONLY]

REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS

Joint Research Centre of the European Commission
Ispra, Italy, 19 – 23 September 2005

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The main objective of the GoE is to develop and complete concrete proposals as a product that can be forwarded to COP 7 for consideration, bearing in mind the mandate of the GoE established by the COP. Following further consultations, and in an effort to envisage the best way for a feasible process through which concrete results can be delivered within the time frame, the GoE selected a number of topics that would enable it to produce tangible results. The TOR for the GoE were based on the proposals and recommendations from the third GoE meeting in Beijing, China, in October 2004, which identified expected concrete outputs and products. Efforts were focused on three priority issues; outcomes would be considered by the GoE, for eventual presentation to the CST during the seventh session of the COP (COP 7) in October 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya.

II. OPENING OF THE MEETING
(Agenda item 1)

2. As host of the fourth meeting of the GoE, the representative of the European Commission, Mr. Luca Montanarella, presented a welcoming address and introduced a number of observers from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC). The Director of the JRC Institute for Environment and Sustainability (IES), Mr. Manfred Grasserbauer, who officiated during the opening session, welcomed the participants and presented the policy objectives of the European Commission, the governance structure of the JRC and the research objectives of the Centre. He pointed out that there is a pressing need to make available the results of the scientific community as they provide the credible basis for policy decisions within the European Community (EC) and elsewhere. The primary role of the JRC is one of policy support and a strategy for sustainable development.

3. Mr. Ndegwa Ndiang'ui, representative of the UNCCD secretariat, welcomed the GoE on behalf of the Executive Secretary of UNCCD. He thanked the European Commission for generously offering to host this meeting. He recalled that the GoE had the vision to support ways and means of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST in the short and long term. While pointing out that the ToR of the GoE had been considered by the COP, he said that the GoE is expected to assist the CST in providing tangible and actionable well-directed products. These should be products that can be presented to COP 7.

4. The Chairperson of the CST, Mr. Riccardo Valentini, recalled the expectations of the work programme of the GoE which were emphasized during the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 3). The CRIC reporting on B&I,

traditional knowledge and best practices, has recognized the need for improving the scientific content of the reports. Through its work programme the GoE is expected to forward recommendations to the COP/CST on topics related to the scientific content of these reports. He commended the GoE for its hard work.

5. The Chairperson of the GoE, Mr. David Mouat, welcomed the members and underlined the importance of this meeting that is at the crossroads for the future activities of the Group. He said that he was looking forward to a fruitful exchange of ideas during the five days, with a view to fulfilling the mandate of the GoE as set out by the COP.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

(Agenda item 2)

6. The Group adopted the agenda (appendix VI) and discussed the organization of the work. The experts stated that for improved working efficiency, a better exchange of information and transparency in decision-making and reporting were important elements. The secretariat reiterated its commitment to facilitate the work of the CST and its GoE. It was further stated that the GoE should be more proactive and should present a message to the COP/CST, shifting from an approach by proposals to an advisory capacity.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: WEB GLOSSARY, THEMATIC NETWORK THEMANET (AN INTERNET-BASED SYSTEM OF EXCHANGE OF DATA AND INFORMATION)

(Agenda item 3)

(*Coordinator: Mr. Maurizio Sciortino*)

7. The presentation was well received. The following suggestions were made:

- Agriculture as a topic may not be enough. It may be more appropriate to expand it to agriculture and rural development.
- Monitoring and evaluation may be included as a topic.
- THEMANET should be as user-friendly as possible. It should be a high profile database with cutting edge technology and be different from what is being done elsewhere.
- Most of the topics contain exhaustive knowledge and databases. As such it would be very difficult to put such vast information on the Internet. This should be kept in mind and an appropriate strategy developed.
- Some topics may be integrated if possible.
- Separate pages for glossary, methodology and tool kit may be considered.
- Considering the time constraint, it was also suggested to identify some of the most important topics and to develop them for presentation at Nairobi.
- THEMANET may have GoE members as editors. An expert in programming is also required to contribute to the development of the system and it was agreed that a proposal be put to the European Commission to provide support for hiring a programmer.

- The system should be interactive so that it can be used as a strong tool for empowerment.
- Mr. Sciortino also requested members to suggest additional topics for coverage on THEMANET.

8. A working group was set up to discuss further the objectives and topics and finalize the proposal (appendix I). Four main topics were defined for consolidating the issue areas to be covered by THEMANET: (i) improvement of living conditions in drylands; (ii) natural resource management; (iii) technology development application and transfer; and (iv) monitoring and assessment. These topics are intended to represent the uniqueness of the UNCCD process in addressing issues relevant to desertification.

9. It was agreed that the website should be designed for an audience of decision-makers but that it should not be restrictive in its use and participation should be open to all stakeholders. An important part of the added value will be in empowering the users. The tool could also be used for effective implementation of the decisions of the COP.

10. The budget that had been previously developed for THEMANET during the third meeting of the GoE is shown in appendix II below for consideration by the seventh session of the CST (CST 7).

11. It was agreed that THEMANET should be presented to CST 7. A presentation may be organized as a side event in order to promote this initiative to country Parties.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY FOR POVERTY AND LAND DEGRADATION

(Agenda item 4)

(*Coordinator: Mr. Anders Hiort-af-Ornas*)

12. In the discussions that followed the presentation made by the coordinator, it was agreed that the approach has been appropriate. The following suggestions were made:

- Deliverables should be listed along with outlines of the methodology.
- Criteria for defining priority should be properly reflected in the methodology because poverty cannot be defined based on income alone but must also take into account the interlinkage between poverty and land degradation which evolves over time.
- Poverty charts for different regions may be given.
- More emphasis should be given to local-level assessment in specific areas.
- Access to the market should be considered as an important driver of poverty and therefore also of land degradation.
- Both qualitative and quantitative indicators of poverty should be considered.
- Not only success stories but also failures should be considered as lessons learned.
- Poverty/land degradation is a nexus. Poverty is both a cause as well as a consequence of land degradation, and thus creates a vicious circle that needs to be kept in mind.

- The target audience should be well defined.
- Community action and community participation are vital for concretely addressin the land degradation-poverty relationship.
- It may not be possible to organize workshops on some issues. Communication with stakeholders is already under way at various levels under different programmes. The GoE has to rely on second-hand information.
- Work done by the B&I subgroup of the GoE on B&I may be considered for analysis and use in the assessment of the poverty-land degradation relationship.
- A simple and concise document should be prepared on the methodology and deliverables. The design should be simple and easily understood by the stakeholders.
- The methodology should be applicable to the CST/COP.

13. A working group was constituted to consider the discussions that followed the presentation and suggestions were made on how to develop a strategy and approach for carrying out this task.

14. The small group presented the results of its discussions. Several points were raised and included (appendix III). It was agreed that after COP 7, a budget for the methodology could be prepared.

VI. EFFECTIVE METHODOLOGY FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT IMPACTS – ITS SYNTHESIS AND THE PROGRESS OF PILOT STUDIES

(Agenda item 5)

(*Coordinator: Mr. K. Takeuchi*)

15. In the discussions that followed the presentation on this topic, it was agreed that good efforts have been made to present case studies carried out in various countries, but a specific statement on methodology and deliverables has yet to be adequately spelled out. It was decided that a working group would look into the entire effort and draw up an appropriate strategy to link it with similar work carried out in other countries/regions so that a tangible product can be presented to the CST/COP. It was also agreed that the group should consider whether the short time frame is adequate. The results of the small group were later presented (appendix IV).

16. Several comments were made on the text and concerns were expressed on the how far the detailed TOR could be covered within the time frame; what an effective methodology should include; whether work should address and evaluate existing assessments including Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and focus on elements for guidelines; and what would be the added value of the work for the CST and the COP.

17. The GoE decided that more work was needed on this agenda item in order to arrive at concrete proposals for transmission to the CST.

VII. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS
(Agenda item 10)

18. The secretariat will provide, as soon as possible, the draft report of the fourth meeting of the GoE for consideration by the Group.

VIII. PRESENTATION OF A STRATEGIC PLAN AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES
(Agenda item11)

19. A first draft of a strategic plan was presented by Ms. Mary Seely on behalf of the Chairperson of the GoE (appendix VI). It recalled the framework that has been developed for examining landscapes from a cultural, socio-economic and biophysical point of view, with a number of questions that could be considered. The draft also identified key issues for the activities of the GoE and underlined the necessity to be proactive. It was recalled that the GoE had been established in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST and that a sound scientific background is mandatory for supporting the implementation of the Convention.

IX. DISCUSSION ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE WORK OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS
(Agenda item12)

20. There have been constraints to the work of the GoE, financial support being a major concern. It is the Parties' responsibility to ensure that an enabling environment is created for the Group that they established. The experts have volunteered and committed themselves to work hard to deliver as requested by the CST and they need more substantial financial support.

21. There has been no financial planning to provide budgetary resources for the work of the Group. A formalized partnership, however, is necessary in order to support the work of the GoE in a sustainable way. It was also agreed that decisions made by the CST should be backed by budgetary allocation to facilitate the work envisaged.

22. Scientists from the JRC made presentations on various aspects of the work undertaken by the Centre that is of relevance to the work of the GoE and the CST in general.

23. The meeting was adjourned at 12.30 p.m. on Friday, 23 September 2005.

Appendix I

Consideration of a strategy to improve communication and information

Working Group members: Mr. Maurizio Sciortino (Chairperson), Mr. Ahmed Al-Amoud, Observer: Mr. Luca Montanarella

Introduction

The review and synthesis of the recommendations made by the Parties and relevant organizations on the work programme of the GoE, issued on 29 April 2002, defined the terms of reference for the activity of the GoE, including, among other issues, the development of a mechanism, such as a thematic data net, which would facilitate coordination activities and exchange of data, experience and results, to ensure a sufficient flow of information between national coordinating bodies (NCBs) in the period between COPs.

In accordance with these terms of reference, the GoE prepared a proposal to develop a mechanism for an interactive and thematic data/metadata network (THEMANET) and reported its results to COP 6 in document ICCD/COP(6)/CST/3.

After the presentations and the ensuing debate during the CST at COP 6, the COP, by its decision 15/COP.6 on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, requested the GoE to prioritize the work plan as contained in the framework annexed to that decision, in the light of the comments, observations and recommendations made by the CST at its sixth session, and in particular on the basis of feasibility and relevance to implementation of the Convention and to carry out the priority work plan for the next two years based on sound financial planning.

The proposed strategy takes into account the comments and recommendations made by the CST, and sets the milestones and the objectives towards the implementation of the network.

The main objectives of THEMANET are:

(a) To implement the information and communication mechanism;
(b) To improve NCBs information and communication activities at national and international levels;
(c) To facilitate exchange of data, experiences and results among NCBs; and
(d) To facilitate efficient information flow among NCBs and the roster of independent experts.

The preparation of THEMANET has been carried out in the following three phases:

- Development of a proposal by the GoE
- Development of the website prototype
- Presentation of the THEMANET proposal to the CST.

The main milestones of THEMANET are:

(a) Awareness-raising and information dissemination
(b) Development and testing of the THEMANET website
(c) Direct input from the experts of the Roster and national focal points and thematic programme networks (TPNs) and other relevant entities
(d) Development of indicators of performance of THEMANET (number of hits, uploaded and downloaded documents, etc.)
(e) Evaluation of the performance of THEMANET
(f) Transfer to the secretariat for full implementation

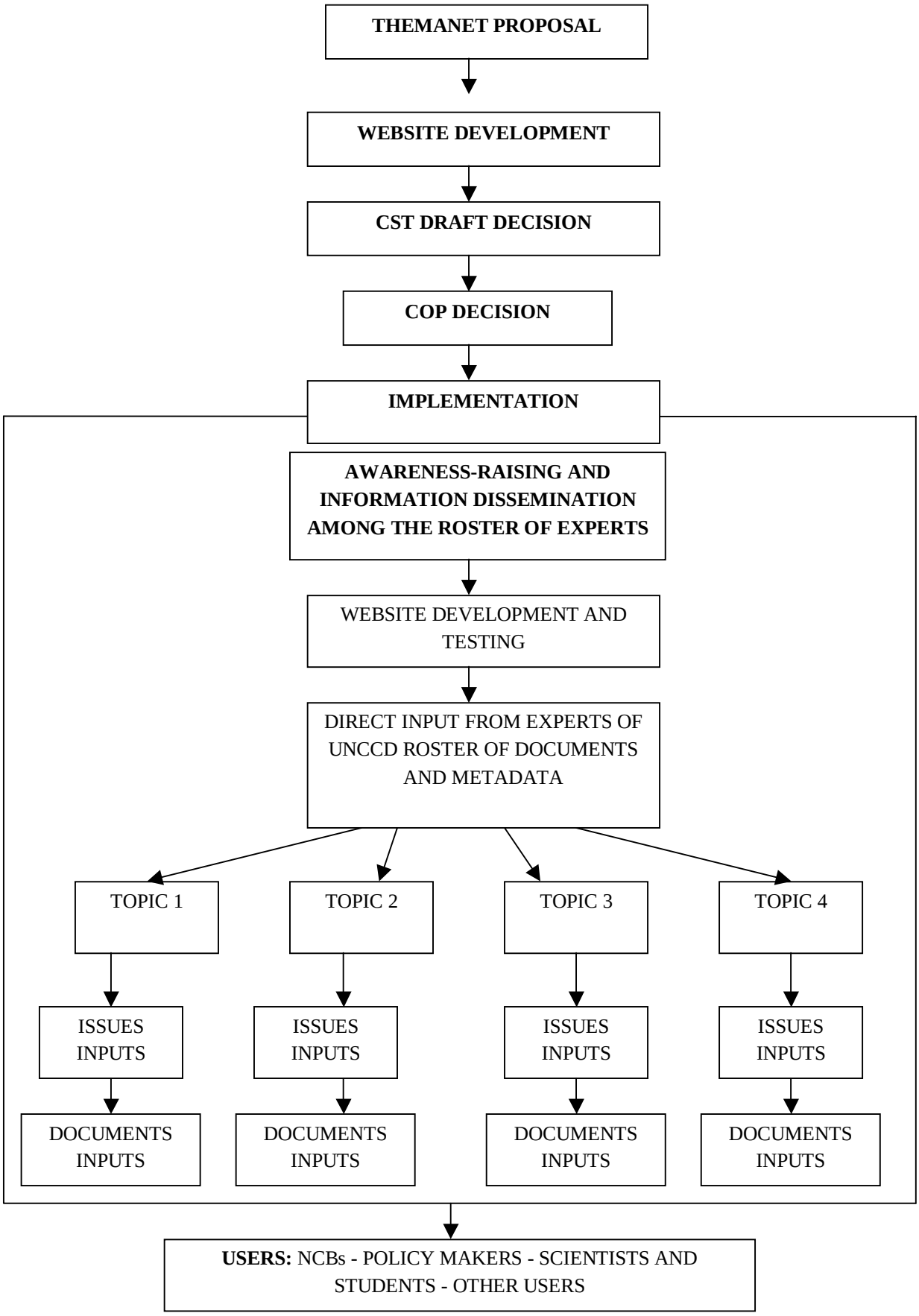
The annexed flow chart shows the main elements of the communication strategy.

Conclusions and recommendations

The THEMANET strategy has been reviewed and approved by the GoE as an important tool for the effective exchange of information among Parties on topical scientific and technological issues that will foster better ways of implementing their activities. The members of the GoE recognized the strategic relevance of setting up the network for the dissemination of information and committed themselves to participate in the network.

After considering this proposal on a communication and information strategy, the GoE reached the following conclusions and recommended that they should be put forward for consideration by the CST:

- The implementation of THEMANET would require the active involvement of the roster of independent experts.
- Parties should be invited to use THEMANET as a communication tool.
- Parties should be invited to provide the means to develop and maintain THEMANET which will be hosted by the secretariat once fully operational.
- Parties should be invited to make use of the scientific information included in THEMANET for improving their national reports.


THEMANET PROPOSAL
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT
CST DRAFT DECISION
COP DECISION
IMPLEMENTATION
AWARENESS-RAISING AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AMONG THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING
DIRECT INPUT FROM EXPERTS OF UNCCD ROSTER OF DOCUMENTS AND METADATA
TOPIC 1
TOPIC 2
TOPIC 3
TOPIC 4
ISSUES INPUTS
ISSUES INPUTS
ISSUES INPUTS
ISSUES INPUTS
DOCUMENTS INPUTS
DOCUMENTS INPUTS
DOCUMENTS INPUTS
DOCUMENTS INPUTS
USERS: NCBs - POLICY MAKERS - SCIENTISTS AND STUDENTS - OTHER USERS

Appendix II

Estimated budget for establishing the THEMANET feasibility phase

The assessment of costs refers only to the feasibility phase of the THEMANET project.

	United States dollars
• Administrative costs of the coordination (post, telephone, coordination of team)	5,000
• Travel and accommodation costs and daily subsistence allowance of five members of the team for two meetings of two days (US$ 2,000 per person)	20,000
• Preparation of the questionnaire and elaboration of the answers to the questionnaire (183 country Parties)	10,000
• Preparation of an information and communication technology strategy and a master plan for a pilot phase of THEMANET to be submitted to the COP through the CST	20,000
Total cost	**55,000**

Appendix III

Consideration of the development of an integrative assessment methodology for addressing poverty and land degradation

Working Group members: Mr. Anders Hiort-af-Ornas (Chairperson), Mr. Alejandro Leon (Rapporteur), Mr. Mohamed Badraoui, Mr. Gustavo Febles, Mr. Harish Singh, Ms. Elena Abraham, Observers: Ms. Monica Berti

This report targets the Convention, promoting local-level action and community participation. It recommends that Parties should carry out literature reviews on the eight activities requested from the GoE by the COP. The proposal was reviewed and approved by the GoE on 22 September 2005 prior to being presented to the COP in Nairobi in October 2005.

The proposal identifies "actionable" tasks to be performed by the Parties. The end product from the working group is a recommended methodology to be used by Parties for assessing the link between poverty and land degradation. The recommendation is therefore that Parties should use an approach in preparing a consistent methodology dealing with land degradation and poverty reduction that will lead to the formulation and maintenance of an interactive manual.

While the meaning of land degradation is given by the Convention (that is, meaning land degradation in drylands; desertification), Parties need to specify clearly which working definition of poverty is being used.

Based on decisions 17/COP.5 and 18/COP.5, the following eight activities have been handed to the Working Group:

Specific objective: To develop an integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation.

Activity 1: Review literature which addresses social, economic and natural driving forces and pressures on land and the impacts of land degradation on society (poverty).

Activity 2: Assess the knowledge gaps and systematize existing research on stakeholders at different levels, connecting their activities with land use.

Activity 3: Analyse case studies to test proposed methodology of filling the gap based on an interaction process (different stakeholders and decision-makers).

Activity 4: Develop criteria assessment for stakeholders at community level listing priorities regarding desertification and poverty issues.

Activity 5: Suggest ways of reaching community level stakeholders and local decision-makers, and strategies for building consensus, understanding vulnerability and risk, and defining priorities and solutions.

Activity 6: Carry out a review of the scientific and technical tools that have been used for poverty assessment.

Activity 7: Analyse the interrelationships/interlinkages between poverty and land degradation in the world.

Activity 8: Develop a training manual/handbook on lessons learned (from workshops, pilot experiences, recommended actions) which addresses interlinkages between poverty and land degradation.

Output 1**:** A poverty reduction methodology and assessment report which identifies, analyses and provides recommendations for eliminating knowledge gaps.

Output 2: A study on the interlinkages between poverty and land degradation.

The eight activities are dealt with in a systematic manner, by recommending that Parties should address how linkages are expressed, provide examples, list the methodologies used, and scrutinize lessons learned. The approach is provided through the matrix below. Details can be presented in an annexed discussion paper (based on the discussion paper of the GoE meeting in Ispra).

The following small adjustments to the activities have been suggested and approved by the GoE:

- Activity 6 is moved up to follow activity 1 since both activities are reviews that feed into the "old" activity 2
- The "old" activity 2 has been reformulated in the matrix below in accordance with the above adjustment
- Activity 7 has been clarified in that the expression "in the world" is omitted
- The specification in activity 8 of lessons learned is reflected in the reporting of the results.

The matrix follows the activities so that it reviews literature (1) and scientific/technical tools (2) with regard to knowledge gaps (3). These gaps need to be filled (4), both so that stakeholders can carry out assessments (5), and policy can reach stakeholders (6). All activities reflect the work of the Parties at the global, regional and subregional levels (7) towards the preparation of a manual that contributes to the learning process (8).

The first column in the matrix summarizes the activities. The step-by-step approach to each activity in the matrix suggests that Parties first survey how the linkages poverty / land degradation are dealt with in each activity (column 2), then to raise key issues by scrutinizing examples (column 3), followed by an understanding of how linkages are addressed (column 4), and in the final column account for lessons learned (column 5).

Matrix summarizing the Activities

1 Outputs and activity	**2 How are the linkages between poverty and land degradation expressed (focus on the linkage)?**	**3 Empirical example(s) when applicable; few cases aiming at illustrating key phenomena**	**4 Methods utilized**	**5 Lessons learned from the assessment of poverty and land degradation; focus on the inter-relation between these two concepts**
1 Review literature which addresses social, economic and natural driving forces and pressures on land and the impacts of land degradation on society (poverty)	Survey projects/actions, etc.; sorted according to findings: failure/ success, poverty/land degradation, small/large scale	Two illustrations: one project oriented to reducing land degradation with poverty reduction as a side effect, and one vice versa	Inventory methods used in empirical approaches	Determine gaps/biases in the inventory list (what has not been achieved in terms of linking poverty and land degradation.
2 Carry out a review of the scientific and technical tools that have been used for poverty assessment	Assessment of the scientific and technical efforts; account for trends over time	Select relevant past and ongoing case studies, to assess effects on poverty	Based on the cases, examine long-term development at the community level after project support has ended	Summary of key deviations from initial objectives with regard to poverty reduction effects and assessment methodologies
3 Assess the knowledge gaps and systematize existing research on stakeholders at different levels and connecting their activities with land use	Focus on science- and experience-based systems to identify the information used for decision making and for the implementation of activities	Examples from five scales-local, national, subregional, regional and global-on how the linkage poverty/land degradation is dealt with. Explain how the linkages at different scales differ	Analysis of how linkages between poverty and land degradation are described by stakeholders and the scientific community at different scales	How science is taken to the community; assessment of the methods practiced; efficiency, contradictions, complementarity

Matrix (continued)

4 Analyse case studies to test proposed methodology of filling the gap based on an interaction process (different stakeholders and decision-makers)	Analyse case studies to identify reasons why gaps exist (e.g. institutional, technical, scientific, etc.)	Combine the inventory into listing all projects with Global Mechanism involvement (whether operational or not)	Compile different methodologies at different scales	Refer to the Group of Experts and roster of independent experts to determine what methodologies fill in gaps
5 Develop assessment criteria for stakeholders at community level listing priorities regarding desertification and poverty issues	Use consensus building tools (such as workshops, meetings with stakeholders) aimed at identifying problems and solutions for both poverty and land degradation	Set up and attend workshops with consensus approach	Formulate local community level approaches to an integrated sustainable land management that combines poverty and land degradation reduction.	Take stock on the consensus to engage stakeholders at different stages of the process of project implementation
6 Suggest ways of reaching community level stakeholders and local decision-makers, and strategies for building consensus, understanding vulnerability and risk, and defining priorities and solutions	An inventory of projects oriented towards poverty and land degradation with regards to (a) awareness raising and (b) capacity building	Select relevant long-term projects with strong emphasis on both awareness raising and capacity building and seek trends for decentralized decision-making	Focus group interactions with community leaders and decision makers. Enquire, for e.g. about pre-project facilitating actions	Design a compendium of experiences
7 Analyse the interrelationships/ interlinkages between poverty and land degradation	Select United Nations and other related institutions that deal with poverty and land degradation	Scan global conventions as providers of case situations	Relate the global analysis with regional, sub-regional, national, and local level analyses as a means to interpret degree of influence from convention to project levels	Identify policy making patterns addressing the combination of poverty reduction and land rehabilitation
8 Develop a training manual/handbook on lessons learned which addresses interlinkages between poverty and land degradation	Building from the above activities, design a handbook presenting methods on how to link measures against poverty and land degradation at all levels between project and policy implementation	Review manuals/handbooks	Summarise how handbooks are prepared with regard to workshops, pilot experiences, recommended actions	A manual is a dynamic tool that integrates learning process made available through systems like THEMANET

Appendix IV

Consideration of a proposal on effective methodologies for the assessment of desertification at the global, regional, and local levels, so that the Convention can be implemented in consultation and interaction with other related ongoing efforts, for example the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA)

Working Group members: Mr. David Mouat (Chairperson), Ms. Mary Seely, Mr. Hassan Ahmadi, Mr. Victor Castillo, Ms. Lixian Wang, Mr. Valiantsin Yatsukhna, Observer: Ms. Monica Schneider

Overall objectives: The role of the GoE is to advise the COP of the UNCCD through the CST on a variety of tasks. We have been asked to examine a task involving assessments. As such, we ask: What should be the role of UNCCD in encouraging its members (and related ongoing efforts) to develop effective assessments for the mitigation of desertification at varying spatial and temporal scales (but especially at the local level)?

Purpose: Develop a framework for integrated desertification assessments.

The role of UNCCD in this regard might be to serve the broad user community by promoting assessments that consider a rational and basic set of criteria for their development. We present a summary of criteria that should be considered in the development of assessments. The criteria address rationale, scales, users, methodologies, and key concerns and constraints.

Rationale for conducting assessments:

- To provide answers to questions related to cultural, socio-economic and/or biophysical land-use issues.
- To assess whether or not national and international strategic policies, plans, and programmes are having their intended impacts or benefits.
- To assess whether or not human development trajectories are showing a positive or negative trend.
- To provide tools to guide decision makers to establish and evaluate policy and programmes.
- To enable communities and local decision makers to determine whether or not local land use practices are sustainable.
- To provide a subnational to global overview on the status and trends in the socio-economic and biophysical condition of the land.
- To provide a baseline for the projection of future land use and land-use conditions.

Scales (and relationships among scales):

- Spatial: Assessments are made at the local, subnational, national, subregional, regional, and global spatial scales.

- Temporal: Assessments tend to be static and they must be considered in the context of monitoring, forecasting and projecting (for planning purposes), the development of early warning systems (EWS), etc. They should be dynamic.

Users:

- Users of assessments include but are not limited to farmers, ranchers (and other household level resource users), community organizations and administrative units, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)/ministry decision makers, national policy makers, national, regional and international organizations and institutions. For each of these end-users, why should assessments be made, and how can they be used?
- Assessments must have a user community (user communities) clearly identified.

Guidelines for methodologies:

- Ensure that assessments are undertaken at the lowest appropriate level.
- Encourage local-level assessments wherever relevant.
- Focus on sustainable (social, economic and ecological) development factors.
- Develop methodologies appropriate to the scale of the assessment (e.g. strategies based on land survey and data collection at the local level; and strategies based primarily on remote sensing (RS) and geographic information system (GIS) at national to global levels). RS for subnational (watershed scale) or lower.
- Identify and involve end-users at all relevant stages or steps in the assessment process.
- Establish communication strategies between the end-users/end-user groups and assessment communities for the dissemination of results at all relevant steps and levels and with attendant feedback mechanisms.
- Establish strategies for integration of assessments to ensure availability of information that is developed at one scale can also be used for assessments at other scales (e.g. information that is developed for a local area assessment may be integrated with other spatially-based data to develop an assessment at a broader scale).
- Involve the user (and/or the affected community) in assessment planning, data collection and interpretation where possible.
- Select a few appropriate benchmarks and indicators for the question being asked, based on accepted criteria (consider benchmarks and indicators used by other conventions).
- Use traditional knowledge, where appropriate, to develop the assessment including the benchmarks and indicators.
- Encourage the use of “simple” assessments rather than complex ones.
- Take advantage and learn from (possibly through “THEMANET”) existing methodologies, approaches, reports, and other information relevant to the assessment. Stress this more – consider the work that has been done by other groups, especially at international level.
- Provide a guide to assessment methodology (methodologies).

General considerations:

- Communication in the development of assessments between those who develop them and end-users may be difficult or non-existent. It is proposed that the end-users need to be identified prior to assessments so that clear assessment communication can be followed.
- The science/research community tends to conduct assessments in the absence of the user community involvement. A two-way communication strategy must be developed to implement demand-driven assessments.
- Assessments all too often are addressed at inappropriate scales.
- At all levels, baselines are frequently not considered or available.
- People affected, who need, or could benefit by, an assessment, are often not asking for it. In addition, those developing assessments do so in the absence of communication with people affected. It is essential that assessments be made in open and full communication among the user communities ranging from the local to the global, taking into account the need for partnerships where parties should have mutual benefits.
- Current assessment methodology regarding the integration of multi-scalar information for the development of assessments at different scales is not a straightforward proposition.
- The questions that lead to the need for an assessment are either vague or not asked.
- Focal points should work towards making data available and accessible.
- Data needed for assessments is often not readily available or accessible.
- Consideration of risk assessments is important.

Appendix V

Consideration of elements for a strategic plan for the Group of Experts of the Committee on Science and Technology
(Chairperson of the GoE: David Mouat)

The purpose of this presentation is to describe what the GoE is, what it does, and what it might do in the context of not only the needs of the CST and the UNCCD, but also of the needs of the global community to improve understanding of the process of desertification as it affects the socio-economic and biophysical landscape at varying scales, including the communities of those landscapes and especially the people who occupy those communities.

The GoE was created by the CST of UNCCD in order to address tasks given to it by the CST through a defined "Work Programme" (decision 17/COP.5).

In considering the issue of desertification, I think that we should follow the framework that has been developed for examining landscapes from a cultural, socio-economic and biophysical point of view. This framework asks a number of questions that could be considered:

1. What is desertification? Where does it occur? Who are affected? How are they affected? (This includes the number of people affected, the places that are affected.)
2. What are the processes of desertification? How do these processes operate?
3. How is desertification (i.e. the status and trends in the condition of desertification) changing?
4. How might it change? What would be the impacts of such change on the people affected? And on the biophysical system?
5. What might be done to mitigate the problem?
6. How might we implement suggestions to mitigate the problem?

The key issues for the GoE, as I see them, were articulated by Ms. Mary Seely, the Executive Director of the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, a little over two years ago and they include:

1. How do we communicate our work (and, indeed the work of scientists throughout the world) to the user groups (and be sure to recognize that user groups start with community user groups and continue through the spectrum to international user groups)? – including media, policy makers at all levels in addition to the local users.
2. How do we translate the results, conclusions, and recommendations of this work for understanding and use by the ultimate users?
3. How do we incorporate the user groups (especially the community-based user groups) into our work (e.g. identification of questions; application of results)?

With and without the encouragement of UNCCD and its CST, scientific research (which is our mandate) has been undertaken throughout the drylands of the world with the expectation of contributing to the mitigation of desertification. Little of this research has been applied in developing countries for its identified purpose. The limited translation of scientific research to make it accessible for application by development agencies or rural communities prevents its intended use.

We must take the responsibility in executing the tasks that have been assigned to us to "translate" our work into a form that is useful. We must use our capabilities to figure out, that is, to develop strategies that will lead directly to improving the long-term maintenance of human well-being of people affected by desertification throughout the world.

We must recognize that the GoE was established for a number of reasons. These include, among others, the ability to recognize issues, potential issues and problems as they occur and before they occur. To provide (1) independent scientific expertise, (2) owned by all categories of stakeholders, (3) building on existing information and (4) addressing desertification using a broad approach. As such, we should recognize that our mandate demands that we be proactive rather than carry on business as usual.

Appendix VI

AGENDA OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS

Sunday, 18 September 2005

18:00 – 20:00	Registration of participants and cocktail reception

Monday, 19 September 2005

09:00 – 09:30	Registration of participants
09:30 – 10:00	Item 1. Opening of the meeting by the representative of the JRC Welcoming remarks by the Representative of the European Commission Statement by the Chairperson of the GoE Statement by the Chairperson of the CST Statement by the representative of the UNCCD secretariat *Chairing of meeting by the Chairperson of the GoE*
10:00 – 10:15	Item 2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work Review of the expectations by the CST and the COP *(secretariat)*
10:30 – 12:30	Item 3. Report from Task Assignment 1 Development of a communication strategy: web-based glossary; thematic data network (*Sciortino)*
14:00 – 15:30	Continuation of consideration of Item 3
15:45 – 17:30	Continuation of consideration of Item 3
17:30 – 18:00	Discussion

Tuesday, 20 September 2005

09:00 – 10:30	Item 4. Report from Task Assignment 2 Development of an integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation *(Ornas)*
10:45 – 12:30	Continuation of consideration of Item 4
14:00 – 15:30	Continuation of consideration of Item 4
15:45 – 17:00	Item 5. Report from Task Assignment 3 Proposing effective methodologies for the assessment of desertification at the global, regional and local levels *(Takeuchi)*
17:00 – 18:00	Continuation of consideration of Item 5

Wednesday, 21 September 2005

09:00 – 10:30	Continuation of consideration of Item 5
10:45 – 12:30	Item 6. Chairperson's Working Groups sessions
14:00 – 15:30	Continuation of consideration of Item 6
15:45 – 18:00	Item 7. Progress reports on other Task Assignments

Thursday, 22 September 2005

09:00 – 10:30	Item 8. Consideration of the reports from the Chairperson's Working Groups *(Rapporteur)*
10:45 – 12:30	Item 9. Synthesis reports by the GoE for CRIC 3 *(Mouat and Sciortino)*
14:00 – 15:30	Item 10. Consideration of draft report of the GoE
15:45 – 17:00	Item 11. Presentation of strategic plan and suggestions for future activities *(Mouat)*
17:00 – 18:00	Item 12. Discussion on financial support to the work of the GoE *(Mouat and European Commission)*

Friday, 23 September 2005

09:00 – 10:45	Presentation by JRC scientists
10:45 – 11:45	Other business
11:45 – 12:00	Closure of meeting

Appendix VII

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