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Desertification**

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Item 13 (a) of the provisional agenda
Outstanding items
Rule 47 of the rules of procedure

Rule 47 of the rules of procedure

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

In accordance with decision 21/COP.7, this document provides information on rule 47 of the rules of procedure (majority required).

The secretariat has prepared reports on this matter since the second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP). At its eighth session the COP may wish to consider the relevant background information and may decide to remove the text in brackets, giving final shape to this rule on the majority required for the adoption of decisions by the COP.

* The submission of this document was delayed due to the short time available between the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties.

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I. Introduction

1. The question of rule 47 of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties (COP), which concerns the voting majority required for the adoption of decisions by the COP, has been an item on the agenda of the COP since its second session. Background information is provided in the present document regarding any development since the seventh session of the COP regarding this outstanding item.
2. By its decision 21/COP.7, the COP took note of the report of the secretariat contained in document ICCD/COP(7)/8, and requested the secretariat to include consideration of this outstanding rule of procedure on the agenda of its eighth session and to report on the status of similar rules of procedure in other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), including the views of other secretariats on the impact of the said status on the work of their respective MEAs (decision 21/COP.7).
3. The environmental organizations approached in this regard report no progress towards reaching agreement on which matters should be decided by a majority vote. As a result, decisions on all matters of substance are taken by consensus, and this has not hampered the decision-making process during sessions.
4. The text of rule 47 of the rules of procedure as amended by decision 21/COP.2 is annexed to document ICCD/COP(3)/13.

II. Conclusions, recommendations and proposed action

5. As proposed in document ICCD/COP(7)/8, the COP may wish to consider the relevant background information on rule 47 of the rules of procedure with a view to reaching agreement and removing the text in brackets.
6. The alternative solutions put forward in the above-mentioned document are still relevant for the purpose of giving final shape to rule 47 on the majority required for the adoption of decisions by the COP. Thus, the COP may wish to consider the following options:
 - (a) Adopting the principle of consensus on all matters of substance;
 - (b) Reaching agreement by a simple or qualified majority when it is impossible to reach a decision by consensus;
 - (c) Determining which decisions should be reached by consensus and which by majority vote; and
 - (d) Deciding whether votes by Parties on such matters should be counted according to the Parties present and voting, or according to the total number of Parties to the Convention.
