



Convention to Combat Desertification

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Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda

Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies

Progress made in the implementation of decision 8/COP.9

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Note by the secretariat

Summary

Article 22, paragraph 2 (i), of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification calls for the Conference of the Parties (COP) to promote and strengthen relationships with other relevant conventions. The vision of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) gives emphasis to this call by aiming “to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability”.

Decision 8/COP.9 requests the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD to continue cooperation with international organizations, institutions and agencies, and coordination with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions through the Joint Liaison Group (JLG), for the implementation of the Convention. It also requests the secretariat to elaborate, in preparation for COP 10, draft advocacy policy frameworks on thematic issues relevant to desertification/land degradation and drought. Prior to COP 10, several country Parties provided inputs to these frameworks, as recommended by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) at its ninth session.

Paragraph 11 of decision 8/COP.9 requests the CRIC to include in its programme of work for 2011 a review and assessment of progress made on the implementation of that decision. The present document contains the requested review and assessment.

Based on the analysis of the information provided herein, the CRIC may wish to consider a general approach for the elaboration and application of advocacy policy frameworks and make recommendations to the COP on the elaboration and implementation of the advocacy policy frameworks. The CRIC may also wish to consider the principles of collaboration of the JLG, recommend their adoption and support continuing cooperation with relevant conventions, international organizations, institutions and agencies.

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I. Introduction

1. Article 22, paragraph 2 (i), of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) calls for the Conference of the Parties (COP) to promote and strengthen interaction with other relevant conventions for the implementation of the Convention. By its decision 8/COP.9, the COP requested the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD to continue cooperation with international organizations, institutions and agencies and to continue coordinating with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions through the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) for the same purpose. The same decision requests the secretariat to elaborate, in preparation for COP 10, draft advocacy policy frameworks on thematic issues relevant to desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD).

2. Paragraph 11 of decision 8/COP.9 requests the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) to include in its programme of work for 2011 a review and assessment of progress made on the implementation of that decision. This document contains the requested review and assessment; it is organized in three main chapters.

3. Chapter II provides information on the role the secretariat of the UNCCD has played during 2010–2011 in pursuing collaborative partnerships towards strengthening relationships and convergence envisaged under the UNCCD 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), and highlights the progress made in promoting “Delivering as one” on land through the United Nations land initiative and the high-level segment in the context of the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

4. Chapter III outlines the continuous cooperation among the secretariats of the Rio conventions through the JLG and highlights the efforts undertaken by the UNCCD secretariat, in response to paragraph 3 of decision 8/COP.9, to continue coordinating through the JLG to facilitate exchanges of information and joint approaches to harmonizing and facilitating the reporting requirements of Parties.

5. Chapter IV presents the progress made on the development of draft advocacy policy frameworks (APFs) set forth in paragraphs 4–8 of decision 8/COP.9. Those paragraphs request the secretariat, in preparation for COP 10, to elaborate draft APFs on a number of thematic issues that foster an enabling policy environment in order to address the adverse impacts of DLDD, and to regularly inform affected countries and other key stakeholders on such proceedings that may be useful in the implementation of action programmes. They also request the Executive Secretary to consult widely with Parties and maintain consistency in the programme of work of the secretariat as it relates to the implementation of The Strategy, and to utilize the APFs to seek financial resources for their implementation.

6. A set of recommendations drawn from these developments is included at the end of this document, for the consideration of Parties during the tenth session of the CRIC. Three country Parties — Argentina, Colombia and Mexico — provided official comments to these documents.

II. Cooperation with international organizations, institutions and agencies

7. The UNCCD continued to develop and strengthen partnerships with United Nations and international institutions with which it has a long history of collaboration on DLDD

issues; this resulted in the establishment of several initiatives at the local, subregional, regional and global levels. This document focuses on partnerships at the subregional, regional and global levels, whose chief purposes are to provide reliable and timely information to national decision makers, to share information and lessons learned, and to coordinate efforts for effective implementation of the Convention and The Strategy.

8. In accordance with The Strategy, the secretariat worked to strengthen established bilateral partnerships for policy development with several United Nations agencies and international organizations within specific thematic and regional approaches for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Partnerships strengthened and developed during 2009–2010 covered a wide range of institutions, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN-Water, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR), regional commissions, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Rio conventions, and international organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Global Risk Forum (GRF) and several universities and research institutions; annex I contains further information on these partnerships.

9. As partnership means cooperating within a broader framework, in which each entity has its own role, the secretariat has taken supporting measures to ensure that The Strategy is implemented in keeping with the United Nations initiative of “Delivering as one” on land. To this effect, the Environmental Management Group (EMG) of the United Nations, coordinated and supported by UNEP, decided to establish in 2009 an inter-agency Issue Management Group (IMG) on drylands, for a period of two years. The Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, together with the Executive Director of UNEP in his capacity as chair of the EMG, invited EMG members to consider a United Nations system-wide rapid response and agenda for action on drylands. The IMG agreed to prepare the United Nations system-wide rapid response and action report on drylands, which would propose policy options for a coherent United Nations-wide contribution to drylands challenges, across the United Nations system entities and based on the implementation of The Strategy. More than 20 United Nations agencies and organizations were involved in the process of preparing the report *Global Drylands: a United Nations system-wide response*, which was presented during CRIC 9. The final report is expected to be concluded in time for COP 10 and to be made available to the high-level event on addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, which will be held at the United Nations General Assembly of September 2011. The report can be found in document ICCD/CRIC(10)/INF.1.

10. Taking up the call on “Delivering as one” on land, General Assembly resolution 65/160 underlined the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, and in this regard invited all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the UNCCD secretariat in supporting an effective response to those challenges. By the same resolution the General Assembly decided to convene a one-day high-level meeting on the theme “Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” on 20 September 2011, scheduled to be followed by a general debate of the sixty-sixth session of the GA to be held from 21 September 2011. The General Assembly was convinced that the meeting should contribute to raising awareness on DLDD at the highest level, should reaffirm the fulfilment of all commitments to the UNCCD and The Strategy, ensuring a higher priority for DLDD on the international agenda, and should also contribute to the preparation of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of 2012 (Rio+20).

III. Cooperation among the secretariats of the Rio conventions through the Joint Liaison Group

11. The Strategy calls on the secretariat to work with the JLG “to strengthen cooperation in the implementation process of the Rio conventions in order to move towards more concrete modalities of substantive cooperation” (decision 3/COP.8, annex, paragraph 20 (b) (iii)). To this effect the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio conventions continued to meet annually in the JLG to discuss and address issues of common interest. Since COP 9 there have been two JLG meetings — JLG 10 on 23 September 2010 under the chairmanship of the CBD secretariat, and JLG 11 on 11 April 2011 under the chairmanship of the UNCCD secretariat.

12. The UNCCD secretariat also continued to follow closely the sessions of the COPs and subsidiary bodies of its sister Rio conventions, and continued its advocacy on sustainable management of the land and water resources and drought risk management issues, as requested by Parties in decision 8/COP.9, paragraph 4.

13. Coordination with the secretariats of the Rio conventions to facilitate exchanges of information and joint approaches to harmonizing and facilitating the reporting requirements of Parties (decision 8/COP.9, paragraph 3) is reflected in document ICCD/CRIC(9)/INF.9, which contains an analysis of the reporting requirements under the Rio conventions and explores options at national and global levels to enhance synergy. The CRIC at its ninth session took note of the document and agreed that synergy in reporting under the Rio conventions should be considered at its tenth session, with a view to formulating recommendations for consideration at COP 10. Document ICCD/CRIC(9)/INF.9 was further presented and discussed at the UNCCD GEF retreat in January 2011, at a round-table meeting at CRIC 9 and at the JLG 11 meeting in April 2011. Document ICCD/CRIC(10)/22 provides updated information on this matter.

14. The options to enhance synergy were presented at the JLG 11 meeting, at which the secretariats supported the preliminary conclusion of the document, that synergy is best promoted at national level. On options for global level support, the secretariats at the JLG 11 meeting agreed to join efforts in linking their glossaries. Following this approach the UNCCD glossary presented in document ICCD/COP(10)/INF.9 is coherent with the glossaries of CBD and UNFCCC.

15. In the context of the presentation of the options for enhanced synergy in reporting, it was particularly highlighted that there is a specific request of the UNCCD COP in decision 13/COP.9, paragraph 7, to the JLG to provide technical assistance relating to The Strategy, particularly outcome 2.5, and to impact indicator SO 4-4, which measures the contributions from innovative sources of funding, such as ecosystem services. In response to this request and other COP decisions directly addressing the JLG, the JLG identified the need to clarify its own role and mandate, because it does not see itself in the position to provide such assistance, and also questions whether such activities should fall under its mandate. The three secretariats jointly developed five guiding principles for the JLG, which define the common framework and purpose of joint action (see annex II).

IV. Elaboration of advocacy policy frameworks on thematic issues

16. The Strategy gives particular attention to fostering the creation of enabling policy environments. With its expected impact 4.2, The Strategy aims at improved enabling policy environments for UNCCD implementation at all levels. The APFs requested by decision 8/COP.9 aim at supporting the creation of such enabling policy environments.

17. During 2010–2011 the secretariat prepared, through a consultative process, draft APFs on climate change (ICCD/CRIC(10)/19), gender (ICCD/CRIC(10)/20) and food security (ICCD/CRIC(10)/21), and integrated them in the common fund-raising strategy of the UNCCD.

18. The draft APFs were prepared for COP 10 in consultation with Parties, with the purpose of informing affected countries and other key stakeholders on such processes that may be useful in the implementation of The Strategy. Decision 8/COP.9 also invites the Executive Secretary to use the APFs to seek financial resources for their implementation, consistent with the fund-raising activities of the secretariat.

19. The draft APFs prepared for COP 10 are envisaged to facilitate the interaction between the secretariat and Parties and also enhance the support provided to the Parties by the secretariat by advocating that Parties' policymakers develop new and/or update their policies at country level. Thus the APFs aim to create or raise awareness in countries, and encourage them to respond to desertification challenges, by providing information on measures, regulations, incentives and other policy issues and opportunities that will support the development, funding and implementation of programmes to address the adverse impacts of DLDD. The APFs are not intended to provide any content or any specific recommended policy position; they recognize that specific policy development is country dependent, as indicated by article 10 of the Convention (on national action programmes), and needs to be worked out by the countries concerned with the full participation of all interested and affected stakeholders, taking into consideration the legal implications of the proposed policies and the consistency between the emerging policies and the policies of other sectors.

20. The first thematic issues selected for the preparation of draft APFs in 2010–2011 were identified from among the current and pressing global issues that include food security, climate change and gender mainstreaming issues.

21. The draft APF on food security (ICCD/CRIC(10)/21) is proposed in recognition of the importance of food scarcity in exacerbating DLDD in the drylands in particular, and of the reciprocal negative impacts that DLDD has on food security as well as on the broader effects of food scarcity on, inter alia, ecosystem functioning, environmental sustainability, economic production and the stability of social systems. It provides the fact-finding support necessary for addressing food security policies in the drylands.

22. The draft APF on gender (ICCD/CRIC(10)/20) illustrates the importance of Parties recognizing gender mainstreaming. This thematic issue has been proposed in response to the request of Parties in decision 8/COP.9, paragraph 6, that the secretariat generate APFs keeping in mind gender sensitive approaches. This draft APF aims to foster permanent coordinated support on gender considerations for implementation of national action programmes, and emphasizes the importance of synergy among the Rio conventions on gender mainstreaming for effective achievement of a coordinated policy on gender. The preparation of this draft APF is thus also timely to contribute to showcasing gender integration at Rio+20.

23. The draft APF on climate change is contained in document ICCD/CRIC(10)/19. This thematic issue has been selected in response to paragraph 4 of decision 8/COP.9, which requests the secretariat to continue its advocacy on sustainable management of the land and water resources and drought risk management issues in the context of international cooperation on climate change and biological diversity. This draft APF provides information to Parties and the secretariat on facilitating the mainstreaming of DLDD into the climate change negotiations, as well as the implementation processes, based on the UNFCCC "Cancun Agreements" (UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16).

24. In response to paragraph 4 of decision 8/COP.9, the secretariat also foresees producing an APF on biological diversity. Because Parties requested, in paragraph 7 of that decision, that the development of APFs be undertaken in consistency with the programme of work of the secretariat, the secretariat proposes a list of thematic issues that could be subjects for future APFs (see annex III). Parties may wish to propose additional thematic issues to be added to that list and advise a time schedule for the preparation of APFs in the time frame of The Strategy.

25. In response to the request of Parties to consult widely with Parties in the development of APFs, the secretariat has undertaken several consultations with Parties and other key stakeholders.

26. In the preparation of the draft APF on climate change, the secretariat received inputs from negotiators of both the UNCCD and the UNFCCC through a web-based consultative process. The draft document was posted on the UNCCD website from May to June 2011 and Parties were invited to provide their comments.¹

27. The draft APF on gender was prepared with the support of IUCN, which cooperated with the secretariat in organizing a three-day consultative workshop. As an outcome of the workshop this draft APF was developed with the active participation of a number of national focal points and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that were participating at the workshop. The development of the draft APF on gender also benefited from inputs provided through the UNCCD website. This draft APF was also useful for the forthcoming coordinated approach on gender among the Rio conventions, seeking to promote coordinated gender mainstreaming programming at the national level.

28. The draft APF on food security was prepared through an expert consultancy and has been subjected to an expert peer review by selected experts as part of the consultation process.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

29. In 2010–2011 the secretariat continued to make efforts to maintain, renew and establish cooperation with other relevant conventions and international organizations. These resulted in partnership agreements and/or joint work plans and joint plans of activities. The *Global Drylands Report: a United Nations system-wide response*, presented in document ICCD/CRIC(10)/INF.1, offers a framework in which each of the relevant United Nations agency can provide support according to its role and mandate; and thus presents a feasible approach to “Delivering as one” on land issues in drylands. Coordinated action in the drylands is crucial to reversing and preventing DLDD and enhancing policies towards sustainability and socio-economic development.

30. The secretariat also continued to follow closely the sessions of the COPs of its sister Rio conventions, as well as the sessions of their subsidiary bodies, and has continued its advocacy-making activities. The secretariats of the Rio conventions have continued to cooperate through JLG meetings, where the UNCCD secretariat, *inter alia*, made a case to enhance synergy in reporting (see ICCD/CRIC(10)/22). The secretariats of the Rio conventions have elaborated the mandate and general principles of the JLG (see annex II).

¹ For the web announcement see
<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/pressrel/showpressrel.php?language=eng&pr=press06_05_11>.

31. Because of the efforts made to further mainstream DLDD into the United Nations, such as the participation and contribution in 2010 in the assessment of the millennium development goals (MDGs) and in 2011 in the one-day special event on the theme “Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”, awareness on the need to prioritize DLDD within the international agenda on sustainable development has been underscored.

32. During the period 2010–2011 the secretariat prepared draft APFs on climate change (ICCD/CRIC(10)/19), gender (ICCD/CRIC(10)/20) and food security (ICCD/CRIC(10)/21) through a consultative process and integrated them in the common fund-raising strategy of the UNCCD.

33. The CRIC may wish to recommend that the COP should adopt a decision which:

(a) Requests the Executive Secretary to continue with the established cooperation schemes and to seek the development of further cooperation with relevant international bodies on matters pertaining to DLDD;

(b) Also requests the Executive Secretary to advocate the integration and prioritizing of DLDD issues within the proposals on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication that are being developed in preparation for Rio +20;

(c) Recognizes the work undertaken by the secretariat and approves the approach used thus far concerning multilateral and bilateral cooperation in developing APFs on DLDD-related matters;

(d) Considers the draft APFs and their recommendations, as presented in documents ICCD/CRIC(10)/19, ICCD/CRIC(10)/20 and ICCD/CRIC(10)/21, and gives guidance on their further application;

(e) Further requests the secretariat, pursuant to decision 8/COP.9, to continue its work on generating in a consultative manner, the APFs tools to advocate improved livelihood conditions of affected populations, and increased ecosystem resilience in the drylands ;

(f) Agrees on a set of issues for subsequent APFs and proposes a schedule for their preparation within the time frame of The Strategy (2008–2018) as included in annex III of this document;

(g) Approves the proposed coordinated action of the United Nations system in the drylands, facilitating delivery in accordance with the respective role that the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system must play;

(h) Recognizes and take into account the on-going and future support that the United Nations EMG has been providing to the implementation of the Strategy, as expressed in the framework for collaboration put forward in document ICCD/CRIC(10)/INF.1;

(i) Proposes that the COP endorses and supports implementation during the period 2012–2013 of the actions of the said report, identified and proposed by the different United Nations agencies on a system-wide cooperation approach on drylands, based on the appropriate policy tools available to them;

(j) Calls for the secretariat to continue and strengthen fostering partnership building to promote policies that favour SLM, with the United Nations and other international institutions and organizations;

(k) Also calls for these partnerships that promote SLM to pursue for 2012–2015 the development of a global advocacy policy framework on SLM, based on the APFs approved by the COP;

(l) Endorses the convening of a regular global dialogue on drought by the CRIC, in close collaboration with WMO and the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and other partners, to exchange information on drought-related issues; to assess progress made in drought mitigation and evaluate the impacts of drought in the context of the changing climate scenarios; to consider the relevant policies and measures undertaken on adaptation to climate change and biodiversity conservation in drylands; and to review progress made in implementing the partnership developed to that effect;

(m) Requests the secretariat to continue coordination with the secretariats of the UNFCCC and the CBD through the JLG in accordance with the principles and mandate of the JLG presented in annex II to this document;

(n) Invites the Executive Secretary to promote the harnessing of appropriate financial instruments, inter alia, dryland forests and soil carbon schemes and initiatives that promote the potential of SLM in dryland ecosystems within the existing, new and emerging mechanisms for adaptation and mitigation to climate change;

(o) Proposes that the operational objectives related to the development and implementation of policy advocacy activities, including gender mainstreaming, be strengthened with additional staffing.

Annex I

Cooperation with international organizations, institutions and agencies

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Second UNCCD UNDP retreat	15 April 2010	Roadmap
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Video conference	September 2010	Joint work programme
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	UNCCD GEF retreat	4 January 2011	Joint plan of action
United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO)	Meeting	5 April 2011	Joint work plan
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Publication		Publication on drylands mountain ecosystems
International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	UNCCD IUCN Retreat	July 2011	Roadmap
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	Senior Staff Meeting	15 March 2011	Update work programme
United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR)		May 2011	Memorandum of understanding
UN Water	Meetings	Twice per year	Contribution (land issues) to World Water Development Report 4
United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)	Meetings	Several	Memorandum of understanding
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Meetings	Several	Memorandum of understanding
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	Meetings	Several	Road map (2009)

Annex II

Mandate and general principles of the Joint Liaison Group

Paragraph 3 of decision 8/COP.9 requests the UNCCD Executive Secretary to continue coordinating with the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through the Joint Liaison Group (JLG), to facilitate exchanges of information. At its eleventh meeting, the JLG agreed, *inter alia*, on the terms of reference and general principles of the JLG, thus defining the common framework and purpose of its coordinated work.

Principle 1: The JLG is not an implementation body. Its purpose is to exchange information with the explicit purpose of enabling Parties to implement policies and measures at a triple bottom-line (the three conventions). There is a differentiation of the level of activity that can clearly be distinguished: the Convention level; the secretariat level; and Parties' efforts and policies and measures focused on addressing nationally the objectives of the three conventions. It is at the national level where synergy can best be implemented, so the JLG should focus its attention to how to support activities at that level.

Principle 2: There is a fundamental regard for the differences that exist among the convention secretariats. There are three different mandates that the secretariats must undertake, and so careful attention must be paid to a number of issues, for example the use of logos, which should be applied only when documents have been approved and agreed upon for external use.

Principle 3: The aim should be to decrease, not increase, the level of bureaucracy in the secretariats. In practice this would mean following an issue-based approach realistically enough so as to consider whether funding for planned activities is available.

Principle 4: The secretariats must make the target of their collaboration easier for the respective country Parties.

Principle 5: Actions need to be realistic and have clear funding or envisage concrete fund-raising (with a good chance of getting the funding).

Annex III

Thematic issues suggested for advocacy policy frameworks

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Decision expected at</i>
1. Climate change	CRIC 10/COP 10
2. Food security	CRIC 10/COP 10
3. Gender mainstreaming	CRIC 10/COP 10
4. Biological diversity	CRIC 11/COP 11
5. Drought mitigation	CRIC 11/COP 11
6. Dryland forests	CRIC 11/COP 11
7. Water	CRIC 12/COP 11
8. Migration	CRIC 12/COP 11
9. Poverty in drylands	CRIC 12/COP 11
10. Renewable energy in drylands	CRIC 13/COP 12
