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**Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention**

**Eleventh session**

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda

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

**Proposed draft standard approach and process for the  
formulation of an advocacy policy framework**

**Note by the secretariat**

*Summary*

Pursuant to decision 9/COP.10, paragraph 11 (b) this document contains a proposal for a standard approach and process to ensure consistency of advocacy policy frameworks (APF) on global and thematic issues relating to desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) relevant to the work of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The document also proposes a methodology for undertaking advocacy with Parties. Taking into consideration the legitimacy, credibility and relevance of the APFs, this report describes and justifies the various steps of the standard approach as well as possible mechanisms to put into place to ensure its implementation.

The document focuses on the provision of elements for a consultative approach that is supported by expert advice on the development of key policy interventions on global and emerging issues. Such a consultative process would chiefly build on sustainable and observable practices reported by Parties, governance experience at the local level, and national and regional performance and impacts (including the indications of current and future drivers for such performance and impacts). The operational elements derived from the consultative approach and the expert advice for the provision of policy-relevant tools on DLDD and the means for their implementation is based on stakeholder-driven action supported by an ad hoc working group (AHWG) composed of practitioners and users who possess the necessary expertise that could be replicated at the level of specific APFs.

The document summarizes the proposed standard approach and process for APFs, from the drafting of the APF and guidance for the establishment of the above-mentioned AHWG; it also proposes ways to undertake advocacy and reporting on it once the APFs are approved by the COP, with the development and implementation of an advocacy plan.

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## I. Background

1. By its decision 3/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP), at its eighth session, adopted the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) which sets out the four strategic objectives to guide the actions for all UNCCD stakeholders and partners: to improve the living conditions of affected populations, to improve the condition of affected ecosystems, to generate global benefits through effective implementation of the Convention and to mobilize resources through effective partnerships between national and international actors. The operational objectives of The Strategy do not target specific policy areas or stakeholder groups; rather they represent broad, cross-cutting thematic areas of action such as advocacy, science and capacity-building.
2. By its decision 8/COP.9, paragraph 6, the COP requested the secretariat to develop relevant advocacy policy frameworks (APFs) on thematic issues in order to address the adverse impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), keeping in mind gender sensitive approaches, and to regularly inform affected countries and other key stakeholders on such proceedings that may be useful in the implementation of action programmes. By paragraph 7 of the same decision, the COP further requested the Executive Secretary, in the development of the APFs, to consult widely with Parties and maintain consistency with the programme of work of the secretariat as it relates to the implementation of The Strategy;
3. At its tenth session, the COP, by its decision 9/COP.10, paragraph 11 (b), requested the Executive Secretary to develop a standard approach and process to ensure consistency of APFs. Such a standard approach and process would be the instrument through which issues relating to the consistency in the structure, objective, functions, measures, procedures and context of any future APFs could be addressed.
4. By the same decision 9/COP.10, paragraph 11 (e), the COP further mandated the Executive Secretary to submit a report on this matter to the eleventh session of the COP (COP 11) through the eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 11).
5. The purpose of an APF is to provide the UNCCD secretariat with tools and approaches for assisting country Parties in addressing key policy issues and concerns by identifying potential policy intervention measures. An APF aims at promoting national enabling policies that meet existing challenges in the drylands and enables countries to respond to these challenges. Consequently, APFs provide a framework for the UNCCD secretariat to interact with country policymakers and advocate the development and adoption of policies at country level.
6. An APF is not meant to provide any content or any specific recommended policy position. The specifics of national policy are country dependent and need to be worked out by the countries concerned with the full participation of all stakeholders taking into consideration the legal implications of the proposed policy and consistency between the emerging policy and the policies of other sectors.

## II. The proposed standard approach and process for advocacy policy frameworks

### A. Overview

7. Work in policy analysis<sup>1</sup> recognizes three attributes as essential in influencing the political process:

(a) **Relevance**, which may be gained through the involvement of all concerned stakeholders at the various stages of the drafting of the document or recommendations;

(b) **Credibility**, which may be given by a strong relation to science and/or a robust peer review system;

(c) **Legitimacy**, which may be given through an official mandate.

8. These three attributes are mutually reinforcing and an optimal balance among them depends on the context and trade-offs (for example, the degree of involvement of stakeholders to gain relevance may contribute to the legitimacy and/ or credibility issue). It is envisaged that such balance may be reflected in the proposed process in the following ways: (i) through the UNCCD official process (legitimacy), (ii) through the strengthening of the contribution of science within the framework of the UNCCD process, (iii) a robust science-policy interface (credibility), and (iv) the regular consultation of concerned stakeholders on the significance and usefulness of the thematic policy proposals (relevance).

9. The proposed standard approach and process for the formulation and implementation of an APF is a succession of 16 steps grouped in three main stages as indicated in table 1 below:

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<sup>1</sup> See David Cash and others "Salience, Credibility, Legitimacy and Boundaries: Linking Research, Assessment and Decision Making" (Harvard University Faculty Research Working Papers Series, Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge (Mass), 2002).

Table 1  
**Overview of the standard approach and process for an advocacy policy framework**

<i>Main stages</i>	<i>Steps number</i>	<i>Steps</i>
I. Identification of emerging issues	I.1	Screening and monitoring. Drafting of “emerging issue brief” <sup>a</sup>
	I.2	Stakeholder consultation
	I.3	Review of the literature
	I.4	Final draft of COP document on the “emerging issue”
	I.5	Submission to COP n-1
II. Drafting of the APF	II.1	Establishment of ad hoc working group
	II.2	Background study
	II.3	Policy drafting
	II.4	Peer review of the background study
	II.5	APF draft 0
	II.6	Stakeholder consultation and compilation of contributions
	II.7	APF final draft
	II.8	Submission to COP n
III. Undertaking of advocacy	III.1	Implementation of advocacy plan
	III.2	Drafting of implementation report
	III.3	Submission to COP n+1

 Science mobilization through close interaction with the Committee on Science and Technology  
 UNCCD official process

(a) Derived from different sources: national reports, national action programme (NAP) priorities, regional/global international agreements concerning DLDD.

## B. Identification of potential emerging issues

10. At its tenth session, the COP, by its decision 9/COP.10, paragraph 11 (c), further requested the Executive Secretary to advise on emerging issues and strategic approaches that require an APF.

11. In response to decision 9/COP.10, paragraph 11 (c), the secretariat might identify, through screening and monitoring of the scientific literature, conferences, partner activities and outreach (including national reports submitted by Parties to the Convention), the

emergence of one or several issues to be addressed with an APF that are strongly related to the UNCCD mandate. A short brief shall be drafted considering the identified issue as key for the implementation of the Convention by Parties (step I.1).

12. The draft brief shall be shared with Parties and other stakeholders who may wish to submit to the secretariat their considerations about the relevance of such a proposal (step I.2). After the compilation of the feedback and contributions received from Parties, and a review of the literature (step I.3), the secretariat, in close cooperation with the UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology (CST), shall compile a draft report containing the most up-to-date [scientific knowledge] and a gap analysis on that particular issue with regard to the UNCCD implementation.

13. A draft report (steps I.4 and I.5) shall be submitted to the COP through the CRIC for a decision by Parties as to whether the secretariat should continue with the drafting of an APF and if so, with which proposed modality, approach and other guidance considered relevant by Parties.

### **C. Drafting of the advocacy policy framework**

14. In the development process of the draft decision, a time-bound and independent technical adhoc working group (AHWG) shall be established (step II.1). Supported by the secretariat, the AHWG shall decide on the structure and the modalities necessary for the background study (step II.2) and the drafting of policy recommendations (step II.3), as well as on the consolidation of a draft document to be peer-reviewed (step II.4).

15. At that stage the APF document shall be drafted and submitted to stakeholders for their consideration (steps II.5 and II.6).

16. A consolidated draft shall then be submitted to the COP through the CRIC for review and decision by Parties (steps II.7 and II.8).

### **D. Undertaking the advocacy (for the implementation of the COP decision on the advocacy policy frameworks)**

17. Each APF document submitted to the COP through the CRIC shall present a plan for advocating the proposed policy intervention measures along with expected accomplishments. Once the APF is adopted, advocacy action shall be undertaken thereafter by the secretariat and progress made reported on at the subsequent session or sessions of the COP, as indicated by the respective COP decision.

18. Any Party or group of Parties and all other concerned stakeholders shall submit progress reports to the CRIC on the efforts made in implementing their obligations under the Convention in response to the advocacy initiatives and activities of the secretariat, taking into account the proposed policy options as identified in the APFs.

## **III. Mechanism for supporting the elaboration, implementation and compliance with the standard approach and process**

### **A. Adhoc working group**

19. The Parties shall establish a time-bound and independent technical AHWG that will, with the support of the secretariat, ensure the drafting of the APFs. The members of the AHWG shall be selected by the COP Bureau from among candidates nominated by the

Parties. To that end, the COP Bureau may take into consideration proposals for candidates made by Parties or by non-governmental organizations and scientific research institutions qualified in the fields to which the APF relates. In the selection of the AHWG members, consideration shall be given to the geographical distribution of membership and to the diversity of experience and expertise. In addition, the COP Bureau shall select proposed candidates in such a way that the AHWG is gender balanced. Representatives of both the CRIC Bureau and the CST Bureau shall be part of the AHWG.

20. The AHWG shall meet twice, once to organize its work and once to review and finalize any draft APF it may be giving consideration to. The AHWG shall consult with regional groups before submitting its findings to the COP through the CRIC. The secretariat shall arrange for and service the meetings of the AHWG. In order to organize the work of the AHWG in a cost-effective way the meetings of the AHWG shall as far as possible, coincide with relevant UNCCD meetings and/or shall be held as virtual meetings. In between its meetings, the AHWG shall, in appropriate circumstances, undertake its activities through electronic communication systems.

21. With the support of the secretariat, the AHWG shall:

- (a) Ensure the drafting process of the APFs;
- (b) Facilitate connections with academics and/or policymakers when required by the drafting process (such as consultation, identification of peer-reviewers and so forth);
- (c) Review, assess, amend and improve upon, as may be appropriate, any draft APFs proposed for the consideration of the CRIC;
- (d) Review or validate the final draft for submission to the CRIC.

## **B. Consultation process**

22. Before being submitted to the COP through the CRIC, each APF must be submitted to Parties and other UNCCD stakeholders for comment subject to the availability of financial resources. The document shall be made available in all six languages of the United Nations through the UNCCD website.

23. The secretariat shall compile the comments received. After consolidation of the feedback, the AHWG will give guidance in the case of any contradictory comments. The AHWG shall endorse the final draft before it is submitted to the COP through the CRIC.

## **C. Peer review process**

24. All APFs shall include a scientific background study to support the proposed orientations and recommendations. Such scientific work must be peer reviewed in order to strongly enforce its credibility.

25. Under the supervision of the AHWG, and with the support of the CST, three to six peer-reviewers shall be identified. Their comments shall be submitted to the AHWG for the further improvement of the document.

## **D. Standard outline of an advocacy policy framework**

26. The following standard outline comprises a summary, a preamble and five main sections as well as an annex containing the modalities and approaches for undertaking advocacy based on the potential key policy intervention measures identified in section III

of the outline below. This outline is to be considered as a basic model to be adapted and expanded where necessary:

Summary (Note by the secretariat)

- I. Preamble
    - Legal mandate
    - Purpose of an advocacy policy framework
    - Evidence for action (state of the art scientific knowledge)
  - II. Rationale for an APF on the selected theme
    - Problem statement
    - Current situational analysis
    - Challenges and implications of existing policy gaps
    - Opportunities for addressing existing policy gaps
  - III. Potential key policy intervention measures
  - IV. Proposed review and reporting on progress of implementation
  - V. Conclusions
- Annex: Advocacy work plan (see annex)

## Annex

### Advocacy workplan

The annex presents a detailed guideline for advocating and introducing the proposed key policy interventions into existing policy processes.

#### Modalities and approaches for advocacy

The secretariat may use available advocacy policy frameworks (APFs) to undertake its advocacy initiatives and activities. The **overarching objective** of the APFs is to promote the review of existing and/or the development and adoption of new national policies that reduce societal vulnerability to disasters and risks. The **primary target** of the APFs is national political decision-makers, and the **secondary target** is development partners/civil society. This annex describes the various aspects of undertaking advocacy making use of an existing APF.

#### Objectives:

- Awareness of a thematic issue related disaster among critical stakeholders in countries that are Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is increased;
- Relevant APFs are developed and integrated into relevant national policy areas, plans and documents; and
- APFs are operational and help facilitate a paradigm shift in favour of a thematic area disaster risk reduction and resilience building.

#### Tactics:

- Providing policy and technical support to Parties;
- Facilitating political advocacy and outreach;
- Building partnerships and networking with related organizations and initiatives;
- Developing technical products;
- Establishing media relations, developing education and information campaigns, and disseminating technical products; and
- Mobilising resources.

#### Approach/activities:

(a) Strengthen the science-policy interface on a thematic issue at global and national level. This involves:

- (i) Working with a science-policy expert group/thematic network to continually monitor and assess evidence;
- (ii) Developing a technical manual to support education, capacity-building and training of critical stakeholders; and

- (iii) Documenting and disseminating emerging evidence for action, e.g. on economic and societal vulnerability, to policymakers;
- (b) Promote the mainstreaming of thematic issues into related policy areas. This involves:
  - (i) Mainstreaming relevant thematic issues in the agenda of other workshops seminars, and conferences relevant to the UNCCD (e.g. on Regional conferences, integrated financing strategies, Scientific Conferences, climate change, agriculture, land and soil);
  - (ii) Mapping related emerging issues and opportunities for engagement;
  - (iii) Actively participating in related initiatives to influence global agendas, processes and actors in favour of a thematic area disaster risk reduction and resilience building; and
  - (iv) Convening specific workshops, seminars, conferences and policy dialogues with key policy makers at various levels to promote policy development and mainstreaming;
- (c) Ensure that an effective response to a related thematic area disaster is mainstreamed in other UNCCD activities. This involves:
  - (i) Following-up on the declaration of the relevant High-level Meetings on thematic issues;
  - (ii) Reviewing the Comprehensive Communication Strategy and strengthening the thematic issues components, building on the outcomes of the 2013 World Day to Combat Desertification; and
  - (iii) Carrying out outreach, advocacy, liaison, joint fund-raising/resource-mobilization and partnership-building activities;
  - (d) Build a network of experience and best practice. This involves:
    - (ii) Documenting and sharing lessons learnt with stakeholders and policy makers; and
    - (iii) Fostering global dialogue during the CRIC/COP sessions through **a standing thematic expert group** on substantive thematic issues that have APFs in place to promote the advocacy initiatives and activities of the secretariat by elaborating strategies and recommendations for policy development and their implementation as well as reporting at all levels;
  - (e) Provide information and advice on emerging issues that Parties may wish to take into account; consider developing new policies and/or changing, revising and/or updating existing policies to accommodate such emerging issues in a given thematic area; and facilitate appropriate assistance to individual Parties and/or groups of Parties in order to help them implement the Convention.