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Desertification**

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COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
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**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2 (a) and (b), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION**

**REVIEW OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION REGARDING THE FINANCING OF CONVENTION
IMPLEMENTATION BY MULTILATERAL AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING
INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY CONCERNING
DESERTIFICATION THAT RELATE TO ITS FOUR FOCAL AREAS, AS SPECIFIED IN
ARTICLE 20, PARAGRAPH 2 (b) OF THE CONVENTION**

Note by the secretariat

Information regarding the financing of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) by multilateral agencies and institutions is contained in ICCD/CRIC(1)/7 and ICCD/CRIC(1)/7/Add.1. The present document reports on the latest activities envisaged under the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as well as on the relevant measures taken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) on the implementation of the UNCCD. It also offers possible action that the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) may wish to take at its first session.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. Article 20, paragraph 2 (b), of the UNCCD provides that Parties undertake to "promote the mobilization of adequate, timely and predictable financial resources, including new and additional funding from the Global Environment Facility of the agreed incremental costs of those activities concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Instrument establishing the Global Environment Facility".

2. Article 21 of the Convention provides that "the Conference of the Parties shall promote the availability of financial mechanisms and shall encourage such mechanisms to seek to maximize the availability of funding for affected developing country Parties, particularly those in Africa, to implement the Convention".

3. At the 2000 intersessional meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group for in-depth review and analysis of reports submitted at the third and fourth sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP), most affected Parties reiterated the urgent necessity to make substantial financial assistance available to developing countries. They recommended the Council of the GEF, *inter alia*, to include, during the forthcoming replenishment exercise, a financing window to access GEF resources for combating desertification in order to facilitate the implementation of the Convention.

II. UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

4. At its November 2000 meeting, the Council requested the Chair and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the GEF "to explore the best options for enhancing the support of the GEF in assisting affected countries, especially those in Africa, to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, taking into account the third replenishment of the GEF".

5. In May 2001, and as requested, the Chair and CEO of the GEF reported to the Council the best option for the GEF in enhancing the support it provides for implementation of the UNCCD. In this respect, the Council agreed that "the designation of land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a GEF focal area should be pursued as a means of enhancing GEF support for the successful implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)". The Council also requested the secretariat of the GEF, in collaboration with the implementing agencies, the appropriate executing agencies, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, to prepare a more detailed note elaborating the modalities for such designation for consideration at the Council meeting in December 2001. It further suggested that the note should also discuss the steps necessary for preparing an amendment to the instrument for approval at the second GEF Assembly in October 2002.

6. Based on decision 5/COP.4 and on the decision taken by the May 2001 Council session of the GEF, the secretariat submitted to the fifth session of the COP, held in Geneva in October 2001, document ICCD/COP(5)/6 reporting on the latest developments in GEF's involvement with regard to its support to the implementation of the Convention.

7. In December 2001, the GEF secretariat submitted to the Council a note on the proposed designation of land degradation as a GEF focal area. The Council agreed to consider at its next meeting the proposed textual amendments to the instrument of the GEF for its consideration with a view to the Council's recommending their approval by the Assembly.

8. At its May 2002 session, the Council agreed with the proposed amendments to the instrument and recommended the Assembly to approve them. It is therefore expected that the Assembly will consider and adopt the recommendations at its second session.

**III. MEASURES AT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR
FURTHERING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**

9. In its decision 8/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to continue to participate actively in the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and in the Summit itself, with a view to ensuring that the UNCCD goals and objectives, particularly those relating to poverty eradication and sustainable development, were duly reflected in its outcome. Representatives of the secretariat attended the preparatory sessions and the Summit and, consistent with the mandate from the COP, facilitated a consensus on the important issue of the availability of substantial and predictable financial resources.

10. The Summit acknowledged the UNCCD as one of the tools for poverty eradication and adopted other measures aimed at strengthening its implementation.

11. The Summit welcomed "the successful and substantial third replenishment of the GEF, which will enable it to address the funding requirements of new focal areas and existing ones and continue to be responsive to the needs and concerns of its recipient countries, in particular developing countries, and further encouraged GEF to leverage additional funds from key public and private organizations, improve the management of funds through more speedy and streamlined procedures and simplify its project cycle"¹.

12. In this respect, the Summit agreed to strengthen the implementation of the UNCCD, and to "call on the Second Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to take action on the recommendations of the GEF Council concerning the designation of land degradation (desertification and

¹ See paragraph 81 of advanced unedited text of the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Plan of Implementation (4 September 2002).

deforestation) as a focal area of GEF as a means of GEF support for the successful implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification; and consequently, consider making GEF a financial mechanism of the Convention, taking into account the prerogatives and decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, while recognizing the complementary roles of GEF and the Global Mechanism of the Convention in providing and mobilizing resources for the elaboration and implementation of action programmes"².

13. The Summit agreed to "provide financial and technical support for Africa's efforts to implement the Convention to Combat Desertification at the national level and integrate indigenous knowledge systems into land and natural resources management practices, as appropriate, and improve extension services to rural communities and promote better land and watershed management practices, including through improved agricultural practices that address land degradation, in order to develop capacity for the implementation of national programmes"³.

IV. ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

14. The CRIC may wish to express its gratitude to the world leaders for their strong political support to the Convention expressed through the Plan of Implementation, and particularly the specific measures adopted in order to address the problem of providing the substantial and predictable resources required for successful implementation of this important instrument.

15. The CRIC may also wish to recommend the COP, at its sixth session, to take action on the call made by the WSSD to consider making the GEF a financial mechanism of the UNCCD.

16. The CRIC may further wish to underline the need for a strategic framework that would make the land degradation focal area operational, recognizing the guidance from the COP in terms of policy context and programmes priority, and emphasizing the importance of national action programmes as key instruments of the UNCCD process and also the importance of the established operational principles of the GEF.

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² See paragraph 39 (f) of advanced unedited text of the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Plan of Implementation (4 September 2002).

³ See paragraph 57 of advanced unedited text of the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Plan of Implementation (4 September 2002).