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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
AND OF ITS INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, PURSUANT
TO ARTICLE 22, PARAGRAPH 2 (a) AND (b), AND ARTICLE 26
OF THE CONVENTION, AS WELL AS DECISION 1/COP.5,
PARAGRAPH 10**

**REVIEW OF THE REPORTS BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES
ON MEASURES TAKEN TO ASSIST IN THE PREPARATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES OF AFFECTED
AFRICAN COUNTRY PARTIES, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON
FINANCIAL RESOURCES THEY HAVE PROVIDED, OR ARE
PROVIDING, UNDER THE CONVENTION**

Addendum

Synthesis and preliminary analysis of reports from developed country Parties

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

Summary

The developed country Parties transmitted their reports on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected African country Parties under the Convention to Combat Desertification. These reports are updated versions of previous reports, except for one, which is an initial report. They are generally accompanied by numerous detailed lists of projects of all kinds related to the environment, development and desertification control. All 15 reports received by 1 December 2004 are reviewed in this synthesis and preliminary analysis. Reports received after 1 December 2004 have not been included, but are available on the secretariat's web site (<http://www.unccd.int>). The summaries of reports received by 28 February 2005 appear in document ICCD/CRIC(3)/3/Add.2.

The developed country Parties confirm their support for the affected African country Parties, within the framework of their cooperation and public development aid policies.

The reports show that desertification control projects, and more generally speaking development projects, are more numerous and more important than those strictly related to the implementation of the Convention. This is because the projects supported by developed country Parties have not really been integrated within national action programmes (NAPs), subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs) to combat desertification.

In some countries, there has been a growing tendency to have projects implemented by NGOs. There has also been an increasing tendency to support scientific research in the form of North-South partnerships. The more noteworthy priority thematic sectors are the strengthening of civil society, information concerning the environment and desertification, water management and the definition of new agricultural production and stockbreeding methods.

It is chiefly recommended that affected African country Parties should include their desertification control projects within their NAPs and that they should make the latter part of their national development and poverty reduction strategies. This still leaves the risk, however, that desertification control and the implementation of the Convention may not be given due priority either by affected African country Parties or by developed country Parties.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. Pursuant to article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP), in particular decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, developed country Parties shall report, through the Convention secretariat, on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention.

2. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties also requested the Parties to submit their reports to the secretariat at least six months prior to the session at which they were to be reviewed, and requested the secretariat to compile the summaries of reports submitted and to establish a synthesis of the reports emphasizing trends in the implementation of the Convention. All reports are to be drawn up in accordance with the presentation and contents set out in paragraph 10 (c) of decision 11/COP.1.

3. In its decision 1/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties set up a Committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC). In decision 9/COP.6, the Conference of the Parties decided that the programme of work of the third session of the CRIC should include a review of the implementation of the Convention in affected African country Parties structured around the main thematic issues mentioned in decision 1/COP.5. At its third session, the CRIC was also to review the progress achieved with the implementation of the Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the Convention that appear in decision 8/COP.4.

4. As a result of the establishment of the CRIC and the adoption of the Declaration (decision 8/COP.4), a number of changes were made in the way reports were submitted. Apart from the presentation of reports dealt with in decision 11/COP.1, the Committee took account, when undertaking its first general review of the implementation of the Convention at its first session, of seven key thematic topics which were to serve as reference for the establishment of reports to be submitted to its third session. These topics are as follows:

- (a) Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations;
- (b) Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements;
- (c) Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusion of partnership agreements;
- (d) Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies;
- (e) Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought;

(f) Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment;

(g) Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

5. In addition to these seven key thematic topics, the developed country Parties were invited, in decision 4/COP.6, to provide information on their activities in the following specific thematic and sectoral areas, recommended in decision 8/COP.4:

(a) Sustainable land use management in affected areas;

(b) Sustainable use and management of rangelands;

(c) Development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems;

(d) Development of new and renewable energy sources;

(e) Launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensification of soil conservation programmes;

(f) Development of early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting;

(g) Desertification monitoring and assessment.

6. The developed country Parties were also invited to provide information concerning decisions 1/COP.6, 4/COP.6 and 5/COP.6. In its decision 1/COP.6, the Conference of the Parties indicated that developed country Parties should in their reports mention activities related to: the strengthening of bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes for implementing the Convention, the identification of *chefs de file*, support for South-South and North-South cooperation, the promotion of small and medium-sized projects, support for the rehabilitation of ecosystems degraded by refugee influxes, consideration for gender-sensitive capacity-building measures, the promotion of capacity-building measures and participatory processes in the field of natural resources management, the launch of awareness campaigns in developed country Parties, improved consideration of Convention objectives in support strategies implemented by developed country Parties and consultations with the Global Mechanism (GM).

7. Pursuant to decision 10/COP.4, Parties were encouraged to include information in their reports on scientific and technical activities to combat desertification and on progress achieved in the implementation of scientific and technical activities.

8. Developed country Parties which had not yet submitted their reports were invited to submit a general report covering the period elapsed since their ratification of or accession to the Convention. Those who had already submitted a report to the Conference of the Parties and/or to the Committee were invited to send the secretariat updated information concerning their activities. It was recommended that the updated information should focus on support activities for the Africa region (pursuant to decision 9/COP.6).

II. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

9. On 14 January 2004, the secretariat sent the developed country Parties a letter enclosing an explanatory note dated 8 January 2004 (under ref. ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.4) concerning the drafting of national reports, requesting them to send the secretariat their reports not later than 31 May 2004. At its meeting on 2 April 2004, the COP 6 Bureau decided to postpone the CRIC scheduled for autumn 2004 until early 2005. A reminder was sent by the secretariat in the form of a note verbale to the developed country Parties on 1 October 2004 to inform them of the change of schedule and setting a new deadline of 31 October 2004 for the dispatch of reports. All reports received by 1 December 2004 are covered in this synthesis and preliminary analysis. Reports received after 1 December 2004 have not been included, but are available on the secretariat's web site (<http://www.unccd.int>). A compilation of the summaries of the reports received by 28 February 2005 appears in document ICCD/CRIC(3)/3/Add.2.

10. At the time of drafting, 17 reports have been received: Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, European Community, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. All these reports are updated versions of previous reports, except in the case of Poland, which has submitted its first report since ratifying the Convention.

11. The explanatory note sent by the secretariat to the developed country Parties recommended the following format for the reports: in part A, concerning Convention implementation activities, reports should include a summary, a description of consultative processes and partnership agreements involving the reporting country, a presentation of internal and international resource mobilization and coordination, the identification of *chefs de file*, measures taken to assist the elaboration and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, both bilaterally and multilaterally, and consultation of the Global Mechanism concerning the allocation of bilateral financial and technical assistance. In part B, reports should cover all other activities related to desertification control, with references to the specific thematic and sectoral areas mentioned in decision 8/COP.4 and listed in paragraph 4 above, as well as the scientific and technical activities referred to in paragraph 5 above and the key thematic activities of decision 1/COP.6 referred to in paragraph 6 above, as well as all other activities related to decisions 1/COP.6 and 4/COP.6.

III. SYNTHESIS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

A. Implementation of the Convention

1. Consultative processes and partnership agreements

12. All the reports express support for actions to promote consultative processes, including the involvement of local populations at all stages of the elaboration and implementation of development and desertification control operations. The reports also emphasize support for the organization of civil society and its components, which takes the form of training courses and the

transfer of knowledge or know-how. Two reports refer to gender-related activities. All reports stress the need to incorporate desertification control within broader development frameworks and decentralization activities.

13. On the whole, NGOs have been increasingly involved in support for consultative processes. Support is implemented either directly by the agencies of developed country Parties in conjunction with local African NGOs, or by the agencies of developed country Parties with their own NGOs, which then conclude partnership agreements with African NGOs. Not many details are given regarding partnership agreements. One third of reports give detailed lists of projects run by NGOs, but generally these are limited to project titles, with the amounts and sometimes the names of the NGOs concerned. One third of reports supply additional details on specific cases given as examples. The partnership agreements mentioned in the reports are signed at the launch of local development actions that cover all aspects of rural development, such as forestry management, rural water projects, erosion control, rangeland improvements and agricultural development. Only one report mentions support for actions aimed specifically at strengthening civil society. All these NGOs receive funding from several sources. In that respect, some reports quote the amounts of government subsidies to NGOs, private funds collected in various ways (e.g. by churches or through public campaigns), funds from local authorities (towns and regions), funds from foundations and different kinds of charitable or religious, personal or corporate donations. Most of the affected African country Parties receive support for local development operations aimed both at developing civil society and at combating desertification.

14. Most of the reports, under the heading of support for participatory processes and for partnership agreements with affected African country Parties, mention actions implemented through multilateral organizations, including those of the United Nations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank (WB), or by the European Community, which channels many other resources provided by member European countries. Many actions are channelled through specialized agencies such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) or programmes such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other actions go through major international NGOs, such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Mention is also made of partnership agreements with the major international agricultural research centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) specializing in arid and semi-arid zones, such as the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). Lastly many reports mention support for regional and subregional cooperation actions run through specialized African organizations such as the CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel), IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority of Development), SADC (Southern African Development Community) and OSS (Sahara and Sahel Observatory).

15. One third of the reports give details of voluntary contributions paid through the secretariat of the Convention and of the use made of those contributions, such as support for subregional and regional meetings, support for the participation of affected African country Parties at COP 6, and support for specific projects, capacity-building and synergy with other conventions.

16. The developed country Parties concerned generally indicate for which affected African country Parties they acted as *chefs de file*. This was the case in particular for Senegal and Burkina Faso mentioned by the Netherlands, Chad and Cape Verde mentioned by France, Niger mentioned by Italy, Mali, Morocco and Tunisia mentioned by Germany and Ethiopia mentioned by Norway.

2. Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, bilaterally and multilaterally

17. None of the reports received mentioned any new measures as such to assist in the preparation of national (NAPs), subregional (SRAPs) or regional (RAPs) action programmes. Two thirds of the reports do mention the support already provided for NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs, as well as support for national focal points. The same reports contain accounts of their activities as *chefs de file* referred to in paragraph 17, and the developed country Parties note the fact that preparation of action programmes should now be complete and action programmes adopted. The reports all mention the need at present to move on to concrete actions, partly by incorporating desertification control programmes within development programmes or poverty reduction programmes, and partly by implementing projects in the field that are listed in the action programmes. The reports also point out that in order to obtain support for the practical implementation of actions under NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs, the affected African country Parties (and subregions) should submit the necessary requests through appropriate channels (such as embassies or permanent representations). Some reports add that environmental areas, including desertification control, are not always considered as priorities by affected African country Parties. A few developed country Parties even indicate that such areas are not considered as priority sectors in their development aid policies. The upshot is that few requests are either made or accepted for the implementation of NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs. Only one report mentions the issue of indebtedness and debt reduction programmes, which could be combined with actions to improve the management of natural resources.

18. Information on financial resources made available in 2003 is provided in 14 reports. These reports show the overall amounts of public development aid, showing the proportion of that aid devoted to desertification control. One of them gives the overall amount of its public development aid (PDA) for Africa, explaining that it is entirely devoted to desertification control. Nine reports classify projects, either in the main body of the reports or in annexes, and quote fairly precise amounts. They use either the classification recommended in the secretariat's explanatory note or their own system. Some of the reports classify amounts according to the source of funds (such as ministries, embassies or NGOs) or according to their assignment by projects or by countries. The amounts mentioned are as follows: Germany, € 873 million in 2003 for 237 projects covering all cooperation with affected African country Parties, including 313 million for desertification control; the European Community quotes amounts covering the period 2000-2004, namely € 631 million for 189 projects, or 160 million per year; Denmark: € 312 million for all cooperation with affected African country Parties in 2003;

Finland does not give the total amount; France, following the recommended plan, reports € 62 million in 2003, specifically allocated to the implementation of the Convention and desertification control projects; Greece: US\$ 40,000; Italy: € 32 million in 2003, specifically allocated to desertification control; Monaco: US\$ 232,000 in 2003; Norway: US\$ 2.1 million specifically allocated to desertification control in 2003; Netherlands: US\$ 197 million allocated in 2003 to affected African country Parties under PDA; Poland does not mention any amount; Czech Republic: US\$ 300,000; the United Kingdom quotes a global amount of £2.2 billion for PDA in Africa in 2003; Sweden mentions US\$ 25 million and Switzerland US\$ 17 million, both for desertification control, for the year 2003.

19. The sums mentioned fall into three groups: one group, including three countries that handle substantial amounts (several hundred million US dollars), which give total figures for PDA in Africa; another group made up of eight countries, with amounts ranging from a few million to a few tens of millions of US dollars, whose projects are fairly closely tied to desertification control; lastly a third group, made up of four countries, with amounts of the order of a hundred thousand US dollars, which commit few resources to Africa. Two reports explicitly refer to the “markers” developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but only one report classifies projects according to these markers.

20. Most reports cite domestic efforts by the developed country Parties in support of their own national organizations and NGOs that are assisting the implementation of the Convention in affected African country Parties. These efforts cover the activities of administrative bodies managing PDA, such as ministries, development banks, cooperation and implementation agencies or embassies, in all fields related to the environment and development. The reports also mention what the NGOs are doing, either in support of consultative processes or for the direct implementation of operations described in section B below. A few developed country Parties mention the support they provide for coordinated NGOs, such as the European NGO coordination set up in 2001, or the ENID (European Networking Initiative on Desertification), to which groups of NGOs in Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom belong. Some reports mention efforts made to create awareness among the decision makers of developed country Parties and the public in general with regard to desertification control and the implementation of the Convention, for instance through films or television broadcasts. One such awareness “kit” was financed and produced by a developed country Party jointly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

21. One third of the reports mention funds allocated to the Global Mechanism (GM) and describe the effects expected by countries, such as the “leverage” effect benefiting the implementation of the Convention and NAP projects. One country states that this relationship with the GM works only for countries for which it acts as *chefs de file*. These countries also mention payments to the Global Environment Fund (GEF), giving total amounts covering several years but without any indication of how these amounts are used at present, particularly with regard to desertification control.

B. Other activities relevant to desertification control

22. As far as measures to rehabilitate degraded land are concerned, most reports express an interest but list very few operations specifically devoted to this purpose; on the contrary, the general view expressed is that technical rehabilitation operations are not sufficient to combat desertification. A few major operations are reported, however, in some countries of Southern Africa, in Zambia, Tanzania and Lesotho, in West Africa as part of a UNDP-run regional programme, in Tunisia and in Niger within the framework of the Keita Integrated Development Project.

23. Certain activities are common to practically all the reports, such as early warning systems and the monitoring and assessment of drought and desertification. This area is considered a priority by the developed country Parties. The projects mentioned are generally intended to strengthen national capacities, with the involvement of North and South scientific research, and to train technicians and inform decision makers. Techniques mentioned in practically all the reports include cartography, remote sensing and geographical information systems. Major regional projects cited include: the creation of an environmental monitoring system in North Africa prepared by the OSS (Sahara and Sahel Observatory) with support from different sources; the strengthening in West Africa of the Regional Training Centre for Agro-meteorology and Operational Hydrology and their Applications (AGRHYMET) in Niamey, Niger; and the strengthening of capacities in the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) subregion in Southern Africa and the SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) subregion, and in various affected African country Parties. Some support is channelled through the international agricultural research centres. Half the reports also mention their earlier contribution to discussions regarding early warning systems initiated by the CST. Four reports mention support for the national Long-term Ecological Monitoring Observatories Network (ROSELF), which the OSS has been setting up in 12 affected African country Parties in order to gather environmental data for the use of decision makers. This activity is typically a South-South activity as defined in decision 1/COP.6, operative part 6.

24. Activities related to sustainable land use management and especially water management are mentioned in practically all the reports and concern virtually all affected African country Parties and their subregional organizations, thus reflecting the priority given to water by developed country Parties. The reports give details of operations specifically dedicated partly to evaluating water resources and the supply of water for irrigation, and partly to ensuring the supply of drinking water to towns, without establishing any links between this activity and desertification control. Some hundred or so projects are listed for West Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa, supported by 13 developed country Parties, some of which indicate specific geographical support areas. These activities are either major subregional programmes (such as the Nile basin, or northern and southern Saharan aquifers), or wide-ranging bilateral projects, operating with budgets of several million dollars a year, or small projects concerning village water supplies, additional irrigation and water management, run by NGOs.

25. Support for the sustainable use and management of rangelands is mentioned in half the reports. It involves chiefly operations in arid and semi-arid regions proper, where stockbreeding activities predominate. Such support is quite rare and concerns mainly: Ethiopia, Chad and

Sudan, Burkina Faso and Niger, the Sahel countries, and Southern and Eastern Africa. It is worth noting that these projects are not concerned solely with improving the management of pastoral and stockbreeding resources, but that they also include socio-economic aspects devoted to issues concerning land titles and access rights to pastoral resources.

26. Forestation, reforestation and soil conservation activities are little mentioned in the reports, apart from support for the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the FAO, and integrated agricultural and forestry development projects in East Africa and West Africa. One country mentions a large-scale project to develop gum acacia growing in West Africa. Major efforts are described in North Africa and the Sahelian countries, and one report describes activities to train forest nursery managers. It may be noted in the reports that the forestation/reforestation issue is not considered a priority in arid and semi-arid countries; this is because forests attract much more attention in more humid zones owing to the biodiversity aspect and their economic value. Soil conservation activities are sometimes mentioned, although generally as part of integrated natural resource and rural development management operations, as in the Keita Department of Niger.

27. In the specific sectoral area of the development of sustainable agricultural and stockbreeding production methods, almost all reports refer to many so-called "integrated" operations. These involve a variety of agricultural and stockbreeding activities, linked to actions for the strengthening of civil society. They are generally run on a large scale and are ensured funding for several years. They are scattered across Africa and supported by almost all developed country Parties. They are also increasingly run by NGOs, on the basis of partnerships between northern NGOs and southern NGOs. This sectoral area is a priority which stands out in the project lists given in the reports. One report refers to the need to establish links between agricultural production and markets.

28. The issue of new and renewal energies recurs in reports describing forestation and reforestation activities referred to in paragraph 26, from the point of view of firewood production aimed at mitigating the effects of deforestation. Only one report mentions a programme using solar energy in the Sahel.

29. Initiatives related to links and synergies with other conventions concerned with the environment are mentioned in half the reports. They are of three kinds: either projects concerned with both biodiversity and desertification, or projects concerned with both climate and desertification; or in some cases projects related to all three conventions. The main projects described in the reports are: the promotion of environment information systems in Egypt and in the countries of North Africa, West Africa and East Africa, developed by the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS). These activities are linked to all three conventions, even though they give priority to combating desertification. Mention is also made of support for biodiversity, forestry and water management projects in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe and Algeria; support for operations of carbon sequestration by soils and vegetation; agro-ecological projects and several forestation projects in African countries; support for the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change in some African countries; and participation in scientific working groups dealing with synergies within the framework of the Global Environment Fund (GEF). Significant support is mentioned in one report for the work on weather forecasting applied to droughts of the Africa Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) in Niamey, Niger.

30. All reports describe the efforts made by developed country Parties to assist affected African country Parties to gain access to appropriate technologies, knowledge and know-how. They first describe how the developed country Parties support their own public research on desertification control, then how this research is coordinated with affected African country Parties. The research is carried out in specialized scientific organizations and in universities. It sometimes receives international loans and is generally networked. Two reports mention national networks used for scientific coordination and exchange. All these scientific activities are carried out in partnership with African research centres and universities. Some of them are conducted in connection with African networks, such as the African Forum for Agricultural Research.

IV. GENERAL TRENDS CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

A. Trends in consultative processes and partnership agreements

31. All the developed country Parties confirm their support for consultative processes and partnership agreements in their reports. In the operations they mention or describe, they express their wish to assist affected African country Parties in their efforts to involve local populations more in the development of projects, in their implementation and in decision-making in general, in accordance with the obligations of the Convention. In the introductions and conclusions of their reports, they also emphasize that this obligation is shared by the affected African country Parties and reiterate that they are prepared to help them meet it, in accordance with their own obligations as developed country Parties. The reports contain few mentions of operations directly aimed at strengthening consultative processes and partnership agreements with civil society; they refer rather to sectoral operations with components such as “consultation of the population”, “decentralization”, “strengthening of civil society”, “training of national and village managers”, and “participation of women”. In this respect the trends already observed in reports for previous years are even more apparent.

32. It may also be noted that these activities are increasingly being channelled through development NGOs, North and South, or what are commonly referred to as International Solidarity Organizations (ISOs). They are generally conducted in the field by local NGOs with the support of NGOs and ISOs of developed country Parties. They are all covered by partnership agreements and, in the light of reports received, it may be estimated that hundreds of such agreements have been reached on the African continent between NGOs of South and North. No details are given about purely private operations, since there are no detailed sources of information on those activities, which remain outside the statistics. The only activities clearly identified are those which receive public funds and are therefore classified as part of PDA. Funding provided by private corporations is not covered in the reports. Moreover, so-called “decentralized” cooperation - that is activities conducted jointly by two local authorities (e.g. a town in the North coupled with an African town, a village with a village or a region with a region) - which requires partnership agreements is not included in official statistics. This is because these local authorities do not request government aid and are therefore not officially listed.

33. Since desertification is now recognized as both a local and a global phenomenon, alongside what might be described as “local” partnership agreements there are now others which could be described as “global”. These are international partnerships between developed country Parties, affected African country Parties and international organizations, whether inside or outside the United Nations system. This type of partnership is increasingly widespread, as well as partnerships involving organizations such as the CILSS, IGAD, SADC, Nile Basin Organization and OSS.

B. Trends in measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes, including financial measures

34. The developed country Parties, recalling their past contribution to the preparation of NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs, report no more activities in this particular area. They lay increasing emphasis on the current need to coordinate these action programmes with national plans and programmes and national development strategies, and with poverty reduction plans and programmes.

35. There is again a marked tendency to remind affected African country Parties that they are expected to put in requests. It is clearly emphasized that in order to move on from the stage of preparation to that of support for the implementation of NAP, SRAP and RAP projects, affected African country Parties must submit the necessary requests through appropriate channels. It appears that much remains to be done to lead this process to a successful conclusion and to create an awareness among national decision makers in developed country Parties and in affected African country Parties of the importance of desertification control.

C. Trends in other desertification control activities

36. Activities described under the heading of “other desertification control-related activities” are given much more importance than those strictly related to the implementation of the Convention. This tends to confirm the trend noted in previous reports. Impressive lists of projects related to arid and semi-arid zones of the Africa region are available in all areas. All these projects are presented as being more or less closely related to desertification control activities. There is a great variety of projects, which are fairly evenly spread over all sectors of desertification control, except for the specific forestry sector and the energy sector. It is worth noting: the priority given to issues related to information on the environment and desertification, leading to widespread support for alert systems and drought and desertification monitoring and assessment projects; the priority given to all aspects of water management, giving rise to large-scale projects; and the priority given to the sector dealing with the development of sustainable agricultural production and stockbreeding methods, related to efforts devoted to the development of civil society and implemented by NGOs.

37. The emphasis on scientific research activities is confirmed. Such activities are conducted in scientific institutes and universities of developed country Parties, where they are linked to scientific cooperation and capacity-building actions in affected African country Parties. The amounts involved range from a few fellowships a year to programmes involving several millions of dollars per year.

D. Other trends

38. Some reference is invariably made to reforms undertaken since the previous reports in the internal organization of the cooperation activities of developed country Parties. It may be noted that several have continued to decentralize their decisions in the field of cooperation by allowing their embassies a greater degree of independence. Cooperation objectives and implementation arrangements are explained at length, sometimes in great detail, as are the guiding principles of the countries' development philosophy and PDA policy.

39. The synergy between the three environmental conventions is of great concern to the developed country Parties and gives rise to concrete efforts in terms of financial support for capacity-building and policy harmonization in affected African country Parties.

40. Financial information is given fuller and more detailed treatment than in previous reports, owing to the greater number of project lists and descriptive fact sheets. The great diversity in the presentation of such lists makes it difficult, however, to draw up any synthesis on specific desertification control activities.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions on the organization and approach of the reports

41. It must be agreed that the value of this synthesis depends to some extent on how many reports are submitted within the prescribed deadlines. From the point of view of the organization of reports, two follow the recommended structure; five more do so but without aligning the content of paragraphs in each case with the headings; the remainder have gone ahead with their own presentation. This generally reflects the internal organization of the developed country Parties and their priorities, whether political and geographical or thematic. The reports are in fact updates of activities conducted by developed country Parties to assist affected African country Parties. A few, however, include support actions for countries in other regions.

42. It may be wondered whether the successive COP recommendations summarized in the explanatory note are always understood in the same way by the different Parties and whether the recommendations do not contain a few redundant features. It is worth drawing attention, for instance, to the repetitions in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the note, derived from decisions 11/COP.1, 8/COP.4 and 4/COP.6, considering that in paragraph 7 (e) information is requested on the introduction of early warning systems, in 7 (f) on drought and desertification monitoring and assessment, in 8 (f) on the development of early warning systems for food security and in 8 (g) on desertification monitoring and assessment. These four questions could probably be combined in some way. Might it not be worth reorganizing the structure of reports in order to take account of the decisions of successive COPs? Two reports mention the work of the OECD's statistical group in assisting its member countries to report on their financial contributions to the three environmental conventions by defining specific markers for each convention. Generally speaking, it would be worth using a common format for reports and to highlight initiatives specifically related to the implementation of the Convention.

43. Would it not be worth also making it clear what is understood by terms such as “partnership agreements”, which can refer either to simple agreements between two NGOs or to international agreements between countries and/or international organizations? This should be done by referring to the relevant passage of decision 1/COP.6, which summarizes the results of previous years’ reviews. Moreover, the considerable range of interpretations regarding the scope of desertification control means that the contents of reports vary greatly and are difficult to compare. Might it not be useful to help countries arrive at the right interpretation?

B. Conclusions on the analysis of the consultative processes, partnerships, measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and other matters

44. Following COP 6 and its strong emphasis on implementation in affected African country Parties, while the need to continue with efforts to support consultative processes and partnership agreements is reaffirmed, the advances achieved in that respect are not documented in sufficient detail. While all the developed country Parties appear to share the same approach to these partnership agreements and consultative processes, some of the information on the progress achieved in this respect since CRIC 1 has not been made available. It might be useful to know what methods were used in successful processes and what results were achieved.

45. A new form of cooperation that has appeared attributes a growing role to NGOs and ISOs, both in developed country Parties and in affected African country Parties. This has brought about substantial changes in the way public development aid is implemented. Would it not be worth knowing how the administrative processes of developed country Parties are adapting to these changes? Moreover, there are no really clear indications of what the NGOs and ISOs consist of, nor of their typology. They range from major world-renowned charitable organizations, like Oxfam, Misereor or Care, which are often mentioned, to minor local organizations linked to equally small African village associations. Nor do the reports give any specific indications regarding the typology of African NGOs: are they made up of farmers, stockbreeders or villagers? Would it not, for instance, be useful to know how many farmers’ and stockbreeders’ organizations have been set up and how effectively they operate?

46. While the reports confirm the priority attached to scientific and technological research and the transfer of know-how, the time has perhaps come to check the effectiveness of scientific activities and their real usefulness for decision makers, development actors and all other non-scientific actors, particularly from the point of view of programming efforts directly related to the implementation of the Convention?

47. In addition to information on public aid flows, it would also be worth in future having more information on decentralized cooperation and private capital flows and on the sort of private investments which could be made in affected African country Parties in the field of desertification control. It would also be useful to have some long-term projections of possible developments in the area of desertification and their social and economic consequences in affected country Parties and developed country Parties.

C. Conclusions on synergies with other Conventions and issues concerning the Committee on Science and Technology

48. Measures taken to improve the knowledge and operation of ecosystems are beneficial to all three conventions and have been receiving increasing support. The Committee on Science and Technology receives some support from developed country Parties through nationals who are members of the group of experts.

D. Overall conclusions

49. The 15 reports received for the third review of the reports of activities undertaken by the developed country Parties in favour of Africa reflect only the trend among developed European countries and offer a good overview of the activities conducted. It is clear that efforts by these countries to promote desertification control are continuing. The countries point out, however, that urgent consideration should be given to using the NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs to channel desertification control projects which are conducted outside those action programmes. They also emphasize that all adopted NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs should be incorporated within national development and poverty reduction strategies as soon as possible. More sustained consultation with affected African country Parties could on the other hand alleviate the risk of these programmes being overlooked and not being given the priority they deserve, either by the national political authorities of the affected African country Parties or by the PDA policy decision makers of developed country Parties.

50. All the developed country Parties refer to the Millennium Development Goals and the plan of action adopted at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. They confirm their commitment to these goals and express a wish to conduct their cooperation activities within that framework. They also welcome the initiatives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), especially those concerning the "environment" and "agriculture" sectors, and confirm that they are prepared to support them.
