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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 INFORMATION PROVIDED BY RELEVANT ORGANS, FUNDS AND
PROGRAMMES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, AS WELL AS OTHER
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, ON
THEIR ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CONVENTION IN AFFECTED AFRICAN COUNTRY PARTIES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present document contains input received as at 31 December 2004 from organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) accredited to the Conference of the Parties (COP). The secretariat endeavoured to take into consideration all the reports submitted under this agenda item. In doing so, the secretariat tried to accommodate, whenever possible, reports received after the established deadline of 31 October 2004. However, owing to serious time constraints relating to tight United Nations editing and printing schedules, reports received after 31 December 2004 could not be considered for the purposes of this document. These reports will be posted on the secretariat web site at <http://www.unccd.int>.

As at 31 December 2004, 18 organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other IGOs had reported on activities undertaken in support of the implementation of the UNCCD in affected African country Parties, from 2002 to date. The information provided during this period of time testifies to the active involvement of these organizations, based on their respective fields of expertise, in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) implementation process in Africa.

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I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. By decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, the COP, *inter alia*:

(a) Encouraged relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other IGOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to provide information, as appropriate, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention;

(b) Requested the secretariat to compile the information provided by organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other IGOs and NGOs, on measures taken or planned in support of implementation of the Convention.

2. By decision 1/COP.5, the COP established the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention in the light of experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, and to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties pursuant to article 26 of the Convention.

3. The terms of reference of the CRIC state that the review process shall examine, *inter alia*, reports submitted by the Parties, and information and advice from the Global Mechanism (GM) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), as well as reports from relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other IGOs and NGOs and such other reports as the COP may call for.

4. Decision 9/COP.6 on the programme of work of the third session of the CRIC states that the Committee shall review the information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other IGOs and NGOs, on their activities in support of the implementation of the Convention in affected African country Parties.

5. Following decisions 11/COP.1, 1/COP.5 and 9/COP.6, the secretariat sent reminders to organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and to accredited IGOs, inviting them to submit their reports. Based on established practice, the secretariat requested NGOs to submit their contributions directly to their national focal points so as to ensure that the reports would encompass civil society input in keeping with the “bottom-up” approach. Accordingly, most NGOs channelled their reports through their national focal points directly into their respective national reports. The following summaries have been prepared by the secretariat based on contributions received up to the time this report was finalized.

II. ORGANS, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. Convention on Biological Diversity

6. The last sessions of the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted a number of decisions with the aim of promoting and facilitating the implementation of UNCCD programmes relevant to the rehabilitation of degraded lands (renewable sources of energy, integrated water resources management, mountain ecosystem preservation).

7. Decision VII/2, on the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands, requested the collaboration of the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio conventions to develop mechanisms for facilitating the synergistic implementation of the conventions through the organization of regional synergy workshops, and to review the action plans under the CBD so as to harmonize them with the UNCCD national action programmes (NAPs) and the national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

8. Three work programmes were adopted at CBD COP 7 to promote and facilitate sustainable use and conservation of biological resources supporting the objectives of the UNCCD. These programmes focused on technology transfer and technology cooperation as well as mountain and inland water ecosystems biological diversity.

9. The CBD co-organized the UNCCD/CBD workshop "Forests and Forest Ecosystems: promoting synergy in the implementation of the three Rio conventions" which took place in Viterbo, Italy and addressed the synergy issues at national level.

10. The Executive Secretary of the CBD, in close collaboration with the Executive Secretaries of the UNCCD and the UNFCCC and in consultation with the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), convened a Regional Workshop for Africa on Synergies in implementing the Programmes of Work on Dry and Sub-humid Lands and Agricultural Biodiversity, in Gaborone, Botswana. Government experts attending the workshop identified the restraints and lessons learned in order to maximize synergies between the conventions, discussed proposals for the integration of harmonized strategies of the CBD and the UNCCD into national development programmes and developed project concept notes to maximize the synergy between biodiversity-related conventions while addressing national priorities.

11. During the last sessions of the COPs to both conventions, the secretariats of the CBD and the UNCCD organized side events on joint work programmes.

12. Of particular importance to the implementation of the UNCCD is the adoption by CBD COP 7 of the Akwé: Kon Voluntary Guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessment regarding developments proposed to take place on sacred sites, lands and waters traditionally occupied by local and indigenous communities, with the aim of preparing a plan of action for the retention of traditional knowledge. The African Regional Workshop on the Composite Report on Traditional Knowledge has been scheduled for 7-9 June 2005.

B. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

13. During the World Food Summit (WFS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) put emphasis on food security and therefore sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD). In 1996, FAO established an *ad hoc* Interdepartmental Working Group on Desertification (IDWG) with the aim of facilitating the coordination of relevant FAO programmes and other mechanisms in the area of dryland development, desertification control and drought mitigation. Very recently the IDWG was transformed into the PAIA (Priority Areas for Interdisciplinary Action) on combating desertification, which comprises representatives of 15 technical services with direct links to sustainable development of drylands.

14. PAIA provides a forum for exchange of information, and liaises with other regional and subregional offices of FAO as well as the FAO representatives in dryland countries. PAIA promotes the compilation of data and information on matters of relevance to the UNCCD. PAIA has been instrumental in the adoption of memoranda of understanding on UNCCD matters between FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the GM (technical support for the implementation of a Field Information System), the Italian Ministry of Environment and a memorandum of cooperation with the UNCCD.

15. FAO has set up a website on desertification containing publications, photographs and documents of interest with regard to drylands management, many of them focusing on Africa, and has produced, through PAIA, three publications focusing on sustainable livelihoods, food security and gender in the drylands. Other electronically supported documentation has been, or will be, produced on the same subject.

16. At the regional and subregional levels, FAO has initiated and prepared the Land Degradation Assessment in the Drylands (LADA), used to develop tools and methods to assess and quantify the nature, extent and severity of land degradation. LADA builds up national, regional and global assessment capacities in order to be able to design and plan interventions to mitigate land degradation. It has set up a pilot study in Senegal and regional workshops; one, in Dakar, witnessed the participation of 17 African countries. Additionally, FAO is the technical executing agency of the project for regional development of the Highlands of Fouta Djallon. FAO provides technical support to the workshops and the coordination of activities. The full pledge project proposal, soon to be finalized, will amount to US\$ 10 million. Other regional and subregional initiatives include the Niger/Nigeria shared river basins initiative on the management of water resources; the “Acacia operation project: supporting food security, fight against poverty and soil degradation in the gums and resin producing countries” implemented in Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, Niger, Senegal and Sudan; and the “*Programme de renforcement institutionnel du réseau d’organisations paysannes dans le cadre de la lutte contre la désertification et la pauvreté dans les pays du Sénégal, Mali et Burkina Faso*”.

17. FAO has also supported the regional thematic programme networks (TPNs) in remote sensing and monitoring of desertification, soil conservation and fodder crops, and has participated in the TerrAfrica programme.

18. In Western Africa, FAO implemented the Italy-funded project “Forests and Food Security in Sahelian Africa”, contributing to mitigate the effects of desertification through knowledge transfer and recovering degraded land.

19. At the national level, FAO has been working closely with the national UNCCD focal points and the GM to assist in mobilizing resources for the implementation of the NAPs. Furthermore, FAO has been involved in activities specifically relating to desertification (controlling and reversing degradation of soils or vegetation) in: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia and Uganda.

20. Other FAO initiatives in Africa relating to the implementation of the UNCCD are the Special Programmes for Food Security (SPFS), the Soil Fertility Initiative (SFI) in sub-Saharan Africa, the Low Forest Cover Country Initiative, under the auspices of the FAO-Netherlands Partnership Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Forestry Outlook Study of Africa (FOSA) which analyses agricultural conversion and energy needs as factors driving deforestation.

21. FAO stresses the need in the future better to rationalize and integrate Convention activities in Africa at all levels by encouraging a dialogue between all Parties to avoid duplication and promote synergies, collecting and disseminating existing knowledge, best practices and lessons learned, implementing a reliable assessment of desertification and integrating NAPs within existing national strategies as well as integrating related sectoral action programmes into the NAPs. At the same time, FAO proposes to speed up activities at local level by starting pilot projects in the most affected areas of Africa, ensuring that the investment of NAPs is done through a rational plan giving priority to the most affected areas and accelerating the channelling of resources, both human and financial, into the implementation of priority actions.

22. On this basis, FAO will continue its activities with particular emphasis on food security within the framework of agricultural and rural development. FAO has multisectorial expertise and recognized experience in working with the drylands of Africa.

23. FAO believes that better integration can be achieved at all levels and remains determined to achieve the objectives of the Convention. FAO confirms its readiness to assist African Parties and the secretariat to achieve successful progress in the combat against desertification.

C. International Fund for Agricultural Development

24. The strategy of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is to empower poor rural peoples by improving their assets and giving them influence over important decision-making that shapes their future. As the GEF land degradation executing agency linked to the GM, IFAD has the opportunity to match land degradation to poverty reduction and development concerns.

25. The Executive Board approved the first grant of US\$ 1.25 million for the GM in 2004. For the second phase, IFAD will be submitting another proposal for a grant of US\$ 1.25 million for consideration by the Board in April 2005.

26. IFAD promotes the World Bank initiative TerrAfrica to set up a framework to implement sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. The aims will be to tackle the agricultural, environmental and socio-economic effects of land degradation through a coordinated effort with investment, research and strategy, dissemination and partnerships.

27. IFAD is carrying out the GEF project entitled “Supporting Capacity Building for the Elaboration of National Reports and Country Profiles by African Parties to the UNCCD” so in order to strengthen the ability of African country Parties to analyse the status of land degradation, to spot the obstacles to sustainable land management, and to bolster multi-stakeholder consultation. IFAD will contribute with the preparation of analytical case studies and the latest innovative approaches to sustainable land management in workshops planned for February 2005 in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Cameroon.

28. IFAD has assisted in policy planning of the NAPs in various country Parties, for example by assuming the role of *chef de file* for NAP formulation in Burkina Faso and Cape Verde.

29. In Senegal, IFAD has supported farmers with the following agro-forestry technologies: village woodlots, planting and protecting acacia albida, and construction of energy-conserving clay-cooking stoves. The use of zais and demi-lunes as water catchments has been successful in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger. IFAD has assisted the Mauritanian Government in oasis protection and environmentally sensitive development.

30. Additionally, IFAD has financed, through highly concessional loans to Governments, the implementation of several projects to combat desertification in western and central Africa, that is, the Niger Community Development and Peasant Innovation Project and the Nigeria Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme – Niger Delta (2002), the Community Investment Programme for Agricultural Fertility in Burkina Faso (2003), the Gambia Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project and the Burkina Faso Sustainable Rural Development Programme (2004).

31. IFAD is developing grant proposals for potential GEF financing for farmers combating land degradation and using sustainable methods to maintain productivity in Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania.

32. IFAD supported a workshop in March 2004 on innovations and participatory research in farming with emphasis on natural resource management and preventing land degradation. An action plan was developed for future collaboration and consultation.

33. In eastern and southern Africa, IFAD has collaborated with the GEF on two projects: the Community-Based Integrated Natural Resources Management Project in the Ethiopian Highlands (Amhara Region) GEF OP 15 (PDF-B) and the Mount Kenya East Pilot Project for Natural Resources Management (MKEPP), which involves the concerns and input of the UNCCD, CBD, GM and GEF.

34. IFAD has also assisted country Parties in northern Africa to implement the UNCCD. In Egypt, IFAD is currently financing the reclamation of desert to improve the irrigation infrastructure, agricultural research and finance targeted to land labourers. In Sudan, IFAD

has funded research into cash and forage-crop varieties that are resistant to drought, salinity and poor soil conditions. In Algeria, IFAD supports two rural development projects: one for the mountain zones in the north of the Wilaya of M'Sila to sustain increases in incomes for the poor rural populations through capacity building, sustainability and productivity of agriculture, and financial support for the most vulnerable; and another in the Traras and Sebaa Chioukh Mountains Wilaya of Tlemcen to promote sustainability of household incomes and natural resources through capacity building, sustained agricultural development and access to financial services.

35. Embedded within the IFAD Livestock and Development Project is GEF PDF-B Participatory Control of Desertification and Poverty Reduction in the Arid and Semi-Arid High Plateau Ecosystems of Eastern Morocco. IFAD added US\$ 2.37 million and in 2004 formed part of the Country Financing Partnership (CFP) where IFAD presented the GEF proposal for integration under the NAP framework. The proposal has been well received and is currently in pipeline 18, cleared by the GEF Secretariat in October 2004.

36. In Tunisia, IFAD is contributing to the NAP implementation by building synergies between the IFAD Agro-Pastoral Development and Local Initiatives Promotion Programme for the South East (PRODESUD). This supports income generation and diversification activities.

37. In Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, IFAD and the GM are providing US\$ 75,000 to support NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) in participatory management of natural resources, and to reinforce the International NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD) and the Network of Maghreb NGOs to Combat Desertification (ROM/LCD).

38. Information, knowledge and communication systems help African country Parties in information sharing and resource mobilization. The GM and IFAD will analyse IFAD projects to single out the land degradation components in IFAD loans and its grants portfolio between 2002 and 2004, following the UNCCD reporting criteria and methodologies.

D. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

39. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) undertook a research study on the interaction between global impoverishment and the environment in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) showing how poverty, environmental degradation (deforestation, desertification and soil degradation) and population growth are interlinked in the LDCs.

40. In the course of this research, UNCTAD ascertained, among other results, the relationship between poverty and increased populations, how environmental degradation can lead to economic deprivation, and how population increase can lead to accelerated environmental degradation and in turn accelerated poverty, becoming in the process a downward spiral.

41. UNCTAD stressed the role of diversification in avoiding this downward spiral. This could be done through diversifying production and changing the focus to non-agricultural sectors so as to benefit economic development and environmental sustainability.

42. UNCTAD, by itself or in cooperation with other agencies (such as International Trade Centre (ITC), International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO)) could provide technical support for environmentally-friendly export supply capacities, assess the results of international development programmes at the country level to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development, assist Governments to improve debt management by using the debt-conversion mechanism to channel funds into the environmental protection programmes, and prepare country-specific vulnerability profiles for borderline countries for their inclusion in and graduation from the list of LDCs.

E. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

43. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) measures to assist the implementation of the UNCCD are carried out with emphasis on the science and education fields of competence. In this regard, UNESCO promotes education at all levels and the dissemination of information on the rational use of natural resources based on sound scientific research as key elements to combat desertification.

44. In close collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat, UNESCO produced the education kits on combating desertification targeting primary schools of desertification-affected countries. The kit has been a success after being piloted in 18 desertification-affected countries. With the financial assistance of Italy, Monaco and Switzerland, the material has now been translated and produced in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The Chinese translation is under way, and UNESCO and the UNCCD are looking into production in other languages, including German, Hindi and Mongol.

45. Regarding higher education and science, two university chairs on desertification have been created in Jordan and Sudan, with more under consideration.

46. Through its “Man and the Biosphere” programme (MAB), UNESCO is working on the *in situ* conservation of drylands. In 2001, MAB launched the UNESCO-MAB/UNEP-GEF regional project “Building Scientific and Technical Capacity for Effective Management and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Dryland Biosphere Reserves in West Africa”.

47. Within the framework of the rehabilitation of degraded lands, including integrated water resources management, UNESCO is working on a new interregional project, “Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands (SUMAMAD)”, which will benefit north African and Asian countries. Preparatory project workshops have been organized in Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Tunisia. The aim of the project is to ensure the transfer of scientific expertise on the rehabilitation of degraded drylands in the two regions through south-south cooperation.

48. UNESCO has also launched a scientific flagship project entitled “Sustainable Integrated Management and Development of Arid and Semi-Arid Regions of Southern Africa (SIMDAS)”. The project focuses mainly on water but it also deals with poverty eradication

and the development of a knowledge society. SIMDAS will contribute to the United Nations World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and will enrich UNESCO contributions to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in the use of science and technology to address health, energy and environmental problems.

F. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

49. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has prepared and submitted to the GEF the project "Industrial Approach to Combat Desertification in Jamalac (Chad/Sudan)". This project, which will be implemented in cooperation with IFAD, is aiming to introduce pilot projects of jaspura plantations as part of environmental conservation to improve sustainable land management and to target research and pilot technologies demonstrating the industrial use of jastropha plants and their products to mitigate land degradation and improve socio-economic conditions, transboundary governance of the area and development of the community.

50. UNIDO has also developed a programme to rehabilitate and recover degraded land. This programme is based on maximizing the synergy between the various activities to combat different elements that impact on desertification, the creation of employment and an increase in agricultural productivity. The UNIDO programme is designed to promote "energy plantation" on degraded land through family and cooperative farms, to support the transfer and adaptation of appropriate technologies and to create the suitable institutional environment, technical capacities and financial mechanisms needed to enhance "bio-diesel" production.

51. The programme is being implemented as a regional project in west Africa (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Senegal) and the first assessment indicates positive potential as well as private sector interest in participating.

52. Additionally, a project to be implemented in Sudan has been designed to develop national legislative financial mechanisms promoting use of LPG and the transfer and adaptation of technological solutions which use LPG as their energy source. Another project has been formulated to combat desertification and deforestation in Rwanda through the promotion of innovative technologies for the extraction and purification of methane gas from Lake Kivu which will reduce the burden on forest fuel and decrease CO₂ emissions.

53. UNIDO also works on manufacturing conservation agriculture technologies, mainly water harvesting and zero tillage, bamboo and oil palm plantations and downstream oil. These technologies ensure that these activities exploit commercially and are self-sustaining. Through the Agricultural Machinery Industrial System, all income generation equipment, essential for the exploitation of the value chain, is supported.

G. United Nations University

54. The United Nations University (UNU) has undertaken collaborative research and a capacity-building programme on sustainable land management in drylands, with emphasis on international sharing of experience.

55. In collaboration with UNESCO and the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), as well as with other stakeholders, UNU has developed a research project in Egypt and Tunisia, amongst other Arab-speaking countries, on sustainable management of marginal drylands. The aim of the project is to identify the peoples' adaptation techniques and traditional knowledge in coping with dryland conditions. The project fosters community-led approaches, training, capacity building, interaction of landowners and farmers, and sustainable and dryland indigenous management practices.

56. At the same time, UNU has also involved African countries in a research project on traditional water management in dry areas. One of these studies was a "Comparison of Traditional and Contemporary Water Management Systems in Arid Regions of Tunisia".

57. Together with Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and with the support of the GEF, UNU is developing a global research and demonstration project on People, Land Management and Environmental Change (PLEC) to demonstrate that biodiversity and biophysical resources can be conserved in agricultural systems in a way that preserves farmers' livelihoods and leads to better interactions between them and scientists. The results of these projects are summarized in the two books: *African Biodiversity in Smallholder Farms of East Africa* and *Managing Agrodiversity the Traditional Way*. Technical support from UNU has ensured that the PLEC partners could make the necessary effort to carry out activities on sustainable land management to mitigate desertification and loss of biodiversity as well as to alleviate rural poverty..

58. The UNU dryland programme focuses on improving capacity building and the sharing of experience between developing countries. In order to achieve this, UNU has organized technical workshops for young specialists and professionals in Egypt and Tunisia, among other places.

59. Furthermore, UNU has signed an agreement with a Tunisian institution (*Institut des régions arides* (IRA)) and a Chinese institution (Cold and Arid Regions Environmental and Engineering Research Institute (CAREERI)) to organize a joint master's degree programme on integrated land management in drylands, to take place between 2004 and 2006.

60. The UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa will organize a pilot multidisciplinary course in Ghana, "Land degradation and management in a rural livelihoods context". The participants from west Africa will develop capacities to reflect more critically on land degradation and rural livelihood issues.

61. A working paper on land degradation (Guidelines for Field Assessment) was made available at the UNU website for training purposes. The UNU has provided partial or full fellowships to two researchers and one policy maker.

62. UNU has also organized a training workshop on local knowledge-based rehabilitation of ecosystems. In this regard, UNU will continue to support research, training and dissemination on the integrated management of water, soil and biodiversity in drylands for enhancing the well-being of people in the drylands of Africa.

H. World Food Programme

63. In those countries where environmental degradation has a major impact on the food security of the hungry poor, the priority of the World Food Programme (WFP) has been activities to combat desertification. The strategic plan (2004-2007) is to protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks by creating assets, by disaster mitigation and by enabling more sustainable livelihoods. The WFP is concerned with man-made disasters and has provided guidelines for staff working in situations of natural disasters and refugee crises. In 2003, the WFP spent US\$ 310 million on programmes to increase food security and livelihoods whilst managing their resource base. The activities undertaken by WFP of relevance to the UNCCD involve the participation of local communities and aim to prevent degradation and to conserve natural resources while raising public awareness on environmental issues.

64. In Kenya, WFP is implementing jointly with the Government of Kenya the “Fund for disaster preparedness activities”. While the first phase of the programme was devoted to the arid and semi-arid areas recovering from drought through food-for-work activities, in 2003 166 community projects were carried out in the most food-insecure districts. Most of the projects aimed to increase access to water and food production and to conservation of acacia trees.

65. In Madagascar, WFP provided assistance to the Government to help people living in the areas frequently affected by cyclones and drought to improve and sustain their livelihoods through reforestation, sand dune fixation, protection against water erosion and improved wood cooking ranges (Food-for-Training activities).

66. In Mali, the WFP food-for work programme on rural development supports agriculture, the creation of rural infrastructures and vocational training, with the aim of improving food security in the vulnerable communities, preventing soil erosion, promoting disaster mitigation and developing food self-sufficiency.

67. In Mauritania, WFP undertook rural development activities including dyke/dam construction, reforestation (Acacia Senegal in drought affected areas, development of the Nouakchott “Greenbelt”, including the construction of a national training centre for desertification and environmental protection in arid zones), well digging and vegetable garden planting.

68. WFP also carried out programmes on land conservation and water management in other sub-Saharan countries such as Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

69. In Egypt, through its Country Programme activities “Development of Sinai” and “Development of Red Sea Governorate”, WFP also provided assistance to marginalized communities living in the desert areas of these regions.

I. World Bank

70. In the report made available, the World Bank indicated that it provided US\$ 700,000 for preparation of the national reports by affected African country Parties to the UNCCD to be submitted to the third session of the CRIC. The funds will help African countries to prepare national implementation progress reports, to crystallize capacity building needs, to raise awareness and will assist in the implementation of planning and mainstreaming mechanisms of land degradation issues. The funds also aimed to bring together all national and regional stakeholders to promote discussion and dissemination of best practices as well as to strengthen the national coordinating body (NCB) to implement the UNCCD.

71. A programme-level coordination mechanism is needed to bring together regional groups and activities to share information through workshops, which in turn could produce reports on the lessons learned which would be widely distributed.

III. OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. African Union

72. The African Union (then Organization of African Unity) granted a total contribution of US\$ 840,000 to the UNCCD secretariat over the period 1998-2001. This contribution was provided to undertake land degradation projects in some African country Parties.

73. In line with the recommendations of COP 6, decisions were made to develop the Plan of Action for capacity development for sustainable livelihoods in arid lands of Africa. The Plan identifies core areas of intervention such as: public and policy level sensitization, mainstreaming governance, gender, HIV/AIDS, drylands management rights, capacity building, policy and technology issues, regional cooperation, drylands economics and livelihood systems, and the involvement of CSOs, CBOs and NGOs in drylands management activities.

74. The Assembly of the African Union at its summit on Agriculture and Water, held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, adopted the “Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa”. The Declaration highlights the need for cooperation in harnessing the fresh water catchments of Africa, as an important prerequisite for social and environmental development. In that regard, the African Union Commission will work on the following aspects of the declaration: joint management of shared waters for agricultural development, environmental protection, water supply and sanitation.

75. Following the “Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan” (CAADP) and the Environment Action Plan of NEPAD, the Assembly of the African Union has adopted further measures through the Sirte declaration on food security, early warning systems, agricultural finance at macro and micro levels, marketing and rural infrastructure development.

B. Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands

76. The Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), in cooperation with Remote Sensing in the Arab World, established the Arab Desertification Monitoring and Assessment Network (ADMANET).

77. Furthermore, ACSAD has carried out different projects in collaboration with the main financial institutions aiming to combat desertification in the African Arab countries among others. In this regard, with the support of IFAD, ACSAD developed a project on the utilization of brackish and saline water in north Africa (Algeria and Tunisia); in cooperation with the German Earth Science Institute (BGR), it implemented a project on the vulnerability of soil and water pollution in 16 Arab countries. ACSAD also organized several training programmes for experts, one, in collaboration with the Arab Development Bank in Africa (BADIA), for the African English-speaking countries on the improvement of irrigation through implementation of technology and knowledge, and another for engineers on crop management in arid and semi-arid zones.

78. In the future, ACSAD is planning to support the African TPN 4 to monitor and assess the information concerning desertification in African Arab states. Furthermore, it will undertake a project to manage, protect and use in a sustainable manner the groundwater and soil resources in the countries of Morocco and Tunisia, and to develop guidelines for resource sustainability and disseminate knowledge to specialists and communities through workshops and training courses. ACSAD is also working to increase communication and liaison between the north and south Mediterranean coasts as concerns soil degradation and land management through its MED coastal project.

79. In Tunisia, ACSAD is working to improve technical expertise and build capacity as concerns the management, protection and sustainability of groundwater and soil in Arab countries. This was part of Phase 1 (2002-2003); examples of activities included: mathematical models for nitrate transfer, preparation of vulnerability maps, and establishing a soil and water database. Phase 2 (2004-2006) involved Morocco and integrated a Decision Support System for soil and water resources management which made use of a database.

C. Arab Organization for Agricultural Development

80. The Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) promotes and facilitates implementation of the UNCCD programmes relevant to the rehabilitation of degraded lands in the Arab countries. From 1996 to 2002, AOAD undertook a series of studies and research on topics such as water harvesting techniques, surface irrigation and drainage, integrating communities into forest protection and rehabilitation of land, developing rules and regulations for Arab water resources, the role of parks and reserves in biodiversity conservation and strengthening collaborative research in the sustainable development of sandy soils.

81. Between 1995 and 1997, AOAD carried out training on land management development, forest management, combating forest fires, alfa grass management, environmental protection, sand dune stabilization and geographical information systems (GIS) and remote sensing in range studies.

82. AOAD organized seminars and workshops on the following: an international conference on sustainable agriculture, coordination and development of policies and regulations concerning the protection and development of range and forest resources, strengthening the role of local NGOs in range and forest protection, development of water resources management, integration of environmental principles into agricultural education, GIS and remote sensing in desertification assessment, and environmental assessment of land pollution.

83. The AOAD also organized studies, research and training with the aim of promoting the expansion of economic and commercial opportunities in the drylands by linking the private sector to the identification of equal and fair economic opportunities.

84. The AOAD supports the training programmes in negotiation, multi-sectoral programme planning, and financial and technical resource mobilization. Research was carried out into how environmental principles can be integrated into agricultural education. The training was to increase “extension” in the proper use of water resources. A workshop was held on modern forest technologies.

85. AOAD has collected and disseminated success stories and best practices which focus on poverty eradication.

86. AOAD has developed activities taking into account the aims and objectives of the UNCCD in its strategies to support the efforts of affected country Parties. In this regard AOAD has supported studies into monitoring, application of GIS and protection of the environment, has organized a workshop on indicators for monitoring desertification and has provided technical assistance for the preparation of NAPs and for supporting changes of participants to attend UNCCD related meetings at all levels.

D. Global Environment Facility

87. In October 2002, the second Assembly of the GEF in Beijing, China agreed that land degradation (desertification and deforestation) should become a primary thematic area for GEF support, and therefore a financial mechanism of the UNCCD. The new operational program 15 (OP 15) “Sustainable Land Management” describes the strategic guidance for GEF supported initiatives, which have to monitor the impact on the ecosystem health and sustainable livelihoods based on agricultural and forest activities.

88. The need of the countries concerned to accelerate the development of activities to address their concerns about land degradation and to adopt integrated approaches at national level, the difficulties for many countries in fulfilling their obligations under the UNCCD and their lack of capacity to adopt sustainable land management approaches in their natural resources management has made it necessary to create an enabling environment that encourages cross-sectoral dialogue among resource users. In order to alleviate these concerns it was important to focus on: accelerated project implementation, integrated sustainable land management, capacity building, fund-raising, mobilization of resources and an enabling environment of governmental policies and legislature.

89. Since the approval of OP 15 in May 2003, 16 full projects (10 of them focusing on removing barriers to sustainable land management in Africa) from 17 countries in the world, with a total cost of US\$ 639.66 million and a GEF contribution of US\$ 105.35 million, have so far been admitted into the pipeline of projects to be implemented. In addition, two full projects on improving sustainable management and capacity building, including finalization of NAPs, have been admitted to the pipeline. Furthermore, nine medium-sized projects (PDF-A), with a total cost of US\$ 21 million and a GEF contribution of US\$ 9 million, will all be applied in Africa.

90. The GEF addresses land degradation as a cross-cutting issue in the other GEF focal areas. This is important in the context of the increasing importance of demonstrating the synergies between the objectives of the other conventions such as biodiversity, climate change and persistent organic pollutants.

91. The GEF's Small Grants Programme (SGP) managed by UNDP was recently amended to include the focal area of land degradation.

92. Even before the decision to make land degradation a focal area, the GEF informed on assistance provided to African countries in meeting the biodiversity conservation and climate change objectives through dryland management projects. Since the GEF is the financial mechanism for the CBD, GEF projects emphasized the prevention and control of land degradation by developing sustainable use methods that conserved terrestrial biodiversity. Since the GEF also served as the financial mechanism for the UNFCCC, some dryland projects were designed primarily to address climate change related issues.

93. The GEF is also a member of the Facilitation Committee of the GM. In its new role as financial mechanism for the UNCCD, the GEF will collaborate with the GM. Since GEF resources are catalytic only to support incremental costs of global environmental benefits of country-driven environmental programmes, it is expected that the GM will help the countries to identify and mobilize co-financing for their activities.

94. In the future, the GEF considers the country partnerships at the national level to be the best way to achieve results in sustainable land management. This is because of the length of time it takes to implement the project and the commitment of resources required for such a long period. It also allows less competition between countries over financial resources. According to the GEF, the projects on land management in Africa will show a strong link to the NAPs, subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and NEPAD Action Plan. The GEF initiative will provide opportunity for capacity building in a more holistic way by integrating the various capacity building tools supported by the GEF focal areas.

E. International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas

95. In collaboration with the GM, ICARDA has continued to implement the regional programme that involves Algeria, Egypt, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. In this regard, ICARDA established a Regional Facilitation Unit to facilitate implementation of the regional programme.

96. ICARDA started its activities through the formulation of an “Inventory and Gap Analysis of Activities for Sustainable Development of the Drylands in West Asia and Northern Africa” which was discussed at a workshop in October 2004. These activities were funded by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Swiss Agency for Development Aid (SDC) through the GM.

F. Islamic Development Bank

97. The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is reviewing a project proposal entitled “Dates for the Sahel: Supporting Sahelian countries in combating poverty through date palm cultivation and youth employment” submitted by the UNCCD secretariat on behalf of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal). The project aims at poverty reduction and food security in these countries through improving natural resource management and land use and generating youth employment.

98. IDB is discussing with ICRISAT and FAO their further implication in the implementation of the project. Requests for assistance have been received by the Bank from the member countries concerned.

G. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

99. The Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands approved during the eighth session of its COP a series of resolutions relating to joint efforts to combat land degradation and drought. Furthermore, COP 8 also called for the development of partnerships and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other institutions. Moreover, the Ramsar Secretariat has added to its list of Ramsar sites several significant sites in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid areas in Algeria, Morocco, Mali and Niger. In this regard, there were discussions regarding Ramsar playing a more active role in the reactivation of TPN 1 under UNCCD.

100. The Ramsar Convention, with the sponsorship of the Evian project of the Danone Group (France), the Dutch Government and the Swiss Grant Fund for Africa, has organized several workshops (for example, at Naivasha in Kenya) to develop training modules for wetlands managers in Africa. Furthermore, training was offered to several francophone African countries in 2004 on wetlands inventory methodologies. Pre-accession workshops in Ethiopia, Rwanda, the Seychelles and other countries also provided an opportunity for training on wetlands management and its correlations with land degradation. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) is developing a series of indicators to monitor the state of the world’s wetlands, these indicators taking into consideration the quality of soils around the wetlands.

H. The Sahara and the Sahel Observatory

101. The Sahara and the Sahel Observatory (OSS) has directed its efforts to the development of methodologies and tools intended for the monitoring and evaluation of the NAPs and the management of shared water resources. This mechanism aims to monitor and evaluate progress made with the NAPs and SRAPs, to improve the synergy of the management of shared water resources, and to advance the management of environmental information better to aid decision making.

102. The OSS methodology used to evaluate and monitor the environment is called a 'dashboard'. The dashboard consists of a range of indicators which evolve and allow the actors at the national level to evaluate change. This 'dashboard' has been implemented in Niger and Tunisia.

103. OSS has disseminated and shared its conceptual document on synergy between the three Rio conventions. This has allowed the national focal points to gather information on how best to launch a common minimum programme that integrates the information from producer, provider and user institutions relating to the three Rio conventions.

104. OSS has supported the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) in the installation of an early warning system on drought and desertification. They developed national case studies, which give an overview of drought in these regions. OSS is determined to improve cooperation and networking in the subregions of Africa. The supplanting of 'risk management' for early warning systems at this level has been a step forward and has led to the formation of a subregional mechanism. OSS and the UMA are hoping in time to extend its range to cover such problems as bush fires and/or soil erosion.

105. OSS has strengthened cooperation between some African countries and several bilateral and multilateral agencies with regard to monitoring and evaluation. This cooperation has been carried out through the development of particular projects in most of the Maghreb and west African countries with the support of different partners including Italy and the European Commission.

106. OSS has participated actively in the activities of the NCBs through incentive actions. This has allowed formal integration of a monitoring and evaluation component within their NAPs; worth mentioning in this regard is the example of such countries as Algeria, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.

107. OSS has put its efforts into facilitating synergy and consistency between the NAPs and the Long Term Ecological Monitoring Observatories Network (ROSELT/OSS). For example, in Niger ROSELT has a national network with a link to the monitoring and evaluation of the NAP. This has led to capitalizing approaches, identifying impact indicators, highlighting the contributors of projects and reinforcing the exchanges between projects in the national system of monitoring and evaluation in the NAP.

108. In the case of capacity building, OSS has put its efforts into the training of the trainers, as well as a firm establishment of experience at local and national levels. In this regard, OSS, working with the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), has created a virtual training platform on the Internet to establish a network of trainers, enhance capacity and

maintain quality of training. OSS has elicited cooperation interest from the Francophone Institute of Energy and the Environment (IEPF) and the GEF in helping with training sessions on project formulation and the integration of monitoring and evaluation components.

109. The objectives of ROSELT/OSS are to enhance knowledge about the causes and consequences of desertification, to monitor the long-term evolution of ecological systems and resources, to understand the functioning of these systems and how this interacts with the human populations, and to look for the links between climate and the human causes of land degradation. In addition to the supply of data, ROSELT/OSS contributes land cover maps of features and locations of plant formations. This historical data helps the teams contribute to the identification of the relevant indicators. Countries such as Mali and Niger have launched their national ROSELT to broaden their range of monitoring and evaluation sites. OSS has initiated a desertification monitoring pilot scheme combining satellite images with field data (Morocco and Tunisia).

110. Within the context of the Desertification Information System for the Mediterranean (DISMED) project, OSS has contributed towards the methodology for developing charts of desertification sensitivity around the shores of the Mediterranean.

111. In conjunction with the launching of TPN 4 in Africa, OSS, with GTZ support, assisted in the installation of a cartographic server and the virtual library on the local server of the Organization for African Cartography and Remote Sensing (OACRS). The OSS also contributed to the design of the document “Ensuring sustainability of the TPN 4 through the establishment of a mutually profitable partnership”.

112. The management of non-renewable water resources has been addressed by OSS within an integrated approach to combat desertification. OSS promotes the concept of ‘basin awareness’ and facilitates the use of appropriate tools in the sustainable management of shared aquifers. This involves the enhancement and sharing of knowledge on water resources and how to sustain them. OSS has been requested by the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to contribute to an ongoing programme of national studies, and cooperation has been developed between UNESCO and OSS on the Illumenden basin shared by Mali, Niger and Nigeria.

113. In spite of the successes mentioned above, there are still many obstacles to be overcome in the monitoring and evaluation programme in order to bring greater accountability to the NAPs. The obstacles are the following: to change institutions’ perception of monitoring and evaluation as a form of constraint or sanction, to bring the practice of monitoring and evaluation to greater national prominence, to free up compartmentalization and information flow, to emphasize a more global approach in creating more synergies, and finally to increase the number of trainers in monitoring and evaluation in the field.

I. The World Conservation Union

114. The World Conservation Union's (IUCN) support of the UNCCD is based on an overarching global framework comprising three resolutions adopted at the second IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC 2) held in Amman, Jordan. This support involves four thematic priorities to guide the activities, which are: promoting understanding and operating the principles of the ecosystem approach, promoting understanding and application of cost-effective ecosystem restoration, development and testing of indicators of ecosystem status and the development and communication of ecosystem management tools.

115. The establishment of the IUCN drylands specialists task force and the Arid Lands Initiative stimulated the realization of cross-regional, subregional and national activities to improve dryland management and sustainable use of its biodiversity.

116. It was because of an impasse in the implementation of action plans, especially in West Africa, that the IUCN decided to reintroduce a new process to implement action programmes. In this regard, the IUCN supported the implementation of the UNCCD in Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania with the assistance of the GTZ, UNDP, Dutch and French development cooperation and representatives of civil society. The IUCN Regional Office for West Africa resumed dialogues between the main actors in the implementation of the Convention so as to present the UNCCD as a more holistic organization in terms of conserving natural resources and not just working with degraded land.

117. The IUCN, in collaboration with the GTZ, organized in seven West African countries the project REDUSO (*Renforcement de la durabilité sociale des actions de lutte contre la désertification*) with the aim of exchanging information on the consideration of social parameters in the implementation of activities to combat desertification. IUCN has also made available several manuals containing tools aiming better to involve grass-roots communities in desertification control activities.

118. The IUCN also organized, at the margins of COP 6, the Global Biodiversity Forum to address the issue of "Ecosystem Approach to Drylands Management: Integrating Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Security". At the Forum, participants discussed aspects of environmental management in drylands from a community perspective, the management of water resources in drylands and the mobilization of financial resources to combat desertification.

119. The IUCN developed, with the assistance of the Netherlands, a transboundary project to promote the application of the ecosystem approach to complement activities between Niger and Nigeria. Similar projects have been carried out between South Africa and Zimbabwe, and between Mozambique and Zambia.

120. At the fifth World Parks Congress (WPC) in Durban, South Africa in 2003, the IUCN, together with the UNCCD, sought to integrate some recommendations concerning the participation of local communities in the management of dryland natural resources. The initiatives aimed to build capacity, identify new sources of funding and promote the use of local knowledge and scientific management.

121. The IUCN is developing guidelines on GEF OP 15 in order to assist countries to develop and implement projects under the programme. Substantial support has been provided to governmental agencies for formulating projects for submission under OP 15.

122. A joint publication has been issued with the UNCCD secretariat entitled *Extractive Industries in Arid and Semi-Arid Zones: Planning and Management* which gives details of the problems associated with extractive industries in arid and semi-arid lands and suggestions as to how these activities could be managed in order to promote the maintenance of the ecosystems where they are taking place.

123. IUCN developed a cooperative agreement with ICRISAT to work on the issue of agricultural development in the drylands. As a result of this, the organizations formulated a proposal entitled "Desertification, Drought, Poverty and Agriculture" which was submitted to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

124. This third African reporting process has proved to be very fruitful in terms of both the quantity and the quality of reports received from organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system as well as from other IGOs. In this regard, the CRIC and the COP may wish to stress the importance for affected country Parties as well as for the bilateral and multilateral partners to exploit fully the information contained in these reports.

125. Furthermore, the CRIC and the COP may also consider continuing to encourage those organizations actively involved in the implementation of the UNCCD worldwide to report to the Parties on their activities in support of the implementation of the Convention and advise, as appropriate, on the content and format of such reports.

126. As per past experience and in conformity with the participatory approach promoted by the Convention, NGOs were encouraged to channel their reports through their national focal points, directly into their respective national reports. In the same way, national focal points were requested to make sure that information provided by NGOs was duly taken into consideration during the national reporting process. This procedure has ensured the involvement of NGOs in the reporting process, confirmed through the participation of their representatives in the national validation meetings. The CRIC and the COP may wish to stress the necessity for Governments to continue considering and duly including in their policy formulation processes the information provided by NGOs on their activities in support of the implementation of the Convention.

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