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**COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION**  
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**Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda**  
**Review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements**  
**Report on enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention**

**Report on enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention**

**Note by the secretariat\***

*Summary*

In accordance with decision 4/COP.7, this document is based on suggestions received from Parties on policy options and practical measures to regularly monitor progress in the strategic areas of implementation with a view to outlining intermediary targets in a long-term perspective, and on recent information on measures taken by affected country Parties in some strategic areas for action identified by the Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

Seven years after the adoption of the Declaration, it is recommended that the Parties engage fully in developing an agreed methodology on desertification monitoring and assessment, to enable affected countries to honour their obligations under the Convention. At COP 8, Parties may wish to decide on the preparation of a harmonized approach and methodology to assess the implementation of activities in the strategic areas for action. Parties are also invited to decide on the launching of consultative processes aimed at identifying intermediary and quantifiable targets to measure progress achieved by affected country Parties in the context of their efforts to enhance implementation of the Convention.

Document ICCD/CRIC(6)/6/Add.1 contains inputs from the Global Mechanism prepared in response to decision 4/COP.7 in collaboration with members of its Facilitation Committee.

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\* The submission of this document was delayed due to the short time available between the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties.

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## I. Overview of the Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the Convention

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 8/COP.4, adopted the “Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the Convention”, also known as the Bonn Declaration. The Bonn Declaration identified specific measures and set a time frame of 10 years (2001–2010). Affected country Parties were encouraged to concentrate their efforts on the strategic areas for action, which include:

- (a) Sustainable land-use management, including water, soil and vegetation 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.

## II. Progress on completion of national action programmes

2. As at 31 May 2007, 96 affected countries had adopted national action programmes. The situation by region is shown in table 1.

**Table 1. Status of national action programmes as at 31 May 2007**

<b>AFRICA</b>		
<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of ratification /accession to the UNCCD</b>	<b>Date of completion/ adoption of the national action programme</b>
Algeria	22 May 1996	December 2003
Benin	27 August 1996	November 1999
Botswana	11 September 1996	October 2006
Burkina Faso	26 January 1996	July 1999
Burundi	6 January 1997	September 2005
Cameroon	29 May 1997	October 2006
Cape Verde	8 May 1995	March 1998
Chad	27 September 1996	April 2000
Congo	12 July 1999	March 2006

<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of ratification /accession to the UNCCD</b>	<b>Date of completion/ adoption of the national action programme</b>
Democratic Republic of the Congo	12 September 1997	May 2006
Djibouti	12 June 1997	June 2001
Egypt	7 July 1995	June 2005
Equatorial Guinea	26 June 1997	November 2005
Eritrea	14 August 1996	September 2001
Ethiopia	27 June 1997	November 1998
Gambia	11 June 1996	September 2000
Ghana	27 December 1996	February 2002
Guinea	23 June 1997	May 2006
Guinea-Bissau	27 October 1995	December 2006
Kenya	24 June 1997	February 2002
Lesotho	12 September 1995	January 1999
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	22 July 1996	September 2005
Madagascar	25 June 1997	November 2001
Malawi	13 June 1996	March 2001
Mali	31 October 1995	May 1998
Mauritania	7 August 1996	July 2002
Morocco	12 November 1996	June 2001
Mozambique	13 March 1997	May 2002
Namibia	16 May 1997	July 1994
Niger	19 January 1996	September 2000
Nigeria	8 July 1997	August 2000
Senegal	26 July 1995	August 1998
South Africa	30 September 1997	November 2004
Sudan	24 November 1995	April 2000
Swaziland	7 October 1996	July 2000
Togo	4 October 1995	December 2001
Tunisia	11 October 1995	June 1998
Uganda	25 June 1997	October 1999
United Republic of Tanzania	19 June 1997	August 1999
Zambia	19 September 1996	February 2002
Zimbabwe	23 September 1997	February 1998

### ASIA

<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of ratification /accession to the UNCCD</b>	<b>Date of completion/ adoption of the national action programme</b>
China	18 February 1997	May 1996
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	29 December 2003	June 2006

<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of ratification /accession to the UNCCD</b>	<b>Date of completion/ adoption of the national action programme</b>
India	17 December 1996	September 2001
Indonesia	31 August 1998	November 2002
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	29 April 1997	April 2002
Kazakhstan	9 July 1997	January 2005
Kyrgyzstan	19 September 1997	8 December 2000
Lebanon	16 May 1996	June 2003
Lao People's Democratic Republic	20 September 1996	September 1999
Mongolia	3 September 1996	July 1996
Myanmar	2 January 1997	October 2004
Nepal	15 October 1996	November 2002
Niue	14 August 1998	December 2004
Oman	23 July 1996	December 2005
Pakistan	24 February 1997	September 2000
Palau	15 June 1999	January 2005
Philippines	10 February 2000	August 2004
Saudi Arabia	25 June 1997	7 March 2005
Sri Lanka	9 December 1998	November 2002
Syrian Arab Republic	10 June 1997	May 2002
Tajikistan	16 July 1997	30 December 2001
Thailand	7 March 2001	March 2004
Turkmenistan	18 September 1996	August 1997
Tuvalu	14 September 1998	July 2006
United Arab Emirates	21 October 1998	December 2003
Uzbekistan	31 October 1995	August 1999
Viet Nam	25 August 1998	October 2002
Yemen	14 January 1997	November 2000

### LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of ratification /accession to the UNCCD</b>	<b>Date of completion/ adoption of the national action programme</b>
Argentina	6 January 1997	November 1996
Bolivia	1 August 1996	November 1996
Brazil	25 June 1997	August 2004
Chile	11 November 1997	17 July 1997
Colombia	8 June 1999	23 February 2005
Costa Rica	5 January 1998	May 2004
Cuba	13 March 1997	November 2000

<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of ratification /accession to the UNCCD</b>	<b>Date of completion/ adoption of the national action programme</b>
Ecuador	6 September 1995	November 2003
El Salvador	6 September 1995	2003
Grenada	28 May 1997	May 2006
Guatemala	10 September 1998	15 November 2001
Guyana	26 June 1997	May 2006
Honduras	25 June 1997	25 July 2005
Mexico	3 April 1995	1997
Nicaragua	17 February 1998	30 November 2001
Panama	4 April 1996	January 2005
Paraguay	15 January 1997	7 November 2003
Peru	9 November 1995	July 2001
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	29 June 1998	August 2004

### EUROPE

<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of ratification /accession to the UNCCD</b>	<b>Date of completion/ adoption (*) of the national action programme</b>
Armenia	2 July 1997	March 2002
Georgia	23 July 1999	2 April 2003*
Greece	5 May 1997	29 July 2001
Italy	23 June 1997	15 February 2000
Moldova	10 March 1999	13 April 2000
Portugal	1 April 1996	1999
Romania	19 August 1998	4 December 2000
Turkey	31 March 1998	May 2006

### III. Progress in the implementation of activities in four strategic areas for action identified by the Bonn Declaration

3. This analysis relates to recent information provided by affected countries in their national reports. Taking into account previous reports submitted to sessions of the COP and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), the following four strategic areas for action are considered in the present report:

- (a) Sustainable land-use management, including water, soil and vegetation in affected areas;
- (b) Development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems;
- (c) Development of new and renewable energy sources;

(d) Development of early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting.

4. The Parties reported on the main achievements, the constraints identified and the main trends observed in the regions concerned.

#### **A. Sustainable land-use management, including water, soil and vegetation in affected areas**

5. One notable development that has followed the inclusion by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) of land degradation as one of its focal areas is the increased number of Parties that have adjusted their strategies along the lines of sustainable land management (SLM) programmes. Most countries report that they have developed project proposals within the ambit of SLM. Most of the interventions are directed towards addressing unsustainable agricultural practices, overgrazing and rangeland degradation, and deforestation.

6. The components of the interventions are wide-ranging, covering improvement of agricultural production in marginalized agricultural areas, soil conservation through the application of practices to prevent soil erosion, water conservation through the efficient use of irrigation and the widespread application of rainwater harvesting, forest rehabilitation, and plantation of shelterbelts for protection from dust- and sandstorms. One of the most important positive changes noted in some countries is the greater participation by civil society stakeholders and community-based organizations in the land reform policy.

7. Some country Parties mention the adoption of new legislative measures for the development of best practices in agriculture, the provision of irrigation subsidies to farmers, improvement of water management and irrigation systems, and the establishment of a programme for the use of rehabilitated lands which aims at stimulating competitive agricultural production and soil conservation. It is noted that economic and financial instruments are used to stimulate rational management of natural resources.

8. Other Parties report efforts to capture rainwater for domestic use, for irrigation, and in some cases for fish farming.

9. The conclusions drawn from the reports point to the fact that integrated water basin management constitutes a common cross-cutting issue, which must be taken into account in order to promote the sustainable use and protection of natural resources.

#### **B. Development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems**

10. An analysis of national reports submitted recently reveals that affected country Parties are fully aware of the magnitude of land degradation problems, especially in agricultural and grazing areas. As this issue is at the core of poverty alleviation in marginalized rural areas, many Parties have initiated measures aimed at responding to this concern.

11. It is also noted that some countries have developed reforms leading to more market-oriented economies. The reforms adopted vary from major structural policy changes in agriculture, land tenure and promotion of agricultural trade to the design of specific project initiatives that address agricultural and ranching production systems.

12. The initiatives mentioned in the reports aim at promoting sustainable use and management of rangelands, including the promotion of secure livelihoods in the pastoral livestock sector, support through research programmes on effective stockbreeding of pasture animals, and the balanced offering of incentives and disincentives aimed at reducing the number of herders in pasturelands.

13. The land-tenure system has been identified as a critical issue in the entire strategy of combating desertification in agricultural areas, as it recognizes land ownership by local communities.

14. Several reports mention that pursuing land-tenure reforms would greatly improve sustainable agricultural production systems in these areas.

15. Some countries mention difficulties and constraints relating to the fact that in the market economy they can no longer use the old crop rotation system, or implement conservation tillage practices, strip cropping, soil nutrient management or other soil conservation measures that would prevent further land degradation.

16. Several indicate that agricultural and ranching production systems are increasingly oriented towards trade in products with market advantages. In this regard, some countries are also trying to develop horticulture and agroforestry, and others are experimenting with or improving the productivity and quality of forestry products.

17. The main challenges facing the predominant farming and ranching production systems in most of the affected countries are the need to upgrade and modernize small-scale production structures, security of land tenure, integrated management of natural resources, and priority for food-security activities.

18. In some cases decentralization policies have led to a transfer of competencies to local natural resource management bodies. Efforts have concentrated on creating an enabling environment and on adopting global integrated approaches to the management of natural resources that take account of soil conservation prerequisites.

### **C. Development of new and renewable energy sources**

19. Few countries report on desertification control initiatives as they relate to the development of new and renewable energy sources. Although some countries have identified new and renewable energy sources as a key component in their development thrusts, a direct relationship between national action programmes (NAPs) and energy development has not been explicitly established as yet. Sustainable management of energy resources is also considered as a high priority area in the context of subregional and regional platforms of cooperation

20. Some Parties report efforts to link up land degradation initiatives and the promotion of alternative sources of energy. For instance, agroforestry and forestry plantations using jathropa as the main crop are being expanded in some countries with the end goal of developing biofuel.

21. Other Parties report measures taken to link their efforts in this field to measures relating to the Kyoto Protocol's clean development mechanism involving support for reforestation (planting of fast-growing tree species) and agroforestry initiatives.

#### **D. Development of early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting**

22. Some reports fail to provide sufficient information on this strategic action area. Most of the information made available deals with legislative action taken and the development of specific projects in sectoral areas relating to combating desertification.

23. Some reports contain information on the development of early warning systems for drought forecasting. Affected countries treat this as a priority in their efforts to mitigate the effects of drought, noting that an operational early warning system provides them with an opportunity to shift drought mitigation strategies from crisis management to risk management.

24. Some reports mention the various constraints (socio-economic, legal, institutional, financial, human, logistical and even political) that greatly reduce the effectiveness of measures to rehabilitate degraded land and to mitigate the effects of drought.

25. The implementation of early warning systems has also been a priority for countries that have become increasingly prone in recent years to severe hurricanes, drought and forest fires. Several countries have updated and expanded their systems for registering climatic and cartographic data. This has contributed to better forecasting and communication and hence to the mitigation of the effects of drought.

26. Several countries mention for the first time forestation and reforestation activities as the best ways to rehabilitate degraded land. A small number also describe actions to mitigate and prevent the effects of soil degradation. Similarly, and in continuation of the work reported in previous reports, several countries mention the creation, expansion and improved management of protected areas to encourage the rehabilitation of degraded land.

27. Some initial progress has been made both in the rehabilitation of degraded land and in the establishment of early warning systems to mitigate the effects of drought. The establishment of regional networks with the assistance of the UNCCD regional coordination units has helped to promote exchanges of information on the management of natural resources, with the aim of increasing capacities and developing effective early warning systems. Many countries mention the need for substantial increases in capacity in this area and for easier access to existing scientific information.

28. The most commonly cited and most important initiatives referred to in the reports include reforestation, rehabilitation of degraded lands, soil conservation and protection of lowlands, establishment of shelterbelts in wind-prone areas, agroforestry, improvement of grazing lands, and disaster management, all with the objective of sustainable management of natural resources. In response to the scarcity of water resources, several countries have drawn up strategies for the preservation of underground water, which is subject to heavy demand as a result of rapid urbanization and the expansion of farming. Several country Parties have used water harvesting techniques, constructed infiltration wells and used mulching to retain water in farmed areas.

## **E. Remarks and conclusions**

29. Despite the fact that the reports submitted do not always provide much detail regarding activities implemented in the remaining four strategic areas of action identified by the Bonn Declaration, countries have clearly stated that combating desertification, particularly in relation to the objective of reducing poverty, is regarded as a priority in the affected developing countries.

30. Reports submitted to previous sessions of the COP show that in most affected developing countries activities are currently being implemented in a number of strategic areas for action, with support from some United Nations specialized agencies and active involvement of leading intergovernmental, non-governmental and other international organizations.

31. In most countries, given the inadequacy of the systems for measuring the impact of desertification control programmes, continued support is needed for the development of information systems and systems for monitoring and assessment of desertification control projects. Countries aim to comply with the highest environmental monitoring standards.

32. In general terms, improvements at the institutional level have facilitated progress in natural resource management towards a more decentralized approach with the involvement of local communities. Lessons drawn from these experiences demonstrate that the management of natural resources by local communities is an essential precondition for any progress towards sustainable development.

## **IV. Suggestions for policy options and practical measures to monitor, on a regular basis, progress in the strategic areas for action with a view to outlining intermediary targets in a long-term perspective**

### **A. Compilation of suggestions received from Parties**

33. As a follow-up to decision 4/COP.7, 30 affected country Parties, the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and one international organization submitted suggestions for benchmarks and indicators as well as for policy options and practical measures to monitor, on a regular basis, progress in the strategic areas for action.

34. Information on benchmarks and indicators takes into account reports submitted by the CST Group of Experts and the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). A compilation of the written suggestions received from Parties has been prepared (see table 2). As many countries have made similar or closely related suggestions, the proposals have been pooled.

**Table 2. Summary of suggestions made by Parties**

Policy option	Practical measure	Intermediary target
Enhancement of national, regional and South–South cooperation	Development of platforms for cooperation on key priority areas	Long-term monitoring of vegetation cover: <i>Development of geographic information system and mapping techniques</i>
Enhancement of participation	Interregional consultations and planning	<i>Monitoring of the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources and their use patterns and trends</i>
Definition of sustainability; country profile	Enforced stakeholder coordination	<i>Monitoring of fluctuations in the water table</i>
Enhancement of partnership building	Empowerment of focal points	<i>Monitoring of wind and water erosion</i>
Enhancement of scientific and technical cooperation	Involvement of civil society in major national initiatives	<i>Setting up of early warning systems, including through the strengthening of customary early warning systems</i>
Enhancement of resource mobilization (GEF, private funds...)	Application of state-of-the-art research findings	<i>Participatory monitoring and evaluation of deforestation and afforestation activities</i>
Development and strengthening assessment and monitoring systems through a participatory approach	Development of synergy	<i>Combination of expert assessment and local knowledge</i>
	Development of proposals for implementation of activities in the strategic areas for action and facilitating access to GEF funding	Sustainable natural resource management based on income-generating activities
	Identification of reliable indicators to better understand desertification, including at local level	Monitoring of the extent and quality of reliance on community-based and customary systems in rehabilitation programmes

Policy option	Practical measure	Intermediary target
<p>Capacity-building</p> <p>Definition of measures and standards of performance through the revision of existing plans, programmes and policies for integrated ecosystem management in drylands</p> <p>Harmonization and alignment of the seven strategic areas for action in national development strategies and other relevant policy areas</p> <p>Prioritization of projects ready for implementation as they relate to the Bonn Declaration</p>	<p>Development of capacity for the conduct of sustainability appraisal, including at local level</p> <p>Review of key policy areas by national coordination bodies</p> <p>Development of appropriate tools for mainstreaming strategic areas for action into national development strategies</p> <p>Appreciation of linkages between desertification and poverty, and the impact on national development strategies</p> <p>Identification of investment opportunities in desertification-prone areas</p>	<p>Capacity-building and scientific and technical training in the targeted strategic areas.</p> <p>Inclusion of time-bound specifically targeted activities in national programmes</p> <p>Definition of a sustainability profile for projects</p> <p>Joint implementation of the international environmental agreements</p> <p>Setting up of a national evaluation mechanism covering national, regional and local levels</p> <p>Setting up of regional review missions</p> <p>Promotion of local focal points and technical advisory groups</p> <p>Adaptation of benchmarks and indicators to local settings</p> <p>Support for smooth transfer of information technology</p> <p>Setting up of a clear benefit-sharing mechanism</p> <p>Provision of technical and financial support</p>

Policy option	Practical measure	Intermediary target
		<p>Improvement of methodological guide for preparing national reports and better information on measures taken to implement the Bonn Declaration</p> <p>Working jointly with thematic programmes networks</p> <p>Costing, customizing and assessment of long-term viability of projects</p> <p>Review of national programmes and inclusion of time-bound specifically targeted activities</p>

*Note:* The 30 submitting Parties are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ghana, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lesotho, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Peru, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Suriname, Swaziland, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Viet Nam, Zambia.

#### **B. Remarks on monitoring systems to assess measures taken by affected countries**

35. The majority of affected country Parties reported on measures taken to implement activities in the strategic areas of action under the Bonn Declaration.

36. In most cases, progress is being made and more attention is being given to the priority activities identified in the Bonn Declaration. It remains difficult, however, to measure progress accomplished due to the lack of reliable baseline and monitoring systems to assess the real status of the implementation processes.

37. There is scarcely any discussion of methodologies for desertification assessment and monitoring in the reports submitted by affected countries. Efforts to collect data and information on physical, biological and socio-economic factors relating to the impacts of desertification are still not fully addressed in the national reports and written suggestions transmitted by country Parties.

38. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) recognized the need for a systematic global monitoring programme leading to the development of a scientifically credible, consistent baseline of the state of desertification.

39. Long-term monitoring is therefore considered necessary to distinguish between the role of human actions and climate variability.

40. To address the lack of reliable monitoring systems, it seems necessary to go beyond a compilation of data from a variety of sources. In order to enhance in practice the sustainability of the strategic areas for action under the Bonn Declaration, it is proposed to start with the identification of sustainable indicators on a local scale. The whole purpose here is to enable end-users to apply them easily.

41. Any indicators of physical and biological sustainability should combine measures of productivity enhancement, measures of natural resources protection and measures of social acceptability. Thus, it is essential to integrate concepts from researchers who focus on indicators of resource quality and those who emphasize economic productivity measures.

42. The LADA project has contributed to the development of indicator tools to assist in meeting the need for reliable indicators to better understand the significance of desertification. However, the process remains difficult to harmonize, the main obstacle identified by experts themselves being the inability to effectively link the biophysical component of land management with the economic, social and policy components of sustainability.

43. Some researchers have found that the majority of sustainability indicators have been developed on an international scale. Few have been targeted at land users or developed on scales relevant to them, and methodologies are not based on a participatory approach. A Kalahari case study relating to sustainable land use management suggests the establishment of a methodological framework for developing sustainability indicators that can be applied easily and accurately by land users to enhance sustainable land-use management. Results show that participatory approaches are capable of eliciting a broad range of indicators encompassing both socio-economic and biophysical parameters.

44. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment also warned that the impact of poverty reduction strategies on ecosystem services and desertification should be fully explored by governments and the international community. "Poverty ecosystems links are typically ignored in poverty reduction policies. Even when these links are included, only the economic values are considered."

45. UNCCD experts, particularly those involved in the work of the CST, could be invited, in liaison with experts active in land degradation assessment in drylands, to further consider working on focused indicators to evaluate changes in the strategic areas for action under the Bonn Declaration, taking into account other relevant initiatives in this field.

## **V. Conclusions and recommendations**

46. The Parties agreed at the seventh session of the COP on the need for clear policy options and practical measures to monitor progress in the strategic areas for action under the Bonn Declaration.

47. Suggestions made by country Parties indicate that the seven thematic and sectoral areas identified by the Bonn Declaration remain among the high-priority activities being implemented at country level. Parties have reiterated in their reports their resolve to intensify their efforts despite difficulties encountered in addressing them all and in doing so at the same time.

48. During their deliberations at COP 8, Parties may wish:

(a) To encourage affected countries to prioritize the implementation of activities in the seven strategic areas for action, once they are fully mainstreamed into national development strategies;

(b) To encourage major (bilateral and multilateral) cooperating partners and affected developing countries to initiate consultative processes leading to the funding of the prioritized strategic areas for action, including through national strategy frameworks for reducing poverty;

(c) To invite affected country Parties to continue giving high priority to the seven strategic areas for action as contained in the Bonn Declaration during the period 2008–2018 in order to address the severe situation prevailing in the affected countries;

(d) To invite affected country Parties to continue to include in their national reports appropriate information relating to the enhanced implementation of obligations under the Convention, as a follow-up to the Bonn Declaration;

(e) To request the secretariat, with the assistance of the CST Group of Experts, FAO and other relevant international organizations and NGOs to facilitate the preparation of a harmonized approach and methodology to assess implementation of activities in the strategic areas for action in the context of revised reporting guidelines, and to suggest intermediary and quantifiable targets taking into account the relevant recommendations in the draft ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD;

(f) To further request the secretariat to report to the COP at its ninth session on progress made regarding practical measures to monitor the implementation of activities in the strategic areas for action identified in the Bonn Declaration.

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