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Improving the procedures for the communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties: Consideration of draft reporting guidelines as referred to in decision 8/COP.8

Consideration of draft reporting guidelines as referred to in decision 8/COP.8

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

Following decision 8/COP.8 on improving the procedures for the communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties (COP), the secretariat identified and elaborated reporting principles for those entities that are requested to report regularly to the COP, or otherwise to provide information, on support to the implementation of the Convention.

The present document provides an overview of reporting principles on the basis of a systematic review of the relevant deliberations of the COP; of reports, conclusions and recommendations made by its subsidiary bodies and by the ad hoc working group; of the relevant provisions of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy); and taking into account the views of the Global Mechanism, the guidance received from the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention and the advice provided by the inter-agency task force established for this purpose. Parties may wish to review the reporting principles (chapter II) and related recommendations (chapter III), with a view to providing guidance to the secretariat on the preparation of fully fledged draft reporting guidelines for consideration at the ninth session of the COP.

* The submission of this document was delayed because of the need to hold extensive consultations for its finalization, in accordance with specific provisions contained in decision 3/COP.8, as well as the close interrelation between document ICCD/CRIC(7)/3 and its addenda.

Addenda to this document focus on the rationale behind the proposed principles, their implementation and the related implications. Documents ICCD/CRIC(7)/3/Add.1 to Add.7 are dedicated to affected country Parties, developed country Parties, United Nations and intergovernmental organizations and relevant international financial institutions and mechanisms, the Global Environment Facility, the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and entities submitting reports on the implementation of subregional and regional action programmes, respectively.

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I. Introduction

1. Reports submitted by Parties, United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and financial mechanisms as well as by institutions established by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) are the basis for reviewing the implementation of the Convention. Such reports provide the means for informed and effective decision-making by the Conference of the Parties (COP) through the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), as well as for sharing information among Parties and with other organizations and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Article 26 of the Convention defines the obligation of the Parties to the Convention to report to the COP.

2. Experience gained from the three reporting cycles that have been concluded thus far has shown that the evolvement of the Convention process calls for improvements in the procedures on the communication of information, as well as in the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP. This matter has been an item on the agenda of every COP and CRIC session since 2005.

3. Decision 11/COP.1 determined the procedures for communication of information and the submission of reports. It provides guidance on the format and content of reports and the timetable for their submission by Parties. It furthermore encourages relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations as well as other intergovernmental organizations to provide information, as appropriate, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention.

4. Guidelines¹ to assist country Parties with the process of reporting were developed by the secretariat and adopted at the third session of the COP. These were subsequently revised pursuant to relevant decisions of the COP at its fourth, fifth and sixth sessions. Decision 1/COP.5 established the CRIC as a subsidiary body of the COP and requested that advice be provided to the CRIC by the GM and by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), according to their respective mandates.

5. At the seventh session of the COP, following the review and recommendation of the third session of the CRIC,² the COP established an Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG)³ to improve the procedures for the communication of information and the quality and format of reports, and to advise on how to bring this matter forward. The AHWG produced two substantive reports to the fifth session of the CRIC and the eighth session of the COP, respectively.⁴ The GM provided written advice on how to improve financial reporting under the Convention.⁵ The reports identified important shortcomings in the reporting process and called for new, simplified and coherent guidelines to be prepared for all the entities that are requested to report regularly to the COP, or otherwise to provide information to support the implementation of the Convention.

¹ Help guides and explanatory notes for affected country Parties and explanatory notes for developed country Parties.

² See ICCD/CRIC(3)/8.

³ Decision 8/COP.7.

⁴ ICCD/CRIC(5)/9 and ICCD/CRIC(6)/6.

⁵ ICCD/CRIC(6)/6/Add.1.

6. The AHWG placed special emphasis on the need for the reports to concentrate on the impacts achieved, and on the use of quantifiable indicators to measure progress against objectives. According to the AHWG, the guidelines to be developed for this purpose should be user-friendly, consistent, comprehensible and standardized; allow comparison; make an assessment of progress easy; be concise but cover all necessary areas; enable a consolidation for subregional, regional and global review; be in line with COP decisions; allow the measurement of progress in the implementation of action programmes and of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy), as adopted by decision 3/COP 8; and allow for the development of synergies with other reporting obligations.

7. These and other elements were taken up by the secretariat in developing the reporting principles as a response to decision 8/COP.8. In the formulation of reporting principles, particular emphasis was put on their coherence with the strategic and operational objectives defined in The Strategy.

8. The present document provides an overview of the reporting principles developed by the secretariat on the basis of a systematic review of relevant deliberations of the COP and of reports, conclusions and recommendations made by its subsidiary bodies and by the AHWG; and taking into account the views of the GM, the guidance received from the CRIC Bureau at its meeting held on 26 May 2008 and the advice provided by the inter-agency task force established for this purpose, which was convened in Bonn on 26-27 June 2008 and which pursued the information exchange thereafter.⁶

9. Given the need to receive further advice from the seventh session of the CRIC (CRIC 7) on a number of matters pertinent to the reporting process, the secretariat has prepared documentation which is based on reporting principles, rather than develop fully fledged draft reporting guidelines. This approach was endorsed by the CRIC Bureau. The feedback received at CRIC 7 will be taken into account in preparing draft reporting guidelines to be submitted to the ninth session of the COP (COP 9) for any decision it may wish to take on this matter.

II. Overview of the reporting principles

10. The proposed reporting principles are categorized under three main headings: content of reporting, format of reporting and reporting process. Altogether, 20 different reporting principles have been identified: seven relating to the content of reporting, four relating to the format of reporting and nine relating to the reporting process. An overview of all the principles and their attribution to various reporting entities is provided in the Table 1.

⁶ Following decision 8/COP.8, an inter-agency task force (IATF) was established to assist the secretariat in reviewing the reporting principles and guidelines to be prepared for CRIC 7 and COP 9, respectively. The expert opinions of the IATF members helped to enhance the quality of UNCCD reporting and to ensure that consistency and linkages with other relevant international environmental reporting/monitoring obligations and initiatives are achieved. The IATF is comprised of the representatives of the following organizations: the CBD secretariat, the European Environment Agency (EEA), the GEF secretariat, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations University – International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) and the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT). A representative of the CST is also a member of the task force.

11. For each proposed principle, the rationale behind its formulation, proposals for its implementation and various possible implications were identified. The rationale, implementation proposals and the implications for each reporting entity are elaborated in detail in the addenda to this document.

Table1. Overview and attribution of reporting principles

	Affected	Developed	UN, IGOs	GEF	Secretariat	GM	Sraps, Raps
CONTENT OF REPORTING							
Consistency with the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives							
Indicator-based analysis and assessment							
Attentiveness to resource, capacity and institutional constraints							
Attentiveness to the impact of the support provided							
Attentiveness to relevant subregional and regional initiatives							
Coherence, comparability and comprehensiveness of financial information							
Ensuring consistency with the work of the CST							
FORMAT OF REPORTING							
A simple, comprehensive and rational common format for reporting following clear, logically structured and user-friendly reporting guidelines							
Flexibility to accommodate new COP decisions, ad hoc COP requests and the particular characteristics of the reporting entities							
Enabling the collection of best practices and success stories							
Standardized and classified description of projects and programmes							
REPORTING PROCESS							
Clear entrusting of reporting responsibilities							
The reporting times for the various reporting entities							
An appropriate interval between reporting cycles							
Efficient treatment of information across the reporting process							
Timeliness and predictability of financial and technical resources, and appropriate time for the preparation of reports							
Capacity building							
Consultative, participatory and coordinated processes							
Facilitating the development of synergies with the other Rio conventions							
Increased transparency in the dissemination of information							

12. The reporting principles listed in Table 1 are discussed in sections A to C below:

A. Content of reporting

13. The following principles were identified with regard to the content of reporting:

(a) Consistency with the scope, strategies and objectives of the Convention (relevant to all reporting entities) This principle works towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy by taking into account the request made by the COP for the alignment of activities undertaken by various stakeholders with The Strategy. It supports the narrowing of the scope of reporting to UNCCD-relevant information.

(b) Indicator-based analysis and assessment (relevant to all reporting entities) Special emphasis was put by The Strategy on the adoption and use of the indicator-based approach to measuring progress against the strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy. Adoption of a core set of indicators will significantly improve the comparability of information among various reports.

(c) Attentiveness to resource, capacity and institutional constraints (relevant only to affected country Parties) Reporting should allow for an analysis of the main factors hampering the implementation of action programmes and other UNCCD-related activities by affected country Parties, and draw conclusions based on lessons learned.

(d) Attentiveness to the impact of the support provided (relevant to all but affected country Parties, subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs)) Reports by those entities providing support to affected country Parties in the implementation of their action programmes should enable an assessment of the impact of their assistance.

(e) Attentiveness to relevant subregional and regional initiatives (relevant only to SRAPs and RAPs) Implementation of SRAPs and RAPs should benefit from, and be placed in, a wider subregional and regional context, collecting and analysing information on other relevant subregional and regional initiatives with a view to enhancing synergies, in particular with regard to scientific information.

(f) Coherence, comparability and comprehensiveness of financial information (relevant to all but the secretariat) Reports should provide comprehensive and reliable information on the financial resources mobilized and spent to support the implementation of the Convention, and enable an assessment of the availability and flows of, and the need for, funding.

(g) Ensuring consistency with the work of the CST (relevant to all but the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Global Mechanism (GM)) Consistency with the work of the CST should be ensured in reports, in order to increase the benefits from the scientific and technological expertise and know-how available in the implementation of the Convention.

B. Format of reporting

14. The following principles were identified with regard to the format of reporting:

(a) A simple, comprehensive and rational common format for reporting, following clear, logically structured and user-friendly reporting guidelines (relevant to all reporting entities) The format of reports for the various reporting entities should be as standardized as

possible, in order to allow for comparison. It should be user-friendly, consistent and easily comprehensible in order to enable reporting entities to respond to reporting requirements and hence improve the quality of the reports submitted.

(b) Flexibility to accommodate new COP decisions, ad hoc COP requests and the particular characteristics of the reporting entities (relevant to all reporting entities) Standardization of reporting formats should not be at the cost of flexibility. Reporting should be able to accommodate various requests by the COP that may not occur regularly, and to respect the specificities of different reporting entities.

(c) Enabling the collection of best practices and success stories (relevant to all reporting entities) The identification and extraction of best practices and success stories from reports is a key element in building up an effective knowledge-sharing system, as requested by the Convention and The Strategy. Determining and disseminating best practices was identified as one of the main functions of the CRIC in decision 3/COP.8.

(d) A standardized and classified description of projects and programmes (relevant to all but the secretariat and affected country Parties) There is a need to establish a methodology for standardizing the information on programmes and projects relevant to the Convention and their classification in order to facilitate analysis and the drawing of conclusions.

C. The reporting process

15. The following principles were identified with regard to the reporting process:

(a) Clear entrusting of reporting responsibilities (relevant to SRAPs and RAPs) Existing institutional weaknesses in the reporting process at the subregional and regional levels need to be overcome by clear entrusting of responsibilities for reporting among involved Parties and institutions.

(b) The reporting times for the various reporting entities (relevant to all reporting entities) There should be coherence between the work programmes of the COP, the CRIC and the CST, and the time provided for the reporting of various reporting entities.

(c) An appropriate interval between reporting cycles (relevant to all reporting entities) An appropriate interval between reporting cycles should be determined for all the various reporting entities on the basis of the time scale of processes of desertification and land degradation (for Parties, IGOs and United Nations organizations, SRAPs and RAPs) as well as pertinent decisions of the COP (for reporting by the institutions established under the Convention and the GEF).

(d) Efficient treatment of information across the reporting process (relevant to all reporting entities) There is a need to use effectively the information gathered in the reporting process. Collection, processing and analysis should be organized in a way that leads to high quality final outputs (reports, decisions) that can be implemented in a systematic and efficient way.

(e) Timeliness and predictability of financial and technical resources, and appropriate time for the preparation of reports (relevant to affected country Parties) Financial and technical resources provided in a timely and predictable manner are the basic prerequisites for enabling affected country Parties to prepare high-quality reports on time.

(f) Capacity building (relevant to affected country Parties) Capacity-building measures are necessary in order for affected country Parties to be able to cope efficiently with reporting obligations. This would also be reflected in an improvement in the quality of the reports submitted.

(g) A consultative, participatory and coordinated process (relevant to affected country Parties, SRAPs and RAPs) The Convention outlines the consultative and participatory processes that are an integral part of the reporting exercise. Coordination and information sharing, in particular at the subregional and regional levels, improve the information submitted to the COP and represent an additional layer of analysis available to the CRIC.

(h) Facilitating the development of synergies with the other Rio conventions (relevant to all reporting entities) This principle works towards reducing the reporting burden of Parties (stakeholders) to all the Rio conventions, especially with regard to the presence of existing thematic overlaps. Information systems need to be established and/or adjusted in order to improve the coordination and circulation of information at the national and local levels.

(i) Increased transparency in the dissemination of information (relevant to affected country Parties and the secretariat) Transparency and comprehensive information sharing would allow for synthesis and analysis to become increasingly comprehensive and informative, allowing for well founded, effective and feasible deliberations by the COP.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

16. Parties may wish to review the reporting principles and related recommendations, with a view to providing guidance to the secretariat on the preparation of the fully fledged draft reporting guidelines to be submitted to COP 9, in the light of the following.

A. Generic conclusions and recommendations

17. Reporting should be based on a new reporting format facilitating the compliance of the information submitted with the scope of the Convention, and The Strategy and its objectives.

18. 'Impact indicators' should be used to measure progress against the strategic objectives of The Strategy (country and regional profiles), while 'performance indicators' should serve to measure progress against the operational objectives of The Strategy (monitoring the effectiveness of The Strategy).

19. The secretariat and the GM, taking into account the views of the CST, should develop indicators for measuring strategic objective 4 for consideration at COP 9.

20. Indicators for the operational objectives of The Strategy should be coherent with the indicators for the impact of land degradation focal area strategic objectives and the strategic programme outcome indicators that the GEF has adopted for its fourth replenishment and will adopt for its further replenishments.
21. Comparability of information should be achieved through the use of a core set of indicators, common to all stakeholders, based on a harmonized methodology for data collection. A methodology for harmonization of indicators, data collection and validation is to be established prior to COP 9. The establishment of baseline data against which progress can be measured should be part and parcel of this process.
22. The CST is supposed to feed into, but also gain from, the reporting process. Hence, CST-related reporting requests to Parties, observers and institutions established by the Convention need to be in line with the overall UNCCD reporting process and schedule.
23. CST-related reporting requests should be accompanied by clear terms of reference, including specification of the section of the report where the information should be provided and in which form.
24. If the implementation of CST-related requests implies the need for additional financial and technical resources for reporting, the availability of additional resources should be taken into account.
25. The work of the CST and its Bureau relating to reporting and to monitoring of the implementation of the Convention should be cross-fertilized with the work of the CRIC and its Bureau. In particular, the CST should analyse the information received through country profiles and provide its feedback to the CRIC. Joint sessions/meetings or sessions/meetings held back-to-back should be considered.
26. Maximum length limits should be set for each section of the reports. The use of quantitative information should be encouraged, in order to increase reliance on information that can be easily and systematically classified.
27. Flexibility to accommodate new COP decisions, ad hoc COP requests and the particular characteristics of the various reporting entities should be reflected in the new reporting formats by means of sections dedicated to this purpose. Any ad hoc requests by the COP for reporting should be accompanied by specific terms of reference.
28. Extraction and presentation of best practices and success stories as well as lessons learned related to the implementation of the Convention should be facilitated by the new reporting format.
29. The secretariat should develop a common framework for the definition and selection of best practices for consideration by Parties. The seven thematic topics identified by decision 1/COP.5 and the seven strategic areas outlined in decision 8/COP.4 might represent a basis for the creation of broader categories, especially in the light of The Strategy and of the priority theme identified in decision 18/COP.8.

30. A decision on the frequency of submission of reports by all reporting entities and appropriate intervals between reporting cycles should be linked with the decision to be taken on the work programme, including the terms of reference and operational modalities, of the CRIC. Due account in these considerations should be taken of decision 3/COP.8, which states that the CRIC should be restructured around a simplified and effective reporting process based on information which is comparable across regions and over time.

31. Information systems should be established and/or improved at the national and global levels. Furthermore, the secretariat should use criteria to classify the information provided in the reports and set up an information system for the efficient handling of the classified information. At the national level, databases that support the preparation of reports under different MEAs should be developed and/or maintained and/or integrated into existing relevant databases. In order to avoid duplication of work, existing information systems at the national level should be surveyed, especially those set up within the framework of international projects/assistance.

32. There should be a mechanism by which Parties can receive feedback on their reports from the secretariat and the GM, as well as through the CRIC. This would provide the possibility for the Parties to adjust their action programmes and other action programmes, following the recommendations emanating from the review process at the global level. In particular, incentives in the context of reporting should be devised as a way of mobilizing both Parties and other reporting entities (especially those which are not obliged to submit reports) to submit qualitative reports.

B. Specific conclusions and recommendations

1. Conclusions and recommendations pertinent to affected country Parties

33. Affected country Parties should accelerate the alignment of their national action programmes (NAPs) and other relevant activities related to the Convention to The Strategy, as requested by decision 3/COP.8, so that the new reporting guidelines can be used to their full effect.

34. Clear linkages between the revision of NAPs and the identification of indicators for reporting should be established. NAPs should set out targets and a timeframe, specify the range of activities envisaged to reach such targets, and identify indicators to measure progress with achieving these targets.

35. Within the reporting format for affected country Parties, a section should be dedicated to responding to the five operational objectives identified in The Strategy, while the country profile should provide information to measure progress against the four strategic objectives of The Strategy.

36. In addition to the core (common) set of indicators to be adopted by the COP, affected country Parties should be in a position to use their own country-specific indicators and data to reflect their country's specificities with due flexibility.

37. The new reporting format should provide opportunities for affected country Parties to highlight the problems and constraints they face in implementing the Convention and The Strategy, whether they are of a physical, financial, social, political, institutional or of another nature.

38. Financial reporting by affected country Parties should be based on a common financial annex, which could include the use of Rio markers. Templates using OR Forms, pre-filled with the data available from the Creditor Reporting System of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) could be used to facilitate the work of affected Parties.

39. The establishment of national environmental information systems would assist with reducing reporting burdens under the three Rio conventions, and assist Parties with the continuous monitoring of UNCCD implementation at the national and local levels, increase capacity and improve environmental reporting supported by the international community.

40. National capacity self-assessment (NCSA) should be widely documented in reports by affected country Parties, in line with operational objective 4. Those country Parties where NCSA has not been undertaken should engage in assessment processes. Sufficient time and resources for capacity building, also in relation to the new reporting format and guidelines, should be ensured and the required support prioritized.

41. Information on validation meetings and any other activities that support an assessment of the level of participation and integration of stakeholders in the reporting process should be included in the reports of affected country Parties. Such reports should also reflect their contribution to subregional and regional reporting processes. National networking and consultations in the UNCCD process should reinforce the development of national environmental information systems.

2. Conclusions and recommendations pertinent to developed country Parties

42. Reporting by developed country Parties should focus on providing information on the extent to which the Convention has been mainstreamed into the countries' development cooperation strategies, the contribution to the achievement of the scope, strategies and objectives of the Convention, with specific reference to outcomes 2.4 and 5.2 of the operational objectives of The Strategy, and the actions undertaken to respond to the relevant requests of the COP.

43. One section of the new reporting format for developed country Parties should be dedicated to a qualitative and, as far as possible, quantitative assessment of the impact of the support provided to affected country Parties. The assessment should comprise an analysis of lessons learned, and of the drivers and the needs behind these drivers. The impact of financial investments can be derived by screening the mid-term reviews and/or final evaluations of projects and programmes.

44. Financial reporting by developed country Parties should be based on a common financial annex, including the use of Relevant Activity Codes (RACs) and the possible use of Rio markers, and a common project and programme sheet. The project and programme sheet should

be used for the description of UNCCD-related projects and programmes that have been, or are being, supported.

45. Where developed country Parties already have well established and centralized information systems for storing and managing environmental data, their adaptation to serve the purpose of reporting under the UNCCD and other MEAs should be encouraged.

3. Conclusions and recommendations pertinent to United Nations and intergovernmental organizations and relevant international financial institutions and mechanisms

46. Reporting by the United Nations organizations and IGOs should include a description of the extent to which the Convention and the support provided to the implementation of action programmes under it have been placed on the agendas of such organizations, an assessment of their contribution to the achievement of the Convention's scope, strategies and objectives, with specific reference to the operational objectives set out in The Strategy, and information on actions taken to respond to relevant requests of the COP.

47. United Nations organizations and IGOs involved in the review of work programmes and action programmes should include information relevant to these programmes in their reports.

48. IGOs and United Nations organizations should, for the sake of consistency and comparability, structure their reports using the same indicator-based approach as that applied to Parties. Particular emphasis should be placed on the provision of information from those IGOs and United Nations organizations that are international financial institutions, facilities and funds, and on their response to the efforts by the Parties to mobilize financial resources from them by promoting the UNCCD/SLM agenda within the governing bodies of these institutions, as requested in The Strategy under operational objective 5 through expected outcome 5.3.

49. IGOs and United Nations organizations that have a specific mandate should produce their own, individually validated, indicators and data to properly reflect the specificities of their individual mandates and of the roles they play in the UNCCD process (e.g. GEF implementing and executing agencies, GM Facilitation Committee members, the coordinating organizations of the various subregional and regional initiatives, the partnership agreement with the secretariat, etc.). This could be reflected in dedicated sections of their reports. Opportunities should be provided for such organizations to submit joint reports.

50. IGOs and United Nations organizations should provide information on qualitative and, if possible, quantitative assessments of the impact of the support they provide to affected country Parties. Based on the specific roles that the United Nations organizations and IGOs have in providing support to affected country Parties, there should be a differentiation between the financial support provided and other support (such as technical assistance, transfer of technology and know-how, awareness raising, education, etc.). Special indicators could be developed for the assessment of expertise/support provided to affected country Parties in the preparation of reports and in the dissemination of relevant information.

51. Financial reporting by IGOs and United Nations organizations should be based on a common financial annex, including the use of RACs and the possible use of Rio markers, and a common project and programme sheet.

4. Conclusions and recommendations pertinent to the Global Environment Facility

52. Reporting by the GEF should include a description of the extent to which the Convention and the implementation of action programmes under it have been supported by the GEF, in particular under the focal area on land degradation; an assessment of the contribution of the GEF to the achievement of the scope, strategies and objectives of the Convention, with specific reference to the operational objectives set out in The Strategy; and information on actions taken to respond to the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the GEF and the COP and other relevant requests of the COP.

53. The GEF should provide information on its involvement in the review of work programmes and action programmes required for affected country Parties.

54. The GEF should, for the sake of consistency and comparability, structure its reports using the same indicator-based approach as that applied for Parties, which should be linked, to the extent possible, to the indicators that the GEF uses for its land degradation focal area.

55. Particular emphasis should be placed on the provision of information from the GEF on its response to the efforts by the Parties to mobilize financial resources from it, by promoting the UNCCD/SLM agenda within the GEF governing bodies (the Council and the Assembly), as requested in The Strategy under the operational objective 5 through expected outcome 5.3.

56. The GEF should be encouraged to emphasize in its reports assessments of the efficiency and impact of the activities it has supported. The impact of the GEF's financial support can be derived by screening mid-term reviews and/or final evaluations of projects and programmes. This should lead to the identification of best practices. Independent reviews could be used to highlight important conclusions and provide recommendations.

57. Given that both The Strategy and the GEF, in its focal area on land degradation, take a results-based management (RBM) approach to the monitoring and assessment of activities and their impact, it would be mutually beneficial if these approaches were to cross-fertilize each other.

58. A special section in the GEF report should be dedicated to its support to capacity building, covering financial support for the reporting process and for the adjustment of action programmes.

59. The financial reporting of the GEF should be supported by the use of a common financial annex, the possible use of Rio markers, and a common project and programme sheet.

5. Conclusions and recommendations pertinent to the secretariat

60. Reporting by the secretariat should include a description of the extent to which the Convention and the implementation of the action programmes under it have been supported by the secretariat; an assessment of the secretariat's contribution to the achievement of the scope, strategies and objectives of the Convention, with specific reference to the operational objectives set out in The Strategy; information on actions taken to respond to the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report and other relevant requests of the COP; and joint reporting with the GM on the implementation of the joint work plan (JWP).

61. The secretariat should, for the sake of consistency and comparability, structure its reports using the same indicator-based approach as that applied by Parties and ensure that the RBM indicators considered and adopted for the work programme of the secretariat feed into the overall indicators identified by Parties for The Strategy. Particular emphasis should be placed on measuring the secretariat's responsiveness to operational objective 1 and specific outcomes of operational objectives 2 and 3, and its supporting role in the achievement of operational objectives 4 and 5.

62. The provisions on which the secretariat bases its reporting to the COP and the CRIC (decisions 9/COP.1, 11/COP.1, 5/COP.3, 1/COP.5, 3/COP.6 and 3/COP.8) should be reassessed and systematized in a new decision.

63. The secretariat should provide reporting entities with the information needed to properly organize their reporting: timeframe, organization, logistics, compliance with the proposed format, coordination, consultation, etc. The secretariat should also coordinate efforts to mobilize timely and predictable financial support for reporting by eligible entities and related capacity building.

64. The secretariat should distill and analyse the information provided in reports (best practices, performance against indicators) using improved and transparent means of information processing, including web-based databases and aggregated analyses of data, which would allow monitoring of individual performance against the indicators defined by the Parties and adopted by the COP.

6. Conclusions and recommendations pertinent to the Global Mechanism

65. Reporting by the GM should include a description of the extent to which the Convention and the implementation of action programmes under it have been supported by the GM; an assessment of the GM's contribution to the achievement of the scope, strategies and objectives of the Convention, with specific reference to the operational objectives set out in The Strategy; information on actions taken to respond to the reviews of policies, operational modalities and activities of the GM, and other relevant requests of the COP, reporting on global funding trends and financial flows as well as the other relevant requests of the COP; and of the joint reporting with the secretariat on the implementation of the JWP.

66. The GM should, for the sake of consistency and comparability, structure its reports using the same indicator-based approach as that applied by Parties, and ensure that the RBM indicators

considered and adopted for the work programme of the GM feed into the overall indicators identified by Parties for The Strategy. Particular emphasis should be placed on provision of information from the GM on its achievements in response to operational objective 5 of The Strategy, as well as its support for the achievement of operational objectives 1 and 2. Performance indicators used for this purpose should be in line with the indicators to be set for country Parties.

67. Special emphasis in the reports of the GM should be placed on an analysis of the efficiency and impact of its activities. Based on the specific role the GM was given, its report should address both financial and other forms of support (technical assistance, transfer of technology and know-how, awareness raising, education, etc.) provided to affected country Parties. Mid-term reviews and/or final evaluations of programmes could be used by the GM for this purpose.

68. The GM should analyse the information provided in the reports that is related to financial matters, including the financial annex and project and programme sheets. This should also include analysis of the levels of synergy among the three Rio conventions as it relates to financial matters. This analysis should be shared with the CBD and the UNFCCC.

69. Reporting by the GM on global funding trends, and financial flows for the implementation of the Convention should be based on a common financial annex, which would include the use of RACs and the possible use of Rio markers. RACs should be reviewed by the GM in the light of The Strategy.

70. The provisions on which the GM bases its reporting to the COP and the CRIC (24/COP.1, 25/COP.1, 5/COP.3, 9/COP.3, 10/COP.3, 1/COP.5, 3/COP.8) should be reassessed and systematized in a new decision.

7. Conclusions and recommendations pertinent to reports on the implementation of subregional and regional action programmes

71. SRAPs and RAPs should be aligned with The Strategy, as required by decision 3/COP.8. Clear linkages between revisions of SRAPs and RAPs and the identification of indicators should be established. SRAPs and RAPs should set targets with regard to timeframe, specify the range of activities foreseen to reach these targets and identify indicators to measure progress with achieving such targets.

72. Within the reporting format, a section should be dedicated to responding to the five operational objectives identified in The Strategy, whereas regional profiles (to be defined in consultation with the Parties, the Regional Implementation Annexes and the CST) should provide information for measuring progress against the four strategic objectives of The Strategy.

73. Given that the substance and nature of some SRAPs and RAPs are evolving, the focus of reporting will depend on whether these action programmes become more scientifically oriented (like those based on thematic programme networks) or more action-oriented.

74. In addition to the core (common) set of indicators to be adopted by the COP, SRAPs and RAPs should be able to use their own subregion- or region-specific indicators and data to properly reflect their specificity.

75. The new reporting format should encourage reporting on activities at the subregional and regional levels that are not strictly included in the SRAPs and RAPs, but are nevertheless relevant to the Convention. In particular, reports should elaborate on the possibilities for developing synergies or for collaboration between these activities and those undertaken under the Convention.

76. Financial reporting by subregional and regional entities should be based on a common financial annex and include the use of RACs and the possible use of Rio markers, as well as on a common project and programme sheet. Templates using the data available from the Creditor Reporting System of the DAC of the OECD could be used to facilitate this work. Accompanying measures, such as capacity building and the improvement of coordination and information-sharing systems, could be considered together with the mobilization of the resources necessary for their implementation. Consultations (and related modalities) could be considered as a way to harmonize the information prior to its submission for synthesis and analysis.

77. Consultation processes among the Parties involved in SRAPs and RAPs should lead to a clear decision on which entities should be entrusted with reporting responsibilities and/or on the modalities for reporting. Any such decision should be made in agreement with existing coordination mechanisms at the subregional and/or regional levels, such as TPNs and (sub)regional financial platforms.

78. The regional mechanisms to be adopted by COP 9 should be tasked with reporting on the activities of SRAPs and RAPs.
