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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

Addendum

Principles for reporting by affected country Parties

Summary

This document provides a detailed explanation of the principles for reporting by affected country Parties. It focuses on the rationale behind these principles, their implementation and the related implications. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention may wish to consider this information at its seventh session and provide further guidance to the secretariat on the development of draft reporting guidelines for affected country Parties to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth session.

It should be noted that action-oriented conclusions and recommendations relating to the reporting principles for affected country Parties are included in document ICCD/CRIC(7)/3.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) currently has 193 country Parties and well over two-thirds of these are directly affected by desertification and land degradation.
2. In carrying out their obligations, affected country Parties are required to prepare, make public and implement national action programmes (NAPs). Together with subregional and regional action programmes, NAPs represent the core instrument for implementing the Convention. They are supposed to be updated through a continuing participatory process on the basis of lessons learned from field action and according to knowledge development.¹
3. In accordance with article 26 of the Convention and with decision 11/COP.1, affected country Parties are requested to provide a description of the strategies established pursuant to article 5 of the Convention and any other relevant information on their implementation. Those countries implementing action programmes are additionally requested to provide a detailed description of these programmes and of their implementation. Decision 11/COP.1 also established the format and content of such reports, along with the timetable for submission.
4. Three reporting cycles have been completed since the entry into force of the Convention. The first and third reporting cycles alternated reporting by African countries with that of other regions. African countries reported in 1999 and in 2004, while other regions reported in 2000 and 2006. The second reporting cycle took place in 2002 and was characterized, as an exceptional case, by the submission of reports by all affected country Parties. Overall, 115, 148 and 139 reports were submitted by affected country Parties during the first, second and third reporting cycles, respectively.
5. Since 1997, major milestones in determining the procedures for communication of information and for review of the implementation of the Convention have included: the preparation of a help guide to assist affected country Parties with the process of reporting, which was adopted at the third session of the Conference of the Parties (COP); revision of the format for national reports and of the help guide at the fourth and fifth sessions of the COP; the establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on communication of information at the seventh session of the COP, and the initiation of a consultative process among relevant stakeholders, with the ultimate aim of improving the procedures for communication of information and the quality of national reports.
6. Among the main recommendations identified by the AHWG and related to affected country Parties are that: reporting should be streamlined and more UNCCD focused; more emphasis should be given to the impacts achieved through the use of quantifiable indicators/benchmarks; the country profile should be revised in order to serve as an analytical tool; a financial annex should be included in the reports to obtain consistent and reliable information on funding and investment flows; reporting guidelines should be improved and simplified; accompanying measures should support the reporting process; and reporting formats should be developed.

¹ Convention text, article 9, paragraph 1.

7. This addendum focuses on the draft reporting principles for affected country Parties. These principles were developed by the secretariat taking into account all the relevant deliberations of the COP, the opinions and recommendations produced by its subsidiary bodies and by the AHWG, the advice received from the Global Mechanism, the advice received through a Bureau meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention held on 26 May 2008, and the advice received from an inter-agency task force established for this purpose and held on 26–27 June 2008. Finally, reporting principles have been drafted taking into account the capacity of affected country Parties to provide the necessary information, considering the constraints they may face in terms of availability of time and financial and human resources, as well as of institutional and IT support.

8. Reporting principles are categorized under three main headings: content of reporting, reporting format and reporting processes.

II. Principles for reporting by affected country Parties

CONTENT OF REPORTING

Consistency with the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) National reporting by affected country Parties will be based on a new reporting format that facilitates compliance of the information provided with the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives.</p> <p>(b) Affected country Parties should align their national action programmes (NAPs) and other relevant activities related to the Convention to the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) so that the new reporting guidelines can be used to their full effect.</p> <p>(c) In order to comply with the overall results-oriented approach fostered by the Convention, NAPs should, across the five operational objectives of The Strategy, set targets for a timeframe, specify the range of activities envisaged to reach these targets and identify indicators to measure progress with achieving these targets.</p> <p>(d) Within the reporting format, a section is dedicated to responding to the five operational objectives identified in The Strategy. A ‘country profile’ will provide information to measure progress against the four strategic objectives of The Strategy.</p>	<p>(a) Consistency with The Strategy and its objectives, and the new reporting requirements will imply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) revision of the work programmes and NAPs of affected country Parties; (ii) revision of the reporting format and guidelines for affected country Parties, including revision of the country profile; (iii) definition of indicators at the national, regional and global levels. <p>(a) It is recommended that the revision of the NAPs should take place with the identification of indicators. That is, that targets set at national level in the NAPs cohere with the indicators meant to measure progress against these targets. Thus, clear linkages between NAP revision and the identification of indicators should be established.</p> <p>(b) The provision of help guides for the revision/preparation of NAPs should be considered by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC).</p>

Rationale

- (a) Since its entry into force in 1996, the (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has progressively shifted its focus from the building of implementation mechanisms and basic obligations (the institutional phase) to the adoption and implementation of its action programmes (the results-oriented implementation phase).
 - (b) This change in focus is reflected in the newly adopted 10-year (2008–2018) strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention. The Strategy outlines four strategic and five operational objectives, defining for each the expected impacts (for the strategic objectives) and outcomes (for the operational objectives). Tentative indicators to measure progress against the strategic objectives are outlined in The Strategy, while preliminary indicators for the operational objectives have been proposed by the Chair of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG) in a separate document.
 - (c) According to decision 3/COP.8, affected country Parties are supposed to align their NAPs, and other relevant implementation activities relating to the Convention, with The Strategy. NAPs should, in particular, address the outcomes under the five operational objectives of The Strategy.
 - (d) The Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) also recognized the need to identify objectives at the national level and to set targets against these objectives.
 - (e) Furthermore, the alignment of the NAPs with The Strategy works towards focusing the reporting exercise on UNCCD-related issues, since The Strategy specifically refers to ‘affected’ populations and ecosystems, and to desertification/land degradation and drought-related issues.
 - (f) The need to narrow the scope of reporting to UNCCD-relevant information is commonly acknowledged.
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Indicator-based analysis and assessment	
Implementation (a) The indicators to be used in national reporting include: ‘impact indicators’, to measure progress against the strategic objectives of The Strategy, and ‘performance indicators’, to measure progress against the operational objectives of The Strategy. (b) Performance indicators should be nationally identified according to existing national resources (information systems and data). (c) Impact indicators are broadly discussed in The Strategy but are to be further refined by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) (and partially by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM)), building on existing data sources. These indicators will form the basis for a global assessment of the implementation of the Convention and will be proposed and analysed in the country profiles. (d) Comparability of information among country Parties will be achieved through a core set of indicators, common to all country Parties, possibly based on harmonized methodologies for data collection and handling. (e) The definition and harmonization of a set of indicators common to all Parties (the core set of indicators) is a process that needs to be completed as soon as possible, with the ultimate aim of having a well defined core set of indicators in place at the beginning of the next reporting cycle. (f) In addition to the core set of indicators, affected country Parties will have their own country-specific indicators and data, which will properly reflect their country’s specificities.	Implications (a) Establishment of baseline data against which progress can be measured is important and will be achieved during the forthcoming reporting cycle. (b) Impact indicators related to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 are to be refined by the CST, as per decision 3/COP.8. Indicators for strategic objective 4 should be defined by the secretariat based on the advice provided by the GM; given the close linkage among all the strategic objectives, the views of the CST on indicators for strategic objective 4 should also be considered. (c) According to decision 3/COP.8, the consolidation of national indicators and their harmonization is to be carried out by the secretariat, but the CST may also be requested to advise on these performance indicators. (d) Consistent use of benchmarks and indicators by affected country Parties is also closely linked to the question of capacity building. (e) Furthermore, the definition of indicators is a unique opportunity to focus reporting on UNCCD-related matters. Broad indicators should complement more specific indicators able to measure UNCCD-relevant information. (f) The increased use of quantitative information in the reports should be complemented by the request to quote the sources of the data/information/statistics provided. This request should form part of a more comprehensive quality control system that should be set in the framework of the reporting process, to verify the quality of the information provided.
Rationale (a) Consistency with The Strategy and its objectives implies the adoption of an indicator-based approach to the assessment of progress with implementation, and thus to reporting. The Strategy itself contains tentative indicators to measure the level of achievement of the strategic objectives. Preliminary indicators for the operational objectives of the strategic plans have been proposed by the Chair of the IIWG. (b) This indicator-based approach is meant to improve the quantitative impact assessment of measures and programmes implemented within the scope of the Convention, assessment that so far has been limited or absent. (c) An indicator-based approach implies the systematic analysis of selected indicators at each reporting cycle, in order to start identifying and assessing trends. Indicators are common tools for supporting the monitoring and assessment of implementation and trends. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Millennium Development Goals process all use indicators for monitoring purposes. (d) Along with the need to identify objectives and targets at the national and regional levels, the AHWG recognized the need to identify indicators to facilitate reporting on measurable impacts.	

Attentiveness to resource, capacity and institutional constraints	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) National reporting by affected country Parties will be based on a new reporting format that facilitates highlighting of the bottlenecks and constraints faced by countries in implementation matters.</p> <p>(b) Bottlenecks and constraints may be present for, inter alia, physical (e.g. natural disasters or exceptional events), financial (lack of funding for implementation), social or political (lack of institutional willingness) reasons.</p> <p>(c) Affected country Parties will be able to elaborate any perceived constraints on implementation. Underlying root causes and lessons learned should also be elaborated.</p> <p>(d) National capacity self-assessment (NCSA) will be widely documented in the national reports. It is in fact an integral part of The Strategy (operational objective 4), and affected country Parties are requested to report on NCSA.</p> <p>(e) The NCSA process has delivered valuable information for effective needs assessments related to desertification/land degradation and drought issues. Those countries where NCSAs have not been undertaken should engage in assessment processes as outlined by decision 3/COP.8, and outcome 4.2 of operational objective 4 of The Strategy.</p>	<p>The ultimate aim of the implementation of this principle is the identification of the means necessary to overcome the problems highlighted, on the basis of the information provided by affected country Parties. Recommendations emanating from CRIC and forwarded to the Conference of the Parties (COP) will thus become more demand-driven.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) The quality of national reporting may be hampered by the lack of sufficient resources and of the capacities needed for the implementation of activities at the national and local (field) levels. Constraints may be based on limited skills and knowledge, but they can also be linked to physical, financial and/or institutional/political reasons.</p> <p>(b) This principle thus also applies to reasons for the ‘non-implementation’ of specific recommendations made by the COP to affected country Parties.</p> <p>(c) The bottlenecks and problems with implementation perceived by each affected country Party will represent valuable information to guide the CRIC and other subsidiary bodies, such as the CST and the GM, in making recommendations to the COP; as such, these bottlenecks and problems should be identifiable through the reporting exercise.</p> <p>(d) Decision 1/COP.8 calls for support for capacity building from developed country Parties and international organizations in all areas relevant to the implementation of NAPs. Capacity building is itself an operational objective of The Strategy, the outcomes of which refer to the NCSA.</p>	

Coherence, comparability and comprehensiveness of financial information	
Implementation (a) Financial reporting by affected country Parties will be based on a financial annex. The adoption of this annex may require the implementation of other accompanying measures, such as capacity building and the improvement of coordination and information-sharing systems. (b) The financial information required by the Convention should refer to the financial resources mobilized and used (i.e. committed and spent) for the implementation of the NAPs and should encompass both domestic and external resources. (c) Facilitation mechanisms for the preparation of the financial annex should also be considered. These could include the distribution to Parties of forms pre-filled with data available from the Creditor Reporting System of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (d) In order to achieve harmonization of the financial information prior to its delivery to the secretariat, it may also be necessary to undertake consultations.	Implications (a) The financial annex will contribute to increased synergies among the Rio conventions by requiring the use of the Rio markers. (b) Guidelines for the preparation of the financial annex should be prepared. (c) Mobilization of resources for the implementation of accompanying measures such as capacity building; and consultations as a prerequisite for a fully functional reporting process should be considered by the CRIC. (d) The establishment of national information systems may in future allow systematic financial data flows from affected country Parties to the Convention. More frequent reporting of the financial information would allow the GM to update its central database, the Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation (FIELD), and to produce performance reports for the CRIC, as recommended by the AHWG.
Rationale	
(a) Several major shortcomings were noted in the reporting of financial information to the Convention in the past three reporting cycles, among which were discrepancies between the information provided by funding Parties and recipients; a low level of detail on financial flows and investments; and double-counting of resources in the case of co-financed projects. (b) The reasons behind the poor quality of the financial information provided in the national reports include: the lack of standardized reporting procedures and methodologies for the monitoring of financial flows; insufficient data collection and management mechanisms (including databases) available at country level; and internal decentralization of donors' financial allocations at the national level, making it difficult for national focal points (NFPs) to report comprehensively. (c) To overcome these constraints, the AHWG recommended the adoption of a standardized financial annex to national reports. The financial annex should not be a stand-alone solution, but should be complementary to a series of accompanying measures.	

Ensuring consistency with the work of the CST	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Any recommendation or ad hoc request for reporting made by the COP following CST deliberations should be made consistent with the logic of the revised reporting format. This will increase the clarity of information provided and avoid the duplication of work.</p> <p>(b) Streamlining the CST input through the standard reporting process will thus require:</p> <p>(i) that the timing of CST requests is aligned to the reporting cycles;</p> <p>(ii) the adaptation of CST requests to the reporting format,</p> <p>(iii) that requests are supported by clear terms of reference and, where possible, with an accompanying budget .</p> <p>(c) The CST should analyse the information received through the reports (country profile) and provide its feedback to the CRIC.</p>	<p>(a) The Strategy envisages that the CST will focus its reviews on one or two priorities each biennium. CST-related requests to country Parties are thus likely to be made every two years, while the reporting cycle has so far been four years. This lack of congruence between the reporting obligations of the CST and the country Parties needs to be addressed by Parties at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) together with a decision on the future terms of reference of the CRIC.</p> <p>(b) COP decisions should ensure consistency between CRIC and CST processes. The possibility of synchronized CST and CRIC sessions, as envisaged in The Strategy, works in this direction.</p> <p>(c) If the implementation of CST-related requests implies the need for additional financial and technical resources for reporting, the availability of such additional resources should be taken into account.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) Decision 3/COP.8 redefines the role and the responsibilities of the CST. The interaction between the CST and the country Parties, and the flow of information from the CST to the country Parties and vice versa, require some improvement.</p> <p>(b) Since the CST plays an important role in defining the scientific knowledge that supports the implementation of the Convention, the work and recommendations of the CST should be taken into account in national reporting.</p>	

REPORTING FORMAT

A simple, comprehensive and rational common format for reporting following clear, logically structured and user-friendly reporting guidelines

Implementation	Implications
(a) A new reporting format needs to be produced and agreed, including a financial annex and a country profile. (b) Maximum length limits will be set for each section of the report. Such limits will focus reporting on UNCCD-relevant topics. (c) The use of quantitative information will be encouraged throughout the reporting format, to increase reliance on information that can be easily and systematically classified. (d) New guidelines for reporting need to be produced and agreed. These guidelines will steer the Parties in the preparation of reports, including the preparation of the financial annex and the country profile.	(a) Deadlines relating to the adoption of the new reporting guidelines should be respected and the approval process should be finalized on schedule, in order that the new reporting cycle can be based on the new reporting principles and formats. (b) The complexity of the review process should be balanced by a simple reporting format that allows for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the effective participation of affected country Parties, as the main sources of information, in the process; (ii) comparison among countries and regions; (iii) the logical and rationale presentation of information, minimizing (and if possible, removing) repetition; (iv) respect of country- and region-specific characteristics; (v) the capacity to accommodate specific reporting needs.
Rationale	
(a) Simplification of the reporting format and its increased effectiveness in delivering the information necessary for the review and assessment of the Convention is prioritized by decision 8/COP.8. (b) The need for new and better structured reporting guidelines is also commonly acknowledged. (c) Simplicity should not, however, be achieved by jeopardizing comprehensiveness. (d) A common format for reporting is proposed - following common reporting guidelines - for all affected country Parties. A common format for reporting represents the most efficient way to foster comparison, simplicity and effective compilation and analysis of the information by the secretariat and the GM. (e) Emphasis should be put on the need to develop user-friendly guidelines, possibly relying on the advice of communication specialists.	

Flexibility to accommodate new COP decisions, ad hoc COP requests and the particular characteristics of the reporting entities

Implementation	Implications
(a) Flexibility will be reflected in the new reporting format by means of dedicated sections. (b) The secretariat will screen COP decisions, starting with the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties, in order to identify whether new reporting requirements have emerged from COP decisions and notify reporting entities. Necessary revisions of reporting guidelines will be forwarded to the COP for adoption.	Ad hoc COP requests for reporting should be accompanied by specific terms of reference, as recommended by the AHWG.

Rationale

- (a) A balance needs to be found between the overall requirement to systematically and comprehensively review the progress of implementation of the Convention, on the one hand; and the broad spectrum of stakeholders, activities and frameworks (policy, environmental, economic, and social) that influence Convention implementation in affected country Parties, on the other hand.
 - (b) Reporting should comply with standards and formats that aim to produce relevant and scientifically sound information, but these standards and formats should be flexible enough to accommodate:
 - (i) reporting on important issues as perceived by each individual Party, and other than those highlighted by The Strategy;
 - (ii) COP deliberations that may supersede existing ones and may imply changes in implementation;
 - (iii) ad hoc COP requests for reporting on specific issues;
 - (iv) the particular characteristics of some country Parties, such as the small island developing States (SIDs), for which flexibility in their reporting formats is specifically required by decision 8/COP.8.
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Enabling the collection of best practices and success stories

Implementation	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) The new reporting format should facilitate the extraction of best practices, success stories and case studies related to the implementation of the Convention. Case studies may also focus on important lessons learned.(b) While respecting the criteria that will be used by Parties to identify best practices and success stories (criteria that are often based on the specificity of local socio-economic conditions), the secretariat should define a common framework for the definition and selection of best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) A section dedicated to the presentation of best practices and success stories will assist the secretariat and the CRIC in discharging their mandate, as determined by decision 1/COP.6 and decision 3/COP.8, respectively.(b) There is a need to define the topics and areas around which these best practices will be structured and classified. A methodology and a consultation on criteria are needed.(c) The UNCCD website, where best practices could be collected for sharing among Parties, institutions and the public in general, would need to be adapted to the new categories agreed for the classification.(d) A formal decision would be needed on where the data and information retrieved through the reports will be stored.

Rationale

- (a) The Strategy calls for effective knowledge-sharing systems to be in place for supporting both policymakers and end-users in the implementation of the Convention. Best practices and success stories are considered to be an integral part of this knowledge.
 - (b) Although progress has been recorded on information exchanges on best practice worldwide, the AHWG further recommends that information on best practices and success stories be included in the national reports. It also calls for a methodology to be developed to extract this information.
 - (c) To overcome the difficulties previously experienced in identifying and extracting from national reports the relevant information, a section dedicated to their presentation will be included in the new reporting format. Affected country Parties will thus take the leading role in identifying those positive experiences that deserve to be shared, disseminated and eventually replicated.
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REPORTING PROCESSES

The reporting times for the various reporting entities

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) The timing of the submission of reports by reporting entities and the future format of CRIC sessions will be discussed at CRIC 7 and adopted at COP 9. COP 9 will also consider and adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC.</p> <p>(b) Implementation of the above could be facilitated by setting a sequence for the delivery of reports among reporting Parties and within each reporting cycle.</p>	<p>(a) The implications resulting from a change in the timing of submissions of reports will have to be considered by Parties during their deliberations on the future format of CRIC and eventually when the new terms of reference for CRIC are adopted at COP 9.</p> <p>(b) Included among the implications is the need to revise COP decisions other than decision 11/COP.1, related to the timing of the submission of reports and the cycle for communicating other information, in order to ensure consistency.</p>

Rationale

- (a) Three reporting cycles have been completed since 1999. The first and third reporting cycles alternated reporting by African countries with that of other regions. The second reporting process took place in 2002 and was characterized by the submission of reports by all affected country Parties. Alternation of reporting is based on decision 11/COP.1.
- (b) Given that the review of reports will be guided by indicators, and not by themes, a reporting process involving all affected country Parties would give rise to the following positive aspects:
 - (i) the same reporting conditions for all Parties;
 - (ii) the same type of assistance provided to all Parties;
 - (iii) preparation of comprehensive analysis of progresses and trends at the global, regional and subregional levels;
 - (iv) the ability to significantly (in statistical terms) compare the information compiled and to synthesize.
- (c) The above positive aspects would allow the CRIC to draw comprehensive conclusions and to make knowledge-based recommendations to the COP that will ultimately facilitate its decision-making role.
- (d) Regular information flows from the UNCCD to other international processes (for example, the other Rio conventions, or global/regional exercises such as state of the environment reports) would also add to the reputation of the Convention as a reliable source of data related to desertification/land degradation and drought processes. This is in line with the third operational objective of The Strategy, calling for the Convention to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought.

An appropriate interval between reporting cycles

Implementation	Implications
<p>The timing of the submission of reports by reporting entities and the future format of CRIC sessions will be discussed at CRIC 7 and adopted at COP 9. COP 9 will also consider and adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC.</p>	<p>The implications of the various possible scenarios affecting the review of information provided by Parties and other reporting entities are contained in document ICCD/CRIC(7)/4.</p>

Rationale
(a) The length of the interval between two consecutive reporting cycles is mainly determined by the nature of the processes that countries are called to report on. Desertification and land degradation trends can only be appreciated on a medium- to long-term basis.
(b) The existing four-year interval between reporting cycles was considered to be appropriate by Parties.

Efficient treatment of information across the reporting process

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Classification – either of numerical or narrative material – is an efficient way to make the information retrievable and analytical enough for assessment. With the adoption of the new reporting format, more compatible and comprehensive information can be expected. Thus, classification may become feasible. This would enable a more systematic analysis of information. Once classified, it will be possible to automatically extract or retrieve information from reports.</p> <p>(b) Efficient treatment of information will require:</p> <p>(c) The setting up of systems for the systematic handling of the information that has been classified, as well as for designing environmental databases to support the reporting obligations of environmental conventions and agreements.</p> <p>(d) The delivery of reports in an electronic format. The electronic format should be provided to reporting Parties by the secretariat. Electronic submission of reports will not replace the formal channels for submission.</p> <p>(e) Classification criteria will have to be established taking into account the type of output analysis that the secretariat plans to carry out.</p> <p>(f) Classification tasks for affected country Parties will be simple, the secretariat being in charge of applying more comprehensive classification criteria to the information contained in the national reports.</p>	<p>(a) Analysis of the information obtained from reports will be shared between the secretariat and the GM (the latter being charged with analysing the information relating to financial matters)</p> <p>(b) Information systems shared between the two organizations are needed to support the analysis of classified information obtained from reports.</p> <p>(c) The secretariat will need the necessary technical and financial resources to implement the classification work. How these resources will be identified and mobilized should be considered. The use of external assistance could be envisaged.</p> <p>(d) It may be necessary to establish a comprehensive knowledge-management system at the central level to handle the information meant to be produced throughout the reporting process. The possibility of using processing tools for the analysis and synthesis of the information should also be considered.</p> <p>(e) The fact that national reports are submitted in different languages may add to the complexity of the classification process.</p> <p>(f) The establishment of information systems at the country level requires, among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) definition of the type of data to be retrieved and stored; (ii) determination of data flows from the different sources to the system; (iii) definition of data collection procedures; (iv) identification of persons dedicated to the system and of their roles; (v) definition of activities for recording, storing, and managing the data; <p>(g) Capacity building measures are needed to support the establishment of such systems at the national level</p>

Rationale
<p>(a) Information retrieval and compilation are the basis of reporting. Networking at the national level is suggested in order to improve the exchange of information and data among the NFPs, the line ministries and other stakeholders, and also at the level of local area programmes within the NAPs.</p> <p>(b) In particular, the AHWG recommended the establishment of compatible information systems, databases or procedures for collecting relevant information at country level and monitoring financial flows.</p> <p>(c) The GM further recommended a methodology for the identification and weighting of activities related to UNCCD topics within a wider portfolio of development and environmental projects.</p> <p>(d) Notwithstanding the positive implications of classification, affected country Parties should not be burdened by this additional requirement. Classification should instead be implemented within the secretariat, possibly supported by external assistance.</p> <p>(e) Financial reporting: a simple classification, according to the new strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy and, possibly, the Rio markers will be the responsibility of all reporting entities that are reporting on financial matters</p>

Timeliness and predictability of financial and technical resources, and appropriate time for the preparation of reports	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Reporting, servicing and facilitation are core activities of the secretariat (decision 3/COP.8). For its implementation, the following will be necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) calculation of the financial needs; (ii) modalities for the mobilization of resources, in particular with a view to making these resources available in advance (one year), as recommended; (iii) determination of necessary capacity building. <p>(b) This information should be made available by the secretariat to reporting stakeholders, to allow them to properly organize their reporting processes.</p>	<p>(a) The secretariat should know in advance the amount of resources required and which financial institutions may eventually be willing to contribute.</p> <p>(b) Information provided by the secretariat to reporting Parties should form part of a more comprehensive package of information on the reporting process, where Parties are informed on: logistics, timing, organization and the sequence of events; as well as the secretariat's expectations in terms of compliance with the new format, familiarization with the new reporting guidelines and the types of effort in terms of data collection, coordination, consultation, and so on.</p>

Rationale
<p>(a) The COP has repeatedly deliberated on the need for substantial, adequate and timely financial resources to affected country Parties, and to developing country Parties in particular. Predictability of funds is the basis for programmatic investment, including national reporting.</p> <p>(b) The AHWG has further stressed the need for adequate human and financial resources not only to comply with the new monitoring and reporting requirements, but also to carry out an effective revision of work programmes and NAPs.</p> <p>(c) With regard to predictability, the AHWG requested that information on the availability of funds to be made available to country Parties one year in advance, to allow for proper planning. This early information would also increase the time available for report preparation, a need commonly recognized.</p>

Capacity building	
Implementation	Implications
<p>The new reporting format will facilitate the highlighting of bottlenecks and constraints faced by countries in complying with the reporting requirements, in terms of skills and capacities. It will thus provide an opportunity for reporting Parties to stress the need for capacity building, and for the secretariat and the CRIC to continually monitor requests and progress on this issue.</p>	<p>(a) Capacity building should commence as soon as practicable and continue to be supported throughout the reporting process.</p> <p>(b) Practical support to the reporting process may be envisaged with regard to the financial annex.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) It is widely acknowledged that high-quality national reporting may be hampered by the lack of capacity to comply with the reporting requirements.</p> <p>(b) In particular, capacity building may be needed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) successful reporting on synergistic implementation of the Rio conventions at the national level; (ii) the consistent use of indicators; (iii) revisions of NAPs and the development of work programmes; (iv) the management of information systems for the collection and compilation of information; (v) compliance with the new reporting guidelines; (vi) the implementation of consultative processes. <p>(c) Improvements in financial reporting, as suggested by the GM, also implies capacity building.</p>	

Consultative and participatory coordination processes	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Information on validation meetings and on any other activity that may support an assessment of the level of participation and of the integration of stakeholders into the process for reporting to the Convention should be included in the national reports.</p> <p>(b) National reports should also reflect, where appropriate, activities relating to subregional and regional processes.</p> <p>(c) National networking and consultation should be supportive of the initiation of environmental information systems at the national level. These information systems, once established, will in turn be supportive of networking, in a reciprocal process.</p>	<p>A functional networking system is needed at the national level that is able to facilitate interaction between the centre and local stakeholders. It may in part be fostered through capacity building, but it also needs dedication and commitment from NFPs.</p>

Rationale

- (a) Reporting by affected country Parties should be guided by continual consultation with and participation by relevant stakeholders. Consultative and participatory processes take place at the national and other levels: subregional, regional and interregional. The latter are addressed under the principles relating to subregional and regional action programmes.
 - (b) At the national level, the following is expected:
 - (i) participatory implementation of the Convention, taking due account of the important role played by NGOs, civil society, community-based organizations and local development associations;
 - (ii) continual, comprehensive, and participatory monitoring and evaluation;
 - (iii) networking for the exchange of information and data among the NFPs, line ministries and other stakeholders, also at the level of local area programmes within the NAPs.
 - (c) The AHWG recommended the production of reports on validation meetings, in order to assess the level of participation by and integration of stakeholders in the reporting process.
 - (d) Networking could be facilitated by the establishment of national information systems, or by the adaptation of existing information systems to UNCCD requirements. These systems could also have the scope to facilitate the reporting obligations to other conventions (see the development of synergies), thus easing the reporting burden of country Parties, in particular the Least Developed Countries and the SIDs.
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Facilitating the development of synergies with the other Rio conventions

Implementation	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Synergies would be fostered in the reporting process of the Convention through the use of the Rio markers for the classification of projects reported in the financial annex. (b) The establishment of national committees on sustainable development and of national environmental information systems at the country level should be considered. (c) Capacity building will also be necessary. (d) Other mechanisms to increase the synergies among the Rio conventions should be investigated. These may include a systematic review and assessment of technical/thematic overlapping in the reporting requirements of the three Rio conventions, and/or the institutional mapping at the national level of the focal points and line ministries involved in the implementation of the three conventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Through the information included in the financial annex, the GM will be able to derive some preliminary analysis of the level of synergy among the conventions, which should be shared with CBD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). (b) In order to avoid duplication, it would be appropriate to survey existing information systems at the national level, especially those set up within the framework of international projects/assistance. Such assessments could be provided by the same country Parties, with specific reference to the information systems hosted by the NFPs, by the contact ministries of the other two Rio conventions and by other line ministries.

Rationale

- (a) An overall framework for harmonized reporting to the three Rio conventions is highly desirable, but unlikely to be achieved in the short-term. This is due to national and international complexities at the institutional level.
 - (b) Nevertheless, mainstreaming among strategies (CBD), national programmes (UNFCCC) and action programmes (UNCCD) could be facilitated by improving the coordination and circulation of information at the national and local levels, and by establishing national committees on sustainable development and national environmental information systems.
 - (c) In particular, initiating the setting up of country information systems, common to the three conventions, may improve the efficiency of reporting obligations under each Rio convention, a topic on which decision 8/COP.8 has requested the secretariat to advise in consultation with the Joint Liaison Group, the aim of which is the strengthening of cooperation in the implementation process of the three Rio conventions.
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Increased transparency in the dissemination of information

Implementation	Implications
A proposal for increased transparency in information dissemination was put forward by the CRIC to the COP, including ways and means for the secretariat to follow up on these new tasks. Provisions for such a proposal have been integrated into the work programme of the CRIC, which will be charged with defining ways and means to improve the review process undertaken by Parties.	Increased transparency in information dissemination implies more comprehensive and complex analysis (classification of reports, best practices, databases for storing information, etc.).

Rationale

- (a) Information provided through the national reports is currently aggregated at the global and regional levels.
 - (b) The new indicator-based approach and the new reporting format are meant to produce more comparable information. Synthesis and analysis will become increasingly comprehensive and informative, allowing for valid, effective and feasible deliberations by the COP.
 - (c) Aggregations of data at the subregional level may deliver significant messages. The collection and dissemination of best practices supports their take-up and replication by other countries.
 - (d) In the light of the above, affected country Parties should consider the possibility of allowing the information provided in the national reports (best practices, performance against indicators) to be disseminated through the UNCCD portal, the FIELD system of the GM, not only as individual national reports but also as aggregated syntheses and analyses, eventually showing the individual performance of countries against indicators.
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III. Conclusions and recommendations

9. This document is an addendum to document ICCD/CRIC(7)/3, which includes conclusions and recommendations relating to both the generic reporting principles and those pertinent to affected country Parties in particular. They are before CRIC 7 for review and consideration. The feedback received will be taken into account when preparing the draft reporting guidelines to be submitted to COP 9 for any decision it may wish to take on this matter.
