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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Improving the procedures for 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 developed country Parties

Summary

This document provides a detailed explanation of the principles for reporting by developed country Parties. It focuses on the rationale behind these principles, their implementation and 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 the developed 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 developed country Parties are included in document ICCD/CRIC(7)/3.

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I. Introduction

1. Article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and decision 11/COP.1 request developed country Parties to report on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of national action programmes (NAPs), including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention, and on the consultative processes and partnership agreements in which they are involved. Decision 11/COP.1 also establishes the format and content of reports, as well as the timetable for their submission.

2. During the three reporting cycles completed since the entry into force of the Convention, developed country Parties have had to report according to the schedule adopted by the first session of the Conference of the Parties, leading to a focus on support provided to affected African country Parties in 1999 and 2004, and on that provided to other affected regions in 2000 and 2006. In 2002, as an exceptional case, developed country Parties reported on the support provided to all affected country Parties. Overall, 31, 22 and 35 reports were submitted by developed country Parties during the first, second and third reporting cycles, respectively.

3. During the first reporting cycle, developed country Parties followed the reporting format set out in decision 11/COP.1. Changes to the formats of reports and to the procedures for communication of information were introduced by the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties and the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties, although these changes were made primarily to the format and content of reports by affected country Parties, and only to a lesser extent to those by developed country Parties. An explanatory note on reporting by developed country Parties was prepared before the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to guide the submission of reports during the second reporting cycle.¹

4. The Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on communication of information was established by the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties with a view to improving the procedures for the communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports submitted to the Conference of the parties (COP). Among the main shortcomings related to developed country Parties identified by the AHWG were: discrepancies in the information provided on investment flows, in particular between the information submitted to the UNCCD and that submitted to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); insufficient communication among stakeholders; and the lack of a common understanding on the types of development measures that are relevant to the Convention.²

5. The AHWG made the following recommendations to overcome the above problems: preparation of detailed reporting guidelines to facilitate consistency of the information contained in the reports; the necessity for reports to focus not only on the extent of the financial means provided, but also on the impact of such means; and the adoption of a standardized financial annex for the presentation of information relating to financial flows and investments.

¹ ICCD/CRIC(1)/INF.8.

² ICCD/CRIC(6)/6 and ICCD/CRIC(6)/6/Add.1.

6. This addendum focuses on the principles for reporting by developed 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 (GM), the advice received from a meeting of the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), held on 26 May 2008, and the advice received from the Inter-agency Task Force established for this purpose, which was convened on 26-27 June 2008. Finally, the reporting principles have been drafted taking into account the need to rationalize the time and resources of developed country Parties in meeting their reporting obligations under the Convention, and the need to capitalize more on their knowledge and information systems as well as on their assessment capacity.

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

II. Principles for reporting by developed country Parties

I. CONTENT OF REPORTING

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

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Reporting by developed country Parties will be based on a new reporting format that facilitates the compliance of the information provided with the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives.</p> <p>(b) Reporting will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a description of the extent to which the Convention has been mainstreamed into the country's development cooperation strategy; (ii) contributions to the achievement of the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives, with specific reference to outcomes 2.4 and 5.2 of operational objectives 2 and 5 of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy); and (iii) actions undertaken to respond to the relevant requests of the COP. 	<p>(a) Reflecting the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives in the reports will imply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the development of a reporting format and guidelines for developed country Parties; (ii) the definition of indicators for the operational objectives of The Strategy.

Rationale

- (a) Developed country Parties play a fundamental role in the implementation of the Convention, as is outlined by articles 4 and 6 of the Convention and by the regional implementation annexes.
- (b) This role has been further confirmed in the newly adopted 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018).
- (c) The Strategy outlines four strategic objectives and five operational objectives. One operational objective is the creation of enabling policy frameworks that support the implementation of the Convention. In particular, developed country Parties are expected to mainstream UNCCD objectives and sustainable management interventions into their development cooperation programmes/projects (outcome 2.4 of The Strategy); they are also expected to provide affected country Parties with substantial, adequate, timely and predictable financial resources (outcome 5.2 of The Strategy).
- (d) According to the deliberations of the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties, developed country Parties are further expected to:
 - (i) support the implementation of NAPs (decision 1/COP.8) and the necessary capacity building (decision 1/COP.8), making resources available (decision 3/COP.8);
 - (ii) prioritize support for The Strategy in their policies and cooperation programmes (decision 3/COP.8);
 - (iii) assist affected country Parties to access new and additional financial resources (decision 4/COP.8);
 - (iv) provide technical and financial support to affected developing country Parties and other eligible country Parties, under the regional cooperation frameworks (decision 5/COP.8).
- (e) Descriptions of the extent to which developed country Parties have contributed to the achievement of the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives, and of the modalities through which they have responded to the deliberations of the COP are a valuable information resource for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention.

B. Indicator-based analysis and assessment	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Developed country Parties should submit nationally identified indicators, with particular reference to those necessary for the measurement of outcomes 2.4 and 5.2 of operational objectives 2 and 5 of The Strategy, respectively.</p> <p>(b) Descriptions of contributions to the achievement of the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives should follow an indicator-based approach, to in pursuit of overall consistency with the indicator-based approach fostered by The Strategy.</p> <p>(c) 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. Developed country Parties should contribute to the definition of this core set of indicators. The process 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.</p> <p>(d) Two sets of indicators are deemed necessary: ‘impact indicators’ to measure the progress achieved against the strategic objectives of The Strategy; and ‘performance indicators’ to measure the progress achieved against the operational objectives of The Strategy. Developed country Parties are specifically referred to The Strategy with regard to the mainstreaming of UNCCD objectives and sustainable management interventions into their development cooperation programmes/projects (outcome 2.4 of The Strategy); and the provision of substantial, adequate, timely and predictable financial resources to affected country Parties (outcome 5.2 of The Strategy). A core set of performance indicators, common to all developed country Parties, will have to be identified in order to measure progress relating to these two specific outcomes.</p> <p>(e) In addition to this core set of indicators, developed country Parties may have their own country-specific indicators and data that properly reflect their country’s specificities.</p>	<p>(a) Impact indicators related to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 are to be refined by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), as per decision 3/COP.8. Indicators for strategic objective 4 should be proposed by the secretariat based on advice provided by the GM; given the close linkages that exist among all the strategic objectives, the views of the CST on indicators for this strategic objective should also be considered.</p> <p>(b) According to decision 3/COP.8, the consolidation of nationally identified 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.</p> <p>(c) The definition of indicators is a unique opportunity to add to the focus of reporting on UNCCD-related matters. Broad indicators should complement more specific indicators able to measure UNCCD-relevant information.</p>

Rationale

- (a) Consistency with the Convention, 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 Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (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) The AHWG also recognized the need to identify indicators to facilitate reporting on measurable impacts.
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C. Attentiveness to the impact of the support provided

Implementation	Implications
(a) A section of the new reporting format for developed country Parties will be dedicated to the qualitative and, as far as possible, quantitative assessment of the impact of the support provided to affected country Parties.	(a) The impact of investments may be derived by screening the mid-term reviews and/or final evaluations of projects and programmes, information that is usually available to funding organizations.
(b) The assessment will comprise an analysis of lessons learned, and of the drivers and the needs behind the drivers.	(b) Information on the impact of investments will: (a) improve understanding of the effectiveness of the support provided within the framework of the Convention; and (b) encourage a performance-based mechanism for funding within the Convention.

Rationale

- (a) Indicator-based analysis and assessment is one of the reporting principles suggested for guiding the reporting of developed country Parties.
 - (b) This assessment may be further improved by the reporting of developed country Parties on mid-term reviews and final evaluations undertaken for UNCCD-related programmes and projects.
 - (c) Independent reviews may highlight important conclusions and recommendations, also in terms of cost-effectiveness. Developed country Parties are encouraged to emphasize these findings in their reporting and to produce brief assessments of the efficiency and impact of the interventions they have funded.
 - (d) This information may be used by developed country Parties to justify their contribution to the Convention. It is also in line with the recommendation of the AHWG to developed country Parties for providing information not only on the financial means made available, but also on the impact of these investments.
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D. Coherence, comparability and comprehensiveness of financial information

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Financial reporting by developed country Parties will be based on a financial annex.</p> <p>(b) In order to achieve harmonization of the financial information prior to its delivery to the secretariat, it may be necessary to undertake consultations.</p> <p>(c) The financial information required by the Convention should include 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.</p>	<p>(a) The financial annex will contribute to increasing the synergies among the Rio conventions, since it will include a classification of the projects against the three conventions according to the Rio markers.</p> <p>(b) Guidelines for the preparation of the financial annex need to be prepared.</p> <p>(c) The establishment of national information systems may in future allow systematic financial data flows from developed country Parties to the Convention, including outside the framework of the four-year reporting cycle. More frequent reporting of financial information would allow the GM to update its central database, the Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation (FIELD), and produce performance reports for the CRIC, as recommended by the AHWG.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) Several major shortcomings were noted in the reporting of financial information to the Convention in the three reporting cycles, among which were discrepancies between the information provided by funding parties and more specifically by affected Country Parties and that provided by developed country Parties, and a low level of detail on financial flows and investments; double-counting of resources in the case of co-financed projects; and discrepancies between the information submitted to the UNCCD and that submitted to the DAC of the OECD.</p> <p>(b) The reasons behind the discrepancies in financial reporting include poor communication among all the actors and a lack of a common understanding of the type of UNCCD-related measures.</p> <p>(c) To overcome these constraints, the AHWG and the GM recommended the adoption of a standardized financial annex.</p> <p>(d) The application of the targeted operational objectives of The Strategy and, possibly, the Rio markers to each project will allow a more precise attribution of resources to UNCCD-related activities. This is in line with the recommendation of the GM to adopt a methodology for better identifying and weighting Convention-related activities.</p> <p>(e) The financial annex should not be a stand-alone solution, but should be complemented by a series of accompanying measures. Among these measures, preliminary consultations between affected country Parties and their financing developed countries are proposed in order to minimize discrepancies and avoid over- or under-reporting.</p>	

E. Ensuring consistency with the work of the CST	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Any recommendation or ad hoc request to the country Parties for reporting on CST-related matters should be within the logic of the revised reporting format. This approach will avoid establishing additional working modalities that may not be readily appreciated by the country Parties.</p> <p>(b) Streamlining the CST input through the standard reporting process will require:</p> <p>(i) that the timing of CST requests is aligned to the reporting cycles;</p> <p>(ii) that requests are supported by clear terms of reference.</p> <p>(c) The CST should elaborate on the information received through the reports 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 by 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, seem to 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>	

II. FORMAT OF REPORTING

A. A simple, comprehensive and rational common format for reporting following clear, logically structured and user-friendly reporting guidelines	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) A new reporting format needs to be produced and agreed, including a financial annex and a programme and project sheet.</p> <p>(b) Maximum lengths will be set for each section of the report. Such length limits will focus reporting on UNCCD-relevant topics.</p> <p>(c) 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 of the programme and project sheet.</p>	<p>(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.</p> <p>(b) If Relevant Activity Codes (RACs) are to be used in the programme and project sheet to classify the main objectives and activities of the programmes and/or projects, RACs should be reviewed by the GM in the light of The Strategy.</p>

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) The complexity of the review process should be balanced by a simple reporting format allowing for effective contributions by developed country Parties to the review and assessment of the Convention.
- (d) Simplicity should not, however, be achieved by jeopardizing comprehensiveness.
- (e) A common format for reporting and common reporting guidelines are necessary in order to gather the same type of information from all developed countries and to allow comparison among countries. A single reporting format is proposed for all developed country Parties. This will add to the overall simplicity of the process and to the effectiveness of the compilation and analysis of the information by the secretariat and the GM.
- (f) The new reporting format should be structured in a rational way, allowing for logical presentation of information and minimizing or removing repetition.
- (g) Emphasis should be put on the need to develop user-friendly guidelines, possibly relying on the advice of a communication specialists.

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

Implementation	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 	<p>Ad hoc COP requests for reporting should be accompanied by specific terms of reference, as recommended by the AHWG.</p>

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) influencing Convention implementation, on the other hand.
- (b) Reporting should comply with standards and formats that aim to produce relevant and scientifically sound information; however, these standards and formats should be flexible enough to accommodate:
 - (i) reporting on important matters 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.

C. Enabling the collection of best practices and success stories

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Reporting by developed country Parties will be based on a new reporting format that will facilitate the presentation of best practices, success stories and case studies related to the implementation of the Convention. Case studies may also focus on important lessons learned.</p> <p>(b) While respecting the criteria that will be used by Parties to identify best practices and success stories, the secretariat should define a common framework for the definition and selection of best practices.</p> <p>(c) Developed country Parties may provide important added value to this knowledge-sharing process by focusing on lessons learned.</p>	<p>(a) In the reports from developed country Parties, 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.</p> <p>(b) There is a need to define the topics and areas along which these best practices would be structured and classified. A methodology by which best practices may be collected will be prepared based on guidance received from the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7).</p> <p>(c) The UNCCD website, where best practices could be collected for sharing among all Parties, institutions, and the public in general, will need to be adapted to the new categories agreed for the classification of best practices.</p> <p>(d) A formal decision will be needed on where the data and information retrieved from the reports will be stored.</p>

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 with information exchanges on best practice worldwide, the AHWG further recommended that information on best practices and success stories be included in national reports. It also called for a methodology to be developed to extract this information.
- (c) Developed country Parties could contribute to this process by reporting on best practices and success stories, and also on case studies and lessons learned, especially those highlighted in the mid-term and final reviews of projects and programmes.
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D. Standardized and classified description of projects and programmes	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Reporting by developed country Parties will be based on a new reporting format, including a programme and project sheet for the description of projects and programmes relevant to the Convention.</p> <p>(b) The programme and project sheet will have a simple structure, harmonized with the structure of the financial annex, to reduce the effort required by reporting countries to comply with the new format.</p> <p>(c) Classification will be requested of the main objectives and activities of the programmes and/or projects against the objectives of The Strategy and, possibly, the Rio markers.</p> <p>(d) The information included in the programme and project sheet will also be classified according to the UNCCD-specific Relevant Activity Codes (RACs) and the Rio markers.</p> <p>(e) This classification will be used to support the processing of the financial information provided in the financial annex. The classification works towards overcoming the lack of guidance for identifying and classifying UNCCD relevant activities.</p>	<p>(a) The following will be necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the development of programme and project sheet formats; (ii) the preparation of guidelines, including a description of the codes and of the rules for their attribution. <p>(b) It is also necessary for the GM to review and update the RACs, in line with The Strategy.</p> <p>(c) Descriptions of projects and programmes supporting the implementation of the Convention, the enactment and/or execution of which they have facilitated, should become a major element in the reporting of developed country Parties.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) Descriptions of projects and programmes supporting the implementation of the Convention are a common feature of the reports produced by developed country Parties. However, such descriptions vary widely among the Parties.</p> <p>(b) In order to produce comprehensive information, common to all developed country Parties, a programme and project sheet will guide the description of projects and activities. The aim is twofold: to ensure that all countries provide the same type of information, and to standardize their presentation.</p> <p>(c) A balance needs to be found between the different reporting obligations of developed country Parties and the existence of pre-defined formats within each country Party, on one hand, and the requirements of the Convention, on the other hand.</p> <p>(d) This balance may be achieved by keeping the format simple, so that information may be easily retrieved from existing formats. Moreover, the programme and project sheet structure will cohere with the financial annex structure, thus optimizing the reporting efforts.</p>	

III. REPORTING PROCESSES

A. 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 entities and within each reporting cycle.</p>	<p>(a) The implications resulting from a change in the timing of the submission 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 CIRC are adopted by 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	
<p>(a) Three reporting cycles have been completed since 1999. The first and third reporting processes 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 reports is based on decision 11/COP.1.</p> <p>(b) Given that the review of reports will be guided by indicators and not by themes, a reporting process by all Parties would give rise to the following positive aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) the same reporting conditions for all country 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. <p>(c) The above positive aspects would allow the CRIC to draw comprehensive conclusions and to make knowledge-based recommendations to the COP.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(e) Reporting by all entities complies with the synchronization of the time interval between the reporting cycles of all regions, also called for by the AHWG in order to facilitate cross-country comparability and trend analysis.</p> <p>(f) From the point of view of developed country Parties, reporting by all Parties implies higher cost-effectiveness than alternate reporting.</p>	

B. 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>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>(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.</p> <p>(b) The existing four-year interval between reporting cycles was considered to be appropriate by Parties and by the AHWG.</p>	

C. 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 should 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 this information from reports.</p> <p>(b) Efficient treatment of information will require the setting up of information systems for the systematic handling of the information that has been classified, as well as for the designs of environmental databases to support the reporting obligations of environmental conventions/agreements.</p> <p>(c) The use of the Rio markers should be considered with regard to the classification of programmes and projects. Categorization of projects according to the new strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy should also be carried out.</p>	<p>(a) Developed country Parties may have well established, centralized information systems for storing and managing environmental data. In that case, their adaptation to serve UNCCD and other reporting obligations should be encouraged.</p> <p>(b) 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>(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) The fact that reports are submitted in different languages may add to the complexity of the classification process.</p> <p>(e) The use of RACs should be considered to classify the objectives and main activities of the projects proposed by developed country Parties in the programme and project sheet. The RACs are continually updated by the GM. Their review and adaptation to better reflect the strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy will be necessary before the beginning of the next reporting cycle, and well in advance if they are to be included and presented in the revised reporting guidelines.</p>

Rationale

- (a) Information retrieval and compilation are the basis of reporting. In particular, the AHWG recommended the establishment of compatible information systems, databases and procedures for collecting relevant information at the country level and for monitoring financial flows.
 - (b) 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.
 - (c) Projects described by developed country Parties will be classified according to the RACs and possibly the Rio markers. Classification based on the RACs will take into account the main objectives and, possibly, the main activities of the project.
 - (d) Financial reporting: a simple classification according to the new strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy and the Rio markers will be the responsibility of all entities that are reporting on financial matters.
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D. Facilitate the development of synergies with the other Rio conventions

Implementation	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) The establishment of national committees on sustainable development and of national environmental information systems at the country level should be considered.(b) Synergies will be fostered in the reporting process of the Convention through the possible use of the Rio markers for the classification of projects reported in the financial annex and in the programme and project sheet.(c) Other mechanisms should be investigated to increase the synergies among reporting obligations. These may include a systematic review and assessment of the technical/thematic overlaps in the reporting requirements of the three Rio conventions.	Through the information included in the financial annex, the GM will be able to derive some preliminary analyses of the level of synergy among the conventions, which should be shared with CBD and UNFCCC.

Rationale

- (a) An overall framework for harmonized reporting under 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 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 on the implementation process of the three Rio conventions.
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III. Conclusions and recommendations

8. 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 developed country Parties in particular. They are before CRIC 7 for review and consideration. The feedback received will be taken into account in preparing draft reporting guidelines to be submitted to COP 9 for any decision it may wish to take on this matter.
