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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 the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and relevant international financial institutions and mechanisms

Summary

This document provides a detailed explanation of the principles for reporting by United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and relevant international financial institutions and mechanisms. 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 these entities 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 these entities are included in document ICCD/CRIC(7)/3.

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I. Introduction

1. It was widely acknowledged from the outset in the intergovernmental processes and the foundations of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) that the key objective of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought can only be achieved through the active involvement of relevant stakeholders at all levels. Taking into account the inherently multipolar nature of the process, the Convention made cooperation with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) one of the main obligations of its Parties.¹

2. The Convention determined that the role of the United Nations organizations and of other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) is to act as platforms for cooperation among the Parties and for the coordination and harmonization of activities,² in particular as they relate to the elaboration and the implementation of action programmes³, provision and dissemination of information and best practices,⁴ promotion, financing and facilitation of the transfer of technology and know-how,⁵ support for building and strengthening capacity at the local and national levels,⁶ and promoting awareness-raising and education to increase understanding of the causes and effects of desertification and drought and of the importance of meeting the objectives of the Convention.⁷

3. Provision, through various mechanisms within the United Nations system and through multilateral financial institutions and their governing bodies, of support at the national, subregional and regional levels to activities that enable developing country Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention is considered crucial.⁸

4. The relationship between the Conference of the Parties (COP) and these organizations is perceived as two-way and collaborative. The COP is entrusted by the Convention with both providing information to such institutions, on the one hand,⁹ and receiving information by seeking cooperation with and utilizing the services of these organizations, on the other hand.¹⁰

5. Taking into account the particular responsibilities of these organizations, as set out in the Convention, and the need and obligation to establish permanent, reliable and consistent flows of information between the COP and these organizations, the COP, in its decision 11/COP.1, emphasized two main roles for these organizations in the context of reporting: to provide expertise to the Parties in the preparation of reports and in the dissemination of relevant information; and to provide information on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention.

¹ Convention text, article 4, paragraph 2(f).

² Convention text, article 14, paragraph 2.

³ Convention text, article 9, paragraph 3 and article 14, paragraph 1.

⁴ Convention text, article 16(d).

⁵ Convention text, article 18, paragraphs 1 and 2(a).

⁶ Convention text, article 19, paragraph 2.

⁷ Convention text, article 19, paragraphs 3 and 4.

⁸ Convention text, article 21, paragraph 2 and article 20, paragraph 5(b).

⁹ Convention text, article 21, paragraph 1(c).

¹⁰ Convention text, article 22.

6. These entities do not have an obligation to report because they are not Parties to the Convention. The COP, in its decision 11/COP.1, “encourages” them to provide information, as appropriate, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention. No specific format for such reports is mentioned, except that the reports should include summaries, in principle not exceeding four pages. No help guide and no explanatory note has been prepared for these organizations, and they continue to report according to their individual views on how to organize and structure such reports. The secretariat simply compiles such information and submits it to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) in a report.

7. Between 1999 and 2006, in the course of the three completed reporting cycles, 91 reports were submitted either to the COP or the CRIC by IGOs and United Nations organizations from 22 relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and 19 IGOs. During the first reporting cycle (1999 for Africa and 2000 for the other regions), 12 United Nations organizations submitted 20 reports, and 10 reports were submitted by IGOs. In the second reporting cycle (2002), there were 14 reports by United Nations organizations and 10 from IGOs. In the third reporting cycle (2004 for Africa and 2006 for the other regions), 16 United Nations organizations submitted 23 reports, and 14 IGOs submitted reports.

8. Several conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the pattern of reporting by IGOs and United Nations organizations:

(a) While there is a consistent balance between the number of reports submitted by the United Nations organizations on the support provided to African country Parties and the number submitted on support provided to Parties of other regions, a significantly larger number of reports submitted by the IGOs were on Africa than on the other regions. This may be linked to the larger number of regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations in Africa dealing with topics related to desertification, but also to the greater emphasis that international IGOs place on combating desertification in Africa compared to other regions;

(b) When the reporting was divided into two tranches, that is, during the first and third reporting cycles, only eight United Nations organizations in the first cycle and seven United Nations organizations in the third cycle sent reports for both Africa and the other regions, and not a single IGO sent a report for both, which may be interpreted as specialization by the various international entities on particular regions;

(c) The number of reporting organizations has increased over time, both in terms of IGOs and United Nations organizations, which may be linked to strengthened awareness raising activities by the Convention and the increasingly proactive role of the COP in soliciting input from other entities.

9. From a more detailed examination of the content of such reports, it becomes evident that the lack of reporting guidelines has had strong impact on their quality and format. It has been virtually impossible to draw any substantive conclusions from a compilation of these reports, not only because of the incoherent way in which the information is presented, but also because of the different perspectives that the various organizations have on the provision of support to affected country Parties in the implementation of their action programmes. United Nations organizations

and those IGOs that are assisting with the implementation of action programmes emphasize the technical assistance they provide to affected developing country Parties. However, Those IGOs that are international financial institutions and mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF),¹¹ the World Bank, regional development banks, and so on, mainly report on the support provided, either directly or through other specialized and development agencies, to sustainable land management (SLM) projects at all levels. In both cases, the information provided cannot be evaluated against the information provided by affected country Parties. This is seen as the main problem in the communication of information from these entities to the COP.

10. Another shortcoming of the existing approach is that, although in many cases the information provided by these organizations is similar – or least its underlying principle is providing information on the support given to affected developing country Parties – to the information that developed country Parties are supposed to be providing, a comparative analysis of the two sets of reports has been impossible. It is self-evident that sound statistical data on the financial support to combating desertification and the implementation of action programmes under the UNCCD cannot be obtained without a coherent approach to the use of this information and the provision of “comparable, compatible and harmonized data”.¹²

11. The Ad-Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on improving the procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports submitted to the COP, established by decision 8/COP.7, recognized these weaknesses, but provided very little input and guidance on how to devise a future reporting structure that avoids these limitations. The AHWG merely noted that any attempt to identify standards and specific guidelines for reporting should ensure that relevant issues deriving from the specific mandates of the various IGOs and United Nations organizations should not be excluded *ex ante*,¹³ and called for flexibility in the reporting guidelines to take account of the benefit such organizations bring to the implementation of the Convention.¹⁴

12. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy), adopted by the COP by decision 3/COP.8, reflects the aspirations of the Parties to give a new impetus to the implementation of the Convention by strengthening the focus on achieving the targets set by the COP through a performance monitoring system and indicator-based assessment. The operational objectives set by this decision (advocacy, awareness raising and education; policy framework; science, technology and knowledge; capacity building; and financing and technology transfer) are, without exception, closely linked to the roles of the IGOs and the United Nations organizations in the UNCCD processes, as laid down by the Convention and mentioned above. It is therefore clear that the indicators to be adopted by the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9), based on the submissions by the Parties, can and should closely connect to the support that the IGOs and United Nations organizations are

¹¹ It should be noted that the GEF, following acceptance by the COP that it is a financial mechanism of the Convention (decision 6/COP.6) and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and the GEF (decision 6/COP.7), has a specific role in the Convention process, and that special reporting obligations have been established for the GEF by the COP. The COP consequently decided to invite the secretariat to propose separate/special reporting guidelines for reporting by the GEF, which are discussed in ICCD/CRIC(7)/3/Add.4 and are not elaborated in detail here.

¹² Decision 8/COP.7.

¹³ ICCD/CRIC(5)/9.

¹⁴ ICCD/CRIC(6)/6.

providing to affected countries, and thus reflected in the reports they are expected to submit to the COP and the CRIC in the future. This is the approach taken by this document, which follows a structure similar to the documents prepared for the reporting principles of affected and developed country Parties, the GEF, the secretariat, the Global Mechanism (GM) and subregional and regional action programmes (ICCD/CRIC(7)/3/Add.1 to Add.2 and Add.4 to Add.7, respectively). This document should be understood as a basis for the CRIC at its seventh session (CRIC 7) to provide further input in order for the COP 9 to make a final decision on the reporting guidelines for United Nations organizations and other IGOs.

II. Principles for reporting by United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and relevant international financial institutions and mechanisms

I. CONTENT OF REPORTING

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

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Reporting by the IGOs and United Nations organizations will be based on a new reporting format that facilitates: (a) a description of the extent to which the Convention and support to the implementation of action programmes under it has been placed on the agenda; (b) an assessment of their contribution to the achievement of the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives, with specific reference to the operational objectives set by The Strategy; and (c) the provision of information on actions taken to respond to relevant requests by the COP.</p> <p>(b) Particular emphasis will be placed on the provision of information, from those IGOs and United Nations organizations which are international financial institutions, facilities and funds, 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.</p>	<p>(a) Reflecting the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives in the report content implies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the development of a reporting format and guidelines for IGOs and United Nations organizations; (ii) the definition of indicators for the operational objectives. <p>(b) United Nations agencies and IGOs are also to be involved in the review of work programmes and national action programmes (NAPs), which is required for affected country Parties at the national level (decision 3/COP.8). Information relating to the activities mentioned in these work programmes should be provided in reports by United Nations agencies and IGOs as a mandatory obligation, whereas any other information may be furnished and analysed as is deemed fit.</p>

Rationale

- (a) IGOs and United Nations organizations are important actors in the Convention process. Various Convention articles define the role of these organizations, in particular in relation to their support to the implementation of action programmes provision and dissemination of information and best practices; promotion, financing and facilitation of the transfer of technology and know-how; capacity building, and promoting awareness raising and education; as well as provision and facilitation of financial support to enable developing country Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention.
 - (b) Although they are not specifically mentioned in The Strategy, which was adopted by the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8), it is clear that the four strategic and five operational objectives outlined in The Strategy cannot be achieved without the support of these organizations. In particular, the five operational objectives of the strategy are closely linked to the role of the IGOs and United Nations organizations in the UNCCD process as defined by the Convention.
 - (c) The COP has made an increasing number of requests to IGOs and United Nations organizations to provide various supporting services to the Parties. For instance, at COP 8, the IGOs and United Nations organizations were requested to:
 - (i) support capacity building in a sustainable manner in all areas relevant to the implementation of the NAPs (decision 1/COP.8),
 - (ii) mobilize and provide substantial financial resources from all sources, in particular for developing countries and for other eligible countries, where appropriate, for implementation of the objectives of the Convention (decision 1/COP.8),
 - (iii) support participatory natural resource management as a tool to prevent land degradation and to promote the sharing of approaches and experiences in this regard (decision 1/COP.8),
 - (iv) make resources available to affected developing countries for the implementation of The Strategy (decision 3/COP.8), and so on.
 - (d) The information on the extent to which IGOs and United Nations organizations have contributed to the achievement of the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives, and the modalities through which they have responded to the deliberations of the COP, represent valuable information for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention.
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B. Indicator-based analysis and assessment

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) The definition of a set of indicators valid for all stakeholders (a 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.</p> <p>(b) Following decision 3/COP.8, the secretariat invited the Parties to submit their proposals for indicators relevant to the achievement of the operational objectives of The Strategy. These will be consolidated and harmonized and presented for review to the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7) and, following the input received there, to COP 9 for adoption. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the GM will also be requested to advise on these performance indicators.</p> <p>(c) Two sets of indicators are proposed: ‘impact indicators’ to measure the progress achieved against the four strategic objectives of The Strategy; and ‘performance indicators’ to measure the progress achieved against the five operational objectives of The Strategy.</p>	<p>(a) The IGOs and United Nations organizations should, for the sake of consistency and comparability, structure their reporting using the same indicator-based approach.</p> <p>(b) A core set of performance indicators for relevant international financial institutions, facilities and funds should be identified to measure their responsiveness to operational objective 5.3. These should be in line with the indicators to be set for affected country Parties.</p> <p>(c) Furthermore, specific IGOs and United Nations organizations may have their own, individually validated, indicators and data that properly reflect their specificity. This is in line with the concerns expressed by the AHWG that harmonization in reporting by various IGOs and United Nations organizations should not be at the cost of neglecting the specificities of their individual mandates and the roles they play in the UNCCD process.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) The Strategy places special emphasis on the adoption of an indicator-based approach in the assessment of progress with implementation of the Convention and in reporting thereon. While The Strategy adopted broad indicators to measure the level of achievement of its strategic objectives, to be refined by the CST and the GM/ UNCCD secretariat, it has not adopted indicators for achievement of the operational objectives. These are to be identified by the Parties.</p> <p>(b) The rationale behind this indicator-based approach is to improve the quantitative impact assessment of measures and programmes implemented within the scope of the Convention, which so far has been limited or absent.</p> <p>(c) An indicator-based approach implies the systematic analysis of selected indicators at each reporting cycle, in order to draw conclusions on trends and make recommendations for action. Indicators are common tools for supporting the monitoring and assessment of implementation and trends in the realm of sustainable development-related multilateral processes. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Millennium Development Goals process all use indicators for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>(d) The AHWG also recognized the need to identify indicators to facilitate reporting on measurable impacts.</p> <p>(e) IGOs and United Nations organizations are specifically mentioned under operational objective 5, and expected outcome 5.3: Parties increase their efforts to mobilize financial resources from international financial institutions, facilities and funds, including the GEF, by promoting the UNCCD/SLM agenda within the governing bodies of these institutions.</p>	

C. Attentiveness to the impact of the support provided	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) A section of the new reporting format for IGOs and United Nations organizations will be dedicated to the qualitative and, as far as possible, quantitative assessment of the impact of support provided by the IGOs and United Nations organizations to affected country Parties. The assessment will comprise an analysis of lessons learned, and of the drivers and the needs behind the drivers.</p> <p>(b) Based on the specific role that the United Nations organizations and IGOs have in providing support to affected country Parties, there should be a differentiation between the financial support and the other support provided (technical assistance, transfer of technology and know-how, awareness raising, education, etc.)</p> <p>(c) In the spirit of the provisions of decision 11/COP.1, a special indicator may be developed for the assessment of expertise/support provided to the affected country Parties in the preparation of reports and in the dissemination of relevant information.</p>	<p>(a) The impact of support, whether financial or other, may be derived by screening the mid-term reviews and/or final evaluations of projects and programmes, information that is usually available to IGOs and United Nations organizations.</p> <p>(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 support of activities under the Convention.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) Impact assessments may be improved, in the reporting of IGOs and United Nations organizations, by using both the mid-term reviews and the final evaluations undertaken for UNCCD-related programmes and projects, which could also lead to the identification of best practices as requested by decision 3/COP.8.</p> <p>(b) Independent reviews should highlight important conclusions and provide recommendations. IGOs and United Nations organizations should be encouraged to emphasize reporting of these findings and to produce brief assessments of the efficiency and impact of the activities they have supported.</p> <p>(c) This information would shed a clearer light on the possible need for improvements in project elaboration and implementation, and would thus contribute to the lesson-learning approach taken by the Convention process.</p>	

D. Coherence, comparability and comprehensiveness of financial information

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Financial reporting by IGOs and United Nations organizations will be based on a new reporting format (financial annex), common to all reporting entities.</p> <p>(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 action programmes and should encompass both domestic and external resources.</p> <p>(c) In order to harmonize the financial information prior to its submission to the COP or the CRIC, it may be necessary to undertake consultations. In such cases, modalities for the implementation of consultations should be proposed by the GM. IGOs and United Nations organizations may act as supporters and coordinators of such consultations.</p>	<p>(a) The financial annex will contribute to increased synergies among the Rio conventions, since it will require classification of proposed projects against the three conventions and according to the Rio markers.</p> <p>(b) Guidelines related to the preparation of the financial annex will have to be prepared.</p> <p>(c) The establishment of national information systems in affected country Parties would enable a systematized approach to the collection of relevant information and would consequently allow systematic financial data flows between and among different stakeholders.</p>

Rationale
<p>(a) Several major shortcomings were noted in the provision of financial information to the COP or the CRIC during the last three reporting cycles, for example: discrepancies in the information provided by donors and recipients; a lack 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 to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The reasons behind the discrepancies in financial reporting include insufficient communication among various actors and the lack of a common understanding of UNCCD-related measures.</p> <p>(b) In order to overcome these constraints, the AHWG took up the proposal of the GM to adopt a standardized financial annex.</p> <p>(c) The application of Rio markers and of the targeted operational objectives of The Strategy (see principle ‘Standardized and classified description of projects and programmes’) to each project would allow for a more precise attribution of resources to UNCCD-related activities.</p> <p>(d) 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 development partners are proposed in order to minimize discrepancies and avoid issues of over- or under-reporting.</p>

E. Ensuring consistency with the work of the CST	
Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Any recommendation or ad hoc request for reporting made by the COP to the various stakeholders in the CST-related fields should be made following the logic of the revised reporting format. This will lead to clarity of information provision and avoid duplication of work.</p> <p>(b) Streamlining the CST input through the standardized reporting process will require that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the timing of CST requests be aligned to reporting cycles; (ii) the CST-related requests by the COP be harmonized with the reporting format, and accompanied by the specification of the section of the report where the information should be provided and in which form; (iii) the requests be supported by clear terms of reference. 	<p>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>
Rationale	
<p>(a) Decision 3/COP.8 as well as decision 13/COP.8 redefine the role and the responsibilities of the CST. The interaction between the CST and the Convention stakeholders and the flow of information among them require some improvement.</p> <p>(b) United Nations agencies and IGOs have a considerable amount of information at their disposal that relates to the deliberations of the CST and could therefore be used to synergize CST efforts at the regional and the global levels.</p>	

II. REPORTING FORMAT

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

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) New guidelines for reporting need to be produced and agreed. These guidelines will steer the United Nations organizations and NGOs in the preparation of reports. Maximum length limits will be set for each section of the report. Setting length limits will focus reporting on UNCCD- relevant topics.</p> <p>(b) Reporting formats for United Nations agencies and IGOs will include the programme and project sheet and the financial annex.</p> <p>(c) The programme and project sheet will be used for the description of UNCCD-related projects and programmes which the IGOs and United Nations organizations have supported, or are supporting.</p> <p>(d) The programme and project sheet should be simple and harmonized with the structure of the financial annex.</p> <p>(e) The information included in the project sheet will be classified according to UNCCD-specific Relevant Activity Codes (RACs) and the Rio conventions-specific Rio markers.</p>	<p>(a) The reporting principles proposed here will be discussed by the Parties and observers at CRIC 7. On the basis of feedback received from all the stakeholders, a set of reporting guidelines will be proposed for adoption at COP 9. This process needs to be finalized at COP 9 in order that the new reporting cycle can be based on the new reporting principles and formats.</p> <p>(b) Existing RACs should be reviewed by the GM in the light of The Strategy.</p>

Rationale

- (a) The need to establish for the first time reporting guidelines for the reporting of IGOs and United Nations organizations was emphasized by the AHWG and acknowledged by decisions 8/COP.7 and 8/COP.8.
- (b) The complexity of the review process will be tackled by a simple reporting format that allows for effective contributions by IGOs and United Nations organizations to the review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention. Simplicity should, however, not be achieved by jeopardizing comprehensiveness.
- (c) Complementary and coherent reporting guidelines are necessary in order to be able to gather information from all the stakeholders that can be compared both over time and across regions.
- (d) Special emphasis should be put on the need to develop user-friendly guidelines, as it is often claimed that this is one of the deficiencies of the help guides for affected country Parties.

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

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) The flexibility required will be reflected in the new reporting format by means of dedicated sections.</p> <p>(b) Reporting should comply with the standards and formats that aim to produce relevant and scientifically sound information; however, these standards and formats should be flexible enough to accommodate:</p> <p>(i) reporting on important issues as perceived by individual organizations, and other than those highlighted by The Strategy;</p> <p>(ii) COP deliberations that may supersede existing ones and may imply changes in implementation;</p> <p>(iii) ad hoc COP requests for reporting on specific issues.</p> <p>(c) The secretariat will screen COP decisions, starting with the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties, in order to identify new reporting requirements, have emerged from COP decisions and notify reporting entities. Necessary revisions to reporting guidelines will be forwarded to the COP for adoption.</p>	<p>(a) Ad hoc COP requests for reporting should be accompanied by specific terms of reference, as recommended by the AHWG.</p> <p>(b) The specificities of various United Nations organizations and IGOs (financial institutions, United Nations organizations with mandates in specific fields, subregional and regional intergovernmental organizations, etc.) will be taken into account, while not neglecting the need to have comparable and complementary information.</p> <p>(c) Members of the Facilitation Committee of the GM and of implementing/executing agencies of the GEF will have dedicated sections in which to report according to their specific roles and the decisions made by the COP which refer to them.</p>

Rationale

- (a) There has been a proliferation of requests by the COP in the past for various entities to report to it on a number of different topics. This has resulted in a considerable increase in the number of documents before the COP, some of which have not always been easy to digest.
- (b) A balance needs to be established 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.
- (c) For instance, decision 3/COP.8 requested the members of the Facilitation Committee of the GM to report in a coordinated fashion to the COP and the CRIC on issues relevant to its work programme. These reports should follow the same format as all other IGOs and United Nations organization, but the proposed format of the reports should allow sufficient flexibility for these organizations to be able to meet the reporting requirements set out in The Strategy.
- (d) Another important and necessary element is the flexibility needed to provide opportunities for subregional and regional IGOs that act as coordinators or facilitators of activities at the subregional and regional levels, which are clearly linked to the UNCCD process but not classified as subregional or regional action programmes, to report on them.

C. Enabling the collection of best practices and success stories

Implementation	Implications
<p>(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.</p> <p>(b) IGOs and United Nations organizations may provide important added value to this knowledge-sharing process by focusing on lessons learned.</p>	<p>(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.</p> <p>(b) There is a need to define the topics and areas around which these best practices would be structured and classified.</p> <p>(c) The UNCCD website, where best practices could be collected for sharing among all stakeholders, would need to be adapted to the new categories agreed for the classification of best practices. This would need to be decided by the COP.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(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.</p> <p>(b) The AHWG further recommended that information on best practices and success stories be included in the reports submitted to the COP and the CRIC. It also called for a methodology to extract the information obtained from the reports of United Nations agencies and IGOs.</p> <p>(c) United Nations organizations and IGOs could contribute to this process by reporting on best practices and success stories and also on case studies and lessons learned, and by highlighting those which were obtained during the mid-term and final reviews of UNCCD-related projects and programmes.</p>	

D. Standardized and classified description of projects and programmes

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Reporting by IGOs and United Nations organizations will be based on a newly established reporting format, including a programme and project sheet.</p> <p>(b) Information included in the programme and project sheet will be classified according to the UNCCD specific Relevant Activity Codes (RACs) and the Rio markers.</p>	<p>(a) Development of the project and programme sheet format will be necessary as well as guidelines on how to use them.</p> <p>(b) It will also be necessary for the GM to review and update the RACs in line with The Strategy.</p> <p>(c) Description of projects and programmes supporting the implementation of the Convention, the enactment and/or execution of which have been facilitated, should become a major element in the reporting of United Nations Agencies and IGOs.</p>

Rationale

- (a) Descriptions of projects and programmes supporting the implementation of the Convention are a common feature of the reports produced by IGOs and United Nations organizations. However, such descriptions have varied widely in the past.
- (b) In order to produce comprehensive information, common to all United Nations organizations and IGOs, a programme and project sheet will guide the description of projects and activities. The aim is twofold: to ensure that all the organizations provide the same type of information; and to standardize its presentation.
- (c) A balance needs to be found between the different reporting tasks that each organization has and the existing formats they use, on one hand, and the requirements of the Convention, on the other hand.
- (d) This balance may be achieved by keeping the format as simple as possible, so that information may be easily retrieved from existing formats.
- (e) Classification will be used to support the processing of the financial information provided in the financial annex. Such classification aims to overcome the lack of guidance on identifying and classifying relevant activities, which was highlighted by the GM as one of the reasons behind the poor quality of financial reporting.

III. REPORTING PROCESSES

A. The reporting times for the various reporting entities

Implementation	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 consider and adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC. (b) A sequence for the delivery of reports within each reporting cycle could be set. 	<p>In order to ensure consistency, various decisions by the COP related to the cycle for communicating information would need to be revised.</p>

Rationale

- (a) Three reporting cycles have been completed since 1999. The first and third reporting processes alternated reporting on implementation in African country Parties with that of other regions. The second reporting process took place in 2002 with the submission of reports on implementation from all affected country Parties. Alternation of reports is based on decision 11/COP.1.
 - (b) Given that the review of reports will be guided by indicators, a reporting process for all reporting entities would give rise to the following positive aspects:
 - (i) the same reporting conditions for all reporting entities;
 - (ii) where appropriate, the same type of assistance provided;
 - (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.
 - (d) Regular information flows from the UNCCD to other international processes (for example, the other Rio conventions, or global/regional exercises) 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.
 - (e) From the point of view of IGOs and United Nations organizations, reporting on all affected Parties implies increased cost-effectiveness compared to alternate reporting.
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B. An appropriate interval between reporting cycles

Implementation

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 consider and adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC.

Implications

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.

Rationale

- (a) The length of the interval between two consecutive reporting cycles is mainly determined by the nature of the processes to be reported 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 appropriate by Parties.
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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 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) Simple classification, according to the new strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy, and the Rio markers, will be the responsibility of all reporting entities.</p> <p>(c) With regard to the classification of programmes and projects, the use of the Rio markers should be considered by all reporting entities. The attribution of Rio markers would be undertaken in the financial annex. Projects and programmes will also be categorized according to the new strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy.</p> <p>(d) The use of RACs in the project sheets is recommended to classify the objectives and main activities of the projects supported by the IGOs and United Nations organizations.</p> <p>(e) The RACs are updated by the GM. Their review and adaptation to better reflect the strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy will be completed before the beginning of the next reporting cycle, and in time to be included and presented in the revised reporting guidelines.</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 establishment of information systems implies, 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; (vi) capacity building will also be necessary. <p>(d) The secretariat will need the necessary technical and financial resources to implement this classification. A decision is required on how these resources will be identified and mobilized.</p> <p>(e) The fact that reports are submitted in different languages may add to the complexity of the classification process.</p> <p>(f) Classification is intended to attribute codes or key words to the content of the reports, creating a database from which information may easily be retrieved by means of simple search functions.</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 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 IGOs and United Nations organizations could be classified according to the Rio markers and the RACs. Classification based on the RACs will relate to the main objectives and, possibly, the main activities of the project.

D. Facilitating the development of synergies with the other Rio conventions

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) With respect to United Nations agencies and IGOs, programme and project sheets as well as the information obtained from the financial annex will assist the CRIC in assessing the synergetic implementation that is supported by those entities.</p> <p>(b) Input from various stakeholders will provide Parties to the UNCCD and Parties to the other Rio conventions with information on how effective synergies are implemented at the national, subregional and regional levels.</p>	<p>The proposed financial annex to the reports envisages the categorization of projects under the three Rio conventions. The GM will be able to derive some preliminary information on the levels of synergy among the conventions and, eventually, to compile this into a database to be shared with the Conference on Biological Diversity and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.</p>

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 plans (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

13. 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 United Nations organizations and other intergovernmental organizations, and to relevant international financial institutions and mechanisms, 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.
