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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

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 secretariat¹

Summary

This document provides a detailed explanation of the principles for reporting by the secretariat. It focuses on the rationale behind these principles, their implementation and the related implications in the light of the secretariat's proposed planning and programming instruments. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention may wish to consider this information at its seventh session and to provide further guidance to the secretariat on the development of draft reporting guidelines for the secretariat 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 reporting principles for the secretariat are included in document ICCD/CRIC(7)/3.

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

¹ Whereas some decisions of the COP make reporting requests to the secretariat, others place reporting requirements on the Executive Secretary. For the purposes of this document, all reporting requests to the Executive Secretary are treated as reporting requests to the secretariat.

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I. Introduction

1. The secretariat was established by article 23 of the Convention. It is assigned the central coordinating role in the process for reporting to the Conference of the Parties (COP). It is entrusted with “compiling and transmitting reports submitted to it”² and “facilitating assistance to affected developing country Parties, particularly affected African country Parties and the least developed Parties among them, in the compilation and communication of information pursuant to the present procedures”.³ Two other main functions of the secretariat are “to prepare reports on the execution of its functions under the Convention and present them to the Conference of the Parties”⁴ and “to coordinate its activities with the secretariats of other relevant international bodies and conventions.”⁵

2. Decision 9/COP.1 on the programme of work of the COP confirms and extends the scope of the reporting obligations of the secretariat by including the following standing agenda items for the sessions of the COP:

(a) review of the implementation of the Convention, and of its institutional arrangements, pursuant to article 22, paragraphs 2 (a) and 2 (b), and article 26 of the Convention;

(b) review, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2 (d), of the Convention, of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), including its recommendations to the COP and its programme of work, and the provision of guidance on it;

(c) review of available information regarding the financing of Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, as specified in article 20, paragraph 2 (b), of the Convention; and

(d) adoption or adjustment of the programme and budget.

3. The following agenda items were not envisaged as standing;⁶ however, in practice they have been on the agenda of each COP session thus far:

(a) promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions in accordance with article 8 and article 22, paragraph 2 (i), of the Convention;

(b) consideration with a view to adopting, pursuant to article 27 of the Convention, procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions that may arise with regard to implementation; and

(c) consideration with a view to adopting, in accordance with article 28, paragraph 2 (a), of the Convention, an annex containing arbitration procedures.

² Convention text, article 23, paragraph 2(b), reiterated in article 26, paragraph 1, decisions 9/COP.1, 11/COP.1 and 1/COP.5.

³ Decision 11/COP.1.

⁴ Convention text, article 23, paragraph 2(f).

⁵ Convention text, article 23, paragraph 2(d).

⁶ Decision 9/COP.1.

4. In addition, decision 11/COP.1 requests the secretariat to prepare, after the third ordinary session and following every subsequent ordinary session of the COP, a report summarizing the conclusions of the review process. By its decision 5/COP.3 the COP requested the secretariat to provide at forthcoming sessions of the COP a synthesis by each subregion, with the aim of compiling a comparative document on the progress made by affected country Parties in the implementation of the Convention. In several other decisions (notably 3/COP.6 and 3/COP.8), the COP requested the secretariat to report on its activities undertaken together with the Global Mechanism (GM).

5. These seven clusters of documents (reviewing the implementation of the Convention, reporting on its own activities, synergies with other conventions, reporting on CST-related activities, reporting on the financing of Convention implementation and the GEF, reporting on the programme and the budget, and reporting on legal issues) represent the core reporting functions of the secretariat. They have been prepared for each ordinary session of the COP and for each session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

6. In addition, the secretariat has received a large number of ad hoc requests to report to the COP on various other matters, which are either time-bound or have been fulfilled.⁷ There have been 76 such requests thus far. Their number peaked at the seventh session of the COP (COP 7), at which 16 ad hoc requests were made for reporting by the secretariat on various matters.

7. The secretariat has regularly submitted reports on the execution of its functions to the COP.⁸ Following decision 1/COP.5, by which it was decided that the CRIC would regularly review such reports, these reports have also been submitted to the CRIC.⁹ No decision has been made by the COP on how such reports should be structured. The secretariat has submitted single reports on the execution of its functions and referenced documents where additional information

⁷ Examples of such requests include:

- on interim arrangements for the COP and for the secretariat of the Convention (4/COP.1);
- on the medium-term strategy of the secretariat (7/COP.2);
- on the need for, feasibility of, and modalities for regional coordination units, and the costs involved (3/COP.3, 6/COP.5, 11/COP.6);
- on overall review of secretariat activities at the sixth session of the COP (2/COP.3);
- on the enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention, as a follow-up to the Bonn Declaration (at each COP between 2003 and 2010) (8/COP.4, 4/COP.6, 4/COP.7);
- on the progress of activities on Land Degradation in the Drylands (LADA) and Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) projects (18/COP.4, 19/COP.5, 19/COP.6, 19/COP.7, 15/COP.8);
- on the outcomes of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) (28/COP.7);
- on progress made in the relations with the secretariat's host country (29/COP.7, 22/COP.8);
- on the process related to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (2/COP.6, 2/COP.7, 2/COP.8);
- on the preparation of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) (2/COP.7);
- on the review of ways and means for improving the procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP (8/COP.7, 8/COP.8);
- on the implications of results-based planning, programming and budgeting (23/COP.7);
- on the implementation of The Strategy (3/COP.8);
- on the draft multi-year work plan and two-year programme of work (3/COP.8);
- on the draft joint work programme with the Global Mechanism (GM) (3/COP.8);
- on regional coordination arrangements (3/COP.8).

⁸ ICCD/COP(1)/7, ICCD/COP(2)/5, ICCD/COP(3)/5, ICCD/COP(4)/3, ICCD/COP(5)/3.

⁹ ICCD/CRIC(2)/2, ICCD/CRIC(4)/2, ICCD/CRIC(6)/2.

was available in response to various COP decisions on the secretariat's standing obligations to report. This has led to the scattering of information among various documents and, in some cases, to duplication of information.¹⁰

8. 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 the complexity of the secretariat's reporting obligations and recommended that specific reporting guidelines be formulated for the secretariat.

9. It is proposed that guidelines are drafted on the tasks and reporting obligations of the secretariat based on the Convention, The Strategy, the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations and other relevant decisions of the COP. These guidelines should be periodically adjusted in accordance with future COP decisions, which may change the reporting requirements of the secretariat.

10. By its decision 23/COP.6, the COP decided that a comprehensive review of the activities of the secretariat, as defined in article 23, paragraph 2, of the Convention; in the relevant articles of the regional implementation annexes; and in the relevant decisions of the COP, would take place at COP 7, based on the report prepared by the JIU.¹¹ At COP 7, the Parties adopted decision 3/COP.7 by which they decided to establish an Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG) for the purpose of reviewing the report of the JIU in full. The IIWG was further requested to develop a 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) by addressing, inter alia, the recommendations of the JIU report, which was subsequently adopted by the COP in its decision 3/COP.8.

11. The Strategy reinforced the central role of the secretariat in supporting Parties, the COP and the subsidiary bodies of the Convention in fulfilling their respective roles through core servicing, advocacy, agenda-setting and representation functions. The secretariat's servicing functions were re-emphasized – to support COP and CRIC sessions by compiling and synthesizing national reports on the basis of new guidelines; producing case studies and best policy practices; and supporting the preparation of national reports, among other things. The secretariat was requested to adopt a four-year strategic work plan complemented by a two-year work programme taking a results-based management (RBM) approach consistent with the objectives and results of The Strategy. The secretariat was given new standing obligations to report:¹²

(a) It was requested to implement and systematically report to the COP on the relevant institutional recommendations contained in the JIU report;

(b) The secretariat was requested to report to the CRIC and the COP on the implementation of The Strategy, based on its RBM framework.

(c) With regard to its collaboration with the GM, the COP requested the secretariat and the GM to report in a clear and transparent way on the effective share of labour and the use

¹⁰ ICCD/CRIC(6)/6.

¹¹ ICCD/COP(7)/4.

¹² Decision 3/COP.8.

of core and voluntary funds relating to their joint work plan (JWP). The two organizations should report jointly to the COP on the implementation of their JWP.

12. The secretariat was assigned a lead role for operational objective 1 (advocacy, awareness raising and education) and specific outcomes of operational objective 2 (policy framework) and operational objective 3 (science, technology and knowledge), as well as a supporting role in the other operational objectives of The Strategy. Consequently, indicators pertaining to the implementation of The Strategy, to be identified by the Parties and subsequently adopted by the ninth session of the COP (COP 9), need to be closely linked with the performance indicators identified by the secretariat as part of its RBM-based four-year work plan and two-year work programme (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.1 and ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.2, respectively). Thus, it is expected that reporting guidelines for the secretariat would be fully consistent with the RBM monitoring system established for its work plan and work programme.

13. Decision 3/COP.8 also requested the Executive Secretary and the GM to include indicators of successful cooperation in their RBM-based joint work programme with the objective of strengthening the effectiveness of the synergistic services provided by the secretariat and the GM (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.5).

14. The present document follows the structure of the documents prepared for the reporting principles of affected and developed country Parties, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and United Nations organizations, the GEF, the GM and subregional and regional action programmes (ICCD/CRIC(7)/3/Add.1 to Add.4 and Add.6 to Add.7, respectively). It is necessary for CRIC at its seventh session (CRIC 7) to provide further input on reporting matters in order for COP 9 to make a final decision on the reporting guidelines for the secretariat, as requested by decision 8/COP.8.

II. Principles for reporting by the secretariat

I. CONTENT OF REPORTING

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

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Reporting by the secretariat will be based on a new reporting format that facilitates: (a) assessment of the secretariat's contribution to the achievement of the scope, strategies and objectives of the Convention, with specific reference to the operational objectives set in The Strategy under its programming instruments; (b) description of the extent to which the Convention and the implementation of action programmes under it have been supported by the secretariat; (c) provision of information on actions taken to respond to the JIU report and other relevant requests of the COP; and (d) joint reporting with the GM on the implementation of the JWP.</p> <p>(b) Special emphasis will be placed on the provision of information from the secretariat on its achievements in response to operational objective 1 of The Strategy (advocacy, awareness raising and education: to actively influence relevant international, national and local processes and actors in adequately addressing desertification/land degradation and drought-related issues), and specific outcomes of operational objective 2 (policy framework) and 3 (science, technology and knowledge), as well as its supporting role in the implementation of the other two operational objectives.</p>	<p>(a) Reflecting the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives in reporting and its coherence with The Strategy will imply:</p> <p>(i) the development of a reporting format and guidelines for the secretariat in conformity with its work plan and work programme;</p> <p>(ii) the definition of indicators for the secretariat under its RBM, consistent with the indicators for operational objectives agreed upon by Parties.</p> <p>(b) According to decision 3/COP.8, the secretariat is supposed to be involved in the review of action programmes, particularly the national action programmes (NAPs), that are required for affected country Parties at the national, subregional and regional levels; and to assist country Parties with realignment according to The Strategy. Information relating to these activities should be an integral part of the reporting of the secretariat.</p>

Rationale

- (a) The secretariat is the central institution under the Convention, established to streamline and coordinate the activities of the various stakeholders involved in the Convention process and to provide assistance to country Parties in implementing their programmes on combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. In addition, the secretariat has a key role in supporting the work of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.
- (b) The Strategy has provided a new orientation and further impetus to the work of the secretariat by reshaping its work programme and by defining the tools that the secretariat should use in carrying out its tasks and achieving its goals in the context of RBM.
- (c) The Strategy reiterated the key functions of the secretariat (servicing and facilitating functions, advocacy and awareness raising, communication, cooperation with other conventions and institutions, ensuring the participation of civil society).
- (d) The COP further emphasized the role of the secretariat in the implementation of The Strategy by assigning to the secretariat the role of achieving all five operational objectives of The Strategy.
- (e) The information on the extent to which the secretariat contributes to the achievement of the scope of the Convention, The Strategy and its objectives, and the modalities through which it has responded to the deliberations of the COP, represent valuable information for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention.

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 Parties to submit their proposals for indicators relevant to the achievement of the operational objectives of The Strategy. These will be consolidated and harmonized before CRIC 7 and, following the input received there, submitted to COP 9 for adoption. The CST and the GM would 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 five operational objectives of The Strategy.</p>	<p>(a) Performance indicators for the secretariat should be considered and adopted to measure its responsiveness to operational objective 1 and to specific outcomes of operational objectives 2 and 3, as well as its supporting role in the achievement of operational objectives 4 and 5. These indicators should be consistent with the indicators to be set for affected country Parties.</p> <p>(b) The secretariat should, for the sake of consistency and comparability, structure its report using the same indicator-based approach.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) The Strategy places special emphasis on the adoption of an indicator-based approach to the assessment of progress with implementation of the Convention and to 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/secretariat, it has not adopted indicators for the achievement of the operational objectives. These are yet to be identified by the Parties.</p> <p>(b) The evolving indicator-based approach is proposed to improve the quantitative impact assessment of measures and programmes implemented within the scope of the Convention, which has 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 be able to reach conclusions on trends and 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>	

C. Attentiveness to the impact of the support provided

Implementation	Implications
One section of the new reporting format for the secretariat would be dedicated to the qualitative and, as far as possible, quantitative assessment of the impact of the support provided by it to Parties, the COP and the subsidiary bodies of the COP. The assessment will comprise analysis of the lessons learned, and of the drivers and the needs behind the drivers.	(a) Information on the impact of the secretariat's activities will improve understanding of the effectiveness of the support provided by the secretariat in delivering the expected outcomes of its four-year strategic work plan and encourage the development of a performance-based mechanism in support of activities under the Convention. (b) The analysis of impacts could also lead to the identification of best practices, as requested by decision 3/COP.8 and recommended by the AHWG.
Rationale	
(a) The Strategy reinforced the central role of the secretariat in supporting Parties, the COP and the subsidiary bodies of the Convention in fulfilling their respective roles, through its core servicing, advocacy, agenda-setting and representation functions and the derived four-year strategic work plan. (b) Information on the impact of the secretariat's support to the Parties, the COP and its subsidiary bodies would shed a clearer light on the possible need for improvements and would thus contribute to the lesson-learning approach taken by the Convention process, and by The Strategy in particular.	

D. Ensuring consistency with the work of the CST

Implementation	Implications
(a) Any recommendation or ad hoc request for reporting made by the COP following the deliberations of the CST should be made following the logic of the revised reporting format. This would increase the clarity of the information provided and avoid duplication of work. (b) Streamlining the CST inputs through the standardized reporting process will require that: (i) the timing of CST requests be aligned to reporting cycles; (ii) Such requests be supported by clear terms of reference so that budgeting for reporting can be carried out appropriately. (c) The work of the CST Bureau relating to reporting and the monitoring of the Convention needs to be shared with the CRIC Bureau and vice versa.	(a) 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. (b) Joint Bureau meetings or Bureau meetings of the CST and CRIC held back to back would be required in order to take harmonized approaches. (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.
Rationale	
(a) The secretariat has an important role to play in ensuring harmonization of the activities of the two subsidiary bodies under the Convention, i.e. the CRIC and the CST. 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 further improvement. (b) Since the CST plays an important role in supporting the implementation of the Convention, CST work and recommendations should be given adequate importance in reporting. Special requests from the CST for information that can be provided in reports will have to be taken into consideration.	

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 will steer the secretariat in the preparation of its reports. Maximum length limits will be set for each section of the report. Setting length limits should focus reporting on United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)-relevant topics.</p> <p>(b) The new reporting format will be structured in a rational way, allowing for logical presentation of information and fostering consistency with the secretariat's work programmes as requested by decision 3/COP.8.</p>	<p>(a) Decisions 9/COP.1 and 3/COP.8 determine the main focus for reporting by the secretariat to the COP and its subsidiary bodies. Unless the COP decides otherwise, these decisions will be taken as the basis for future reporting.</p> <p>(b) The COP may wish to reconsider the provisions of decisions 11/COP.1 and 5/COP.3 on the standing reporting duties of the secretariat and decide to annul them, as they are sufficiently covered by the other reporting obligations of the secretariat.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) The need to establish reporting guidelines for the secretariat for the first time was emphasized by the AHWG and acknowledged by decisions 8/COP.7 and 8/COP.8.</p> <p>(b) The complexity of the review process will be tackled by a simple reporting format allowing for effective contributions by the secretariat to the review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention and of The Strategy. Simplicity should, however, not be achieved by jeopardizing comprehensiveness.</p> <p>(c) Complementary and coherent reporting guidelines are necessary in order to be able to gather from all the stakeholders information that can be compared both over time and across regions.</p>	

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

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) The flexibility required in the new reporting format will be reflected by means of dedicated sections.</p> <p>(b) Reporting should in future comply with the guidelines determined by the COP; however, it should be flexible enough to accommodate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) reporting on issues perceived as important by the COP and by the secretariat; (ii) COP deliberations that may supersede existing ones and may imply changes in implementation; (iii) ad hoc requests by the COP for reporting on specific issues. <p>(c) The secretariat will screen COP decisions, starting with the tenth session of the COP, in order to identify whether new reporting requirements have emerged from COP decisions, and notify reporting entities as necessary. Revisions to reporting guidelines will be forwarded to the COP for adoption.</p>	<p>Ad hoc requests by the COP for reporting shall be accompanied by specific terms of reference, as recommended by the AHWG. The same shall apply to any specific request made by the CST.</p>

Rationale

- (a) There has been a number of requests in the past from the COP for the secretariat to report to it on various topics.
 - (b) A balance needs to be found between the overall requirement to systematically review the secretariat's contribution to the progress on implementation of the Convention and of The Strategy on one hand; and the broad spectrum of stakeholders, activities and frameworks (policy, environmental, economic, and social) influencing Convention and Strategy implementation, on the other hand.
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C. Enabling the collection of best practices and success stories

Implementation

- (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) The secretariat may provide important added value to this knowledge-sharing process by focusing on lessons learned.

Implications

- (a) A section in the new reporting format dedicated to the presentation of best practices and success stories will assist the secretariat and the CRIC with discharging their mandates, as determined by decisions 1/COP.6 and 3/COP.8, respectively.
 - (b) There is a need to define the topics and areas along which these best practices should be structured and classified. A methodology by which best practices may be collected will be prepared on receipt of guidance from CRIC 7.
 - (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.
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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 an integral part of this knowledge.
 - (b) The AHWG further recommended that information on best practices and success stories be included in the reports submitted to the COP/CRIC.
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III. REPORTING PROCESS

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 consider and adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC.</p> <p>(b) A sequence for the delivery of reports within each reporting cycle could be set.</p>	<p>Various decisions by the COP would need to be revised in order to ensure consistency.</p>
Rationale	
<p>(a) The reporting time for the secretariat needs to be linked with the reporting time of other reporting entities and considered together with the revision of the work programme of the CRIC.</p> <p>(b) The Convention and the COP request the secretariat to report to each session of the COP. Decision 3/COP.8 (The Strategy) requests the secretariat to report on the implementation of the strategic plan, based on its RBM framework, to the CRIC and the COP. However, the CRIC sessions held during the sessions of the COP, which have so far taken up the reports of the secretariat, are not reviewing the implementation of the Convention based on the reports submitted. This has so far been the task of the CRIC at intersessional sessions. This means that, at intersessional sessions, the CRIC is taking up the reports of affected country Parties, developed county Parties, IGOs and United Nations organizations, but not the secretariat or the GM or the GEF. This negatively affects the comprehensiveness and comparability of the information taken up by the CRIC and hinders its capacity to fully assess the implementation of the Convention and of The Strategy.</p> <p>(c) The secretariat was also requested to report, jointly with the GM, on the implementation of the JWP and, in a clear and transparent way, on the effective share of labour and the use of the core and voluntary funds relating to the JWP (decision 3/COP.8). It is proposed that this be done as part of the reporting of both institutions to the CRIC and the COP sessions, as requested by decision 3/COP.8, in which they will also discuss the four-year work plans and two-year work programmes of both these institutions.</p> <p>(d) Regular information flows from the UNCCD to other international processes (e.g., 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, and would facilitate cross-country comparability and trend analyses. This is in line with the third operational objective of The Strategy, which calls 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>	

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 consider and adopt the terms of reference of the CRIC.</p>	<p>Various decisions by the COP would need to be revised in order to ensure consistency.</p>

Rationale

The secretariat has so far reported to the COP and the CRIC every two years. The reporting cycle of the Parties has varied over time. The determination of the new reporting cycle for all reporting entities should take into consideration the request by decision 3/COP.8 that reports should be comparable across regions and over time.

C. Efficient treatment of information across the reporting process

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) With regard to the use of classification in programmes and projects, use of the Rio markers shall be considered for affected country Parties and developed country Parties as well as for the GM, the GEF and IGOs/United Nations organizations. Attribution of Rio markers will 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>(b) Reports from affected country Parties are likely to need a different classification system for the narrative part that is more closely linked to the type of output analysis that the secretariat plans to obtain.</p> <p>(c) Designing a simple classification according to the new strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy and, possibly, according to the Rio markers will be the responsibility of the secretariat.</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) The 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> <p>(c) The secretariat will need the necessary technical and financial resources to implement this classification work. It should be decided how these resources are to be identified and mobilized.</p> <p>(d) The fact that national reports are submitted in different languages may add to the complexity of the classification process.</p> <p>(e) At the national level, establishing information systems in country Parties 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. <p>(f) Capacity building will also be necessary.</p>

Rationale

- (a) Information retrieval and compilation are the basis of reporting. Networking is suggested at the national level in order to improve exchanges of information and data among the national focal points, the line ministries and other stakeholders, and also at the level of local area programmes within the NAPs.
- (b) In particular, the AHWG recommended the establishment of compatible information systems, databases or procedures for collecting relevant information at the national level and for monitoring financial flows.
- (c) The GM further recommended a methodology for identifying and weighting activities related to UNCCD topics within a wider portfolio of development and environmental projects.
- (d) Notwithstanding the positive implications of classification, affected country Parties should not be burdened by this additional requirement. Classification could instead be implemented within the secretariat, possibly with external support.
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D. Facilitating the development of synergies with the other Rio conventions

Implementation	Implications
<p>(a) Special attention will be paid by the secretariat to this subject given the fact that synergies represent a standing agenda item of the COP.</p> <p>(b) The proposed financial annex to the reports envisages the categorization of projects under the three Rio conventions. Information on the levels of synergy among the conventions would be derived from this and could be compiled into a database to be shared with the CBD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).</p>	<p>(a) A systematic review of the technical and thematic overlaps between the Rio conventions needs to be undertaken.</p> <p>(b) A survey of existing projects that address this issue in other United Nations agencies needs to be made.</p> <p>(c) Institutional mapping of the focal points of the three conventions would also be useful.</p>

Rationale

- (a) The COP has deliberated on a number of occasions on the linkage between synergies and the secretariat's mandate and activities (most recently in decision 4/COP.8).
- (b) 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.
- (c) Nevertheless, the streamlining of strategies (CBD), national programmes (UNFCCC) and action programmes (UNCCD) could be facilitated by improving the coordination and circulation of information at the national and the local levels by establishing national committees on sustainable development and national environmental information systems.

E. Increased transparency in information dissemination

Implementation

- (a) The processing and manipulation of a core set of data available at the national level may be used to compile statistics at the national, subregional and regional levels that may enhance the capacity of CRIC to draw conclusions with regard to trend analysis and the status of desertification. The collection and dissemination of best practices goes in the same direction, highlighting good examples and supporting their take-up and replication by other stakeholders.
- (b) In the light of the above, the secretariat might distill the information provided in the reports submitted to it (best practices, performance against indicators) and disseminate it through the UNCCD website and the Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation (FIELD) database of the GM, not only by uploading individual reports to its website as it has done so far, but also by providing aggregated syntheses and analyses of the data, which would allow monitoring of individual country performance against indicators defined by the Parties themselves and adopted by the COP.

Implications

- (a) Increased transparency in information dissemination implies more comprehensive and complex analysis. The secretariat will need the necessary technical and financial resources to implement this additional analysis. The CRIC and the COP should provide guidance on how these resources would be identified and mobilized.
- (b) A proposal for the provision of increased transparency in information dissemination could be put forward by the CRIC to the COP, including the ways and means for the secretariat to follow up on these new tasks.

Rationale

- (a) Information provided through reports submitted by the Parties is currently aggregated at the regional level, and through the CRIC at the global level.
 - (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 well-founded, effective and feasible deliberations by the COP.
 - (c) This in particular applies to the data in the financial annex of the reports submitted by affected and developed country Parties, IGOs and United Nations organizations, the GM and the GEF.
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III. Conclusions and recommendations

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