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Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention: Consideration of the format for future meetings of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

**Consideration of the format for future meetings of the Committee for the
Review of the Implementation of the Convention**

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

By its decision 7/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided that the terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) shall be considered and revised, as necessary, at the ninth session of the COP (COP 9).

However, the COP also decided, taking into account the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy), to include consideration of the format for future CRIC meetings as well as other methodological issues in the programme of work of the seventh session of the CRIC (decision 9/COP.8). The purpose of this document is not to pre-empt a decision by COP 9 on the operational modalities and mandate of the CRIC but to assist country Parties and stakeholders in undertaking a comprehensive review of methodological and institutional issues while deliberating on the format and organization of work for future CRIC meetings.

* This document was delayed due to its close interrelation with document ICCD/CRIC(7)/3 and its addenda, which required extensive consultations for their finalization, in accordance with specific provisions contained in decision 3/COP.8.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1–5	3
II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	6–9	3
III. THE IMPLICATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE FORMAT OF CRIC MEETINGS	10–29	4
A. The tasks of subsidiary bodies in the review process, and the revised terms of reference of the CRIC	12–23	5
B. The methodology for review of implementation, including performance and impact indicators, and the new reporting guidelines	24–25	8
C. Harmonization of the reporting cycle with the lifespan of The Strategy	26–29	8
IV. PROPOSED FORMAT FOR FUTURE SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION	30–35	11
A. Proposed format for intersessional sessions	31–33	11
B. Proposed format for sessional sessions	34–35	12
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	36–37	14

Annex

Comments by country Parties on the nature of the review process and concrete suggestions for the schedule and format of CRIC meetings	15
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I. Introduction

1. By its decision 7/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided that the terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) shall be considered and revised, as necessary, at the ninth session of the COP (COP 9).

2. However, the country Parties also decided, taking into account the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) at COP 8, to include consideration of the format for future CRIC meetings as well as other methodological issues in the programme of work of the seventh session of the CRIC (decision 9/COP.8). The discussion at CRIC 7 of the format of future CRIC meetings is not intended to pre-empt a decision by COP 9 on the CRIC's operational modalities and mandate, but it will assist Parties and stakeholders in undertaking a comprehensive review of institutional/methodological issues and allow Parties to take stock of institutional elements relating to the CRIC, while discussing new reporting guidelines for implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

3. Taking into consideration previous deliberations on this topic, the document is divided into three main parts. The first part summarizes views and opinions on CRIC institutional arrangements reflected in various official COP documents, including the format for future CRIC meetings. In response to the request contained in decision 8/COP.8, an attempt was made to separate the information in those documents concerning the format for future CRIC meetings from that concerning the suggested broader mandate for the CRIC.

4. The second part of the document deals with the implications of The Strategy for the format of future CRIC sessions. It highlights components of the new mandate assigned to the CRIC by The Strategy that will affect the way it undertakes its review and hence the structure and format of its meetings. Finally, the third part contains conclusions and recommendations for further deliberations by the Parties, including on issues for which various scenarios are conceivable.

5. As in the case of documentation prepared for the two-year costed draft work programme of the CRIC, the deliberations at CRIC 7 on the format for future CRIC sessions will assist the secretariat in preparing appropriate documentation on the terms of reference of the CRIC for COP 9.

II. Background information

6. Discussions on institutional arrangements for a review of UNCCD implementation have made significant progress in the relatively short history of the Convention, highlighting the importance that Parties attach to the subject. Relevant documentary output has been prepared since COP 4, when the term CRIC had not even been invented. There is abundant information and constructive criticism on how to establish and possibly improve the desired review of UNCCD implementation, and the following is a summary of the salient points mentioned in a

series of documents already reviewed by the CRIC and the COP.¹ While the adoption of The Strategy is viewed as a turning point in the context of the UNCCD, particularly with regard to the approach to be adopted in reviewing UNCCD implementation, the views and opinions voiced by the Parties on various occasions prior to COP 8 are still pertinent even in this context.

7. Needless to say, a full-fledged discussion on the format for future CRIC sessions is closely bound up with the operational modalities and mandate to be assigned to the CRIC by COP 9. It may be difficult to make valid comments on intersessional and sessional sessions of the CRIC without knowing what Parties see as the overriding principle for the review and what tools they envisage for undertaking it.

8. The annex contains a summary of Parties' comments. They reflect either direct official submissions to the secretariat or the outcome of deliberations during previous COPs. The comments have been divided into two main clusters: (a) comments regarding the nature of the review; and (b) concrete suggestions as to the schedule and format of CRIC meetings. These comments have been taken into account in the preparation of the present document.

9. The Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) made very explicit recommendations concerning the possible schedules of CRIC sessions which are included in the conclusions and recommendations section. The AHWG scenarios will be complemented with scenarios emerging from the provisions of The Strategy.

III. The implication of The Strategy for the format of CRIC meetings

10. By paragraph 15 of its decision 3/COP.8 (The Strategy), the COP decided that future meetings of the CRIC should be held predominantly in an interactive format, highlighting for each key issue² a set of targeted recommendations for the COP to consider and adopt, if appropriate.

11. A number of elements link the reporting process to discussions on the format for future CRIC meetings (both their substantive preparation and their organization). These elements need to be addressed simultaneously in order to provide Parties with the opportunity to make informed recommendations to the secretariat during the period between CRIC 7 and COP 9. In view of the fact that CRIC 7 is a methodological session to discuss "work in progress", i.e. reporting guidelines, the drafting of results-based management documents and CST-related issues, clear guidance from CRIC 7 is needed for this work to be completed by COP 9. The three main elements of the review process that warrant special attention in the context of the format for future CRIC meetings may be summarized as follows:

¹ Documents ICCD/CRIC(3)/8, ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/6 and ICCD/COP(5)/9; decisions 1/COP.5, 7/COP.6 and 7/COP.7; documents ICCD/COP(6)/3, ICCD/COP(6)11/Add.1, ICCD/CRIC(6)/6/Add.1, ICCD/COP(7)/3, ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1, ICCD/COP(8)/3 and ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1.

² The term "key issue" was not further defined in decision 3/COP.8 and it remains to be clarified whether certain strategic/operational objectives identified in the Strategy, which may be considered key issues, deserve a more in-depth review than others.

- (a) The tasks of subsidiary bodies in the review process, and the revised terms of reference of the CRIC;
- (b) The methodology for review of implementation, including performance and impact indicators, and the new reporting guidelines;
- (c) The programming and reporting cycle, in line with the lifespan of The Strategy.

A. The tasks of subsidiary bodies in the review process, and the revised terms of reference of the CRIC

1. Considerations relating to the future mandate of the CRIC

12. While the mandate and terms of reference of the CRIC are to be determined at COP 9, The Strategy has already outlined the CRIC's core functions as follows:

- (a) Determining and disseminating best practices on implementation of the UNCCD;
- (b) Reviewing implementation of The Strategy;
- (c) Reviewing Parties' contributions to the implementation of the Convention;
- (d) Assessing and monitoring CRIC performance and effectiveness.

13. While decision 3/COP.8 makes no provision for a comprehensive CRIC review and monitoring system, it refers to some other institutional elements that should be considered by CRIC 7 in order to provide further guidance on arrangements for the review process and hence sessions relating thereto.

14. First, the COP has in decision 8/COP.8 clearly specified the entities (and/or the nature of their reports, as in the case of subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs)) that will regularly report through the CRIC on either a mandatory or a voluntary basis.³

15. Reporting principles that are currently being drafted propose that submissions from all reporting entities should be made at the same time and sufficiently early to be reviewed during intersessional sessions of the CRIC so that the latter can review reports across regions and over time (decision 3/COP.8). At the same time, it is proposed that the new CRIC task of reviewing the effectiveness of The Strategy should be undertaken by reviewing national reports and reports from all other stakeholders, including the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies that are now implementing results-based management (RBM).

³ The entities are: affected country Parties, developed country Parties, United Nations and intergovernmental organizations and relevant international financial institutions and mechanisms, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the secretariat, the Global Mechanism, and the subregional and regional action programmes.

16. The relevant provisions of decision 3/COP.8 on short- and medium-term programming and the reporting cycle do not clarify the extent to which the review process may complement and indeed enrich discussions on programming discussed at the COP level.

17. A review of work plans and programmes (two-year costed draft work programmes and four-year work plans) at COPs as part of the budgetary discussions would allow Parties: (a) to review the performance of the various bodies and the consistency and effectiveness of their implementation of The Strategy; (b) to express views on future action to be taken and to make decisions on financial matters. However, this would deprive the CRIC of the opportunity to review Convention institutions and bodies and their efficacy in discharging their mandates vis-à-vis The Strategy as prescribed by decision 3/COP.8. It follows that the CRIC would not be in a position to fulfill its primary functions as stipulated in decision 3/COP.8. Moreover, the review would not be undertaken at the same time for other Convention stakeholders and Parties, a point that was identified as one of the shortcomings of the review process.

18. There are two scenarios that could address these issues:

(a) The first would allow the CRIC, at its sessional sessions, to review the proposed two-year work programmes and four-year work plans and the performance reports on the past biennium of Convention institutions and bodies in order to advise the COP on technical and substantive issues that may be of relevance to budgetary discussions. Information on the review would then be integrated into the CRIC process. This proposal would ensure that CRIC is able to assess the effectiveness of The Strategy by reviewing information from all stakeholders involved in UNCCD implementation. It would also enable it to assess and monitor its own effectiveness and performance, another requirement brought about by The Strategy. On the downside, this scenario would conflict with the proposed reporting principle. Decision 3/COP.8 stipulates that the review should benefit from an assessment over the same time period and across regions from all reporting entities, since the substantive reviews will be undertaken during intersessional meetings.

(b) The second scenario would enable the CRIC to review performance reports of Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies at its intersessional sessions and to undertake a preliminary review of future programming instruments at sessional sessions without discussing financial implications. The review at intersessional sessions would provide Parties with an additional opportunity to make recommendations while programmes were actually being implemented and possibly to propose adjustments as and when required.

19. Should the COP take a decision on the CRIC's role in assessing the effectiveness of The Strategy through a review of the programming documents of the Convention's institutions and bodies, this would influence both the terms of reference and the format of future CRIC meetings.

20. The following implications need to be taken into consideration for both scenarios:

(a) The secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) would be requested to report to (inter) sessional sessions of the CRIC, using a reporting format prepared by the secretariat as part

of the reporting guidelines that will take account of RBM reporting procedures for performance reports;

(b) The Global Environment Facility (GEF) would also be invited to report to (inter) sessional sessions of the CRIC instead of to the COP;

(c) Work plans and programmes would become documents for review at (inter) sessional sessions as part of the CRIC mandate to assess effectiveness of The Strategy, it being understood, however, that financial issues would be left for the COP to decide;

(d) If reporting by Convention institutions to the CRIC is not envisaged, reporting guidelines for the secretariat and the GM should not be prepared for COP 9 and it should be noted that the review of the effectiveness of The Strategy would thus be incomplete due to the lack of crucial information;

(e) Guidance needs to be provided on how the CRIC and the CST are to submit their performance reports.

2. Considerations relating to the input to be provided by the CST and civil society

21. Another important aspect of the newly established review system will be the CST input to the review of implementation in the light of the strategic objectives of The Strategy, i.e. its assessment of the scale of, trends in and impact of land degradation. As the CST has been tasked with firming up monitoring approaches for strategic objectives, it may be entrusted with producing a preliminary analysis of desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) profiles in order to provide scientific input and advice to the CRIC for its review of implementation of the Convention.

22. Decision 3/COP.8 highlighted the possibility of synchronizing CST and CRIC sessions in the context of determining the frequency and modalities of meetings of the two subsidiary bodies. As reporting is structured around strategic and operational objectives, Parties may wish to consider the possibility of convening intersessional sessions of the CST and the CRIC jointly (back to back or in parallel), following the example set by CRIC 7. This proposal would ensure that the CST contributes directly to the review process and makes recommendations on the global assessment and impact of the Convention, enhancing the quality of targeted recommendations proposed to the COP.

23. The Parties have already drawn attention on many occasions to the need to increase the involvement of civil society in the review process (see annex). They may wish to take up recommendations made at previous COPs/CRICs and decide to integrate a civil society segment into the official agenda of intersessional CRIC sessions. The character of such a segment requires further discussion by Parties recommendations. It would enhance the visibility and impact of recommendations made by the various civil society groups.

B. The methodology for review of implementation, including performance and impact indicators, and the new reporting guidelines

24. Information regarding the new reporting guidelines is contained in documents ICCD/CRIC(7)/3 and ICCD/CRIC(7)/3/Add.1 to Add.7. Suffice it to note the proposal that the future communication of information and review of implementation should be based on the following three main elements:

(a) A review of implementation of the operational objectives of The Strategy by means of performance indicators;⁴

(b) A review of implementation of the Convention in the light of the strategic objectives of The Strategy by means of impact indicators.⁵ This review will be based on DLDD profiles contained in the reports from affected country Parties and possibly other profiles to be elaborated as part of the CST work programme;⁶

(c) Documentation and dissemination of best practices, as reflected in the reports of Parties and observers.

25. A number of reporting tools have been identified, for instance the use of a financial annex, a methodology for identifying best practices, and knowledge management tools to be used at both the global level (secretariat/GM) and the national level (environmental information systems) to assist stakeholders involved in the review of UNCCD implementation in preparing and analysing reports with a view to highlighting targeted recommendations for the COP.

C. Harmonization of the reporting cycle with the lifespan of The Strategy

26. One of the questions raised by the documentation on UNCCD reporting is when and how often reporting entities should submit their reports on implementation of the Convention and The Strategy. In response to the recommendation in decision 3/COP.8 that reporting and hence the review should be restructured around a simplified and effective reporting process based on information that is comparable across regions and over time, it is proposed that reporting entities listed in decision 8/COP.8 should be requested/invited to report at the same time (i.e. in time for an overall review to be undertaken by the CRIC at its intersessional sessions).

27. In addition, the length of the interval between two consecutive reporting cycles is mainly determined by the nature of the processes to be reported on and the nature of the information provided. As already noted, The Strategy entrusted certain functions to the CRIC, among which the review of implementation of The Strategy and of Parties' contributions to the implementation of the Convention is of particular relevance. Such a review consists, by definition, of two components: an impact assessment to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the

⁴ For performance indicators, see document ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.7 containing the views of Parties on draft indicators for the operational objectives included in the annex to the Strategy.

⁵ For impact indicators, see document ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.3 containing the proposed fine-tuned indicators for the strategic objectives of the Strategy.

⁶ See document ICCD/CST/(S-1)/4/Add.2.

Convention; and monitoring of the performance of Parties and Convention bodies in implementing The Strategy. Impact assessment is by definition a longer-term function.

28. With regard to reporting frequency and the nature of the review, three options are possible:

(a) Option 1: Should the present duration (four years) and the alternation (Africa and the other regions) of the reporting cycle be maintained, a review of implementation of the Convention in all regions could be completed twice during the lifespan of The Strategy, and only one review could be undertaken in time for the mid-term review of The Strategy in 2013. It should be noted that if alternation is maintained, regions other than Africa will have a reporting period identical to that of Africa in order to abide by decision 3/COP.8. If reporting were to commence in 2010 with reports from African countries for the period 2005-2010, regions other than Africa would be requested to provide reports in 2012 for the same period, basically omitting the period 2010-2012. The system would eventually result in an incomplete review process for regions other than Africa, since reporting schedules would be structured according to the submission of African reports.

(b) Option 2: If the option of biannual reporting on both operational and strategic objectives of The Strategy is adopted, country Parties would report four times during the lifespan of The Strategy. However, this would require a huge effort by Parties and observers that is unlikely to be sustained and it would probably prove over-ambitious, given that desertification and land degradation are medium- to long-term phenomena.

(c) Option 3: The COP may consider adjusting the scope and frequency of the CRIC review so that implementation in all regions is addressed at once: every two years for implementation of The Strategy and every four years for implementation of the Convention through DLDD profiles and impact indicators (see figure).

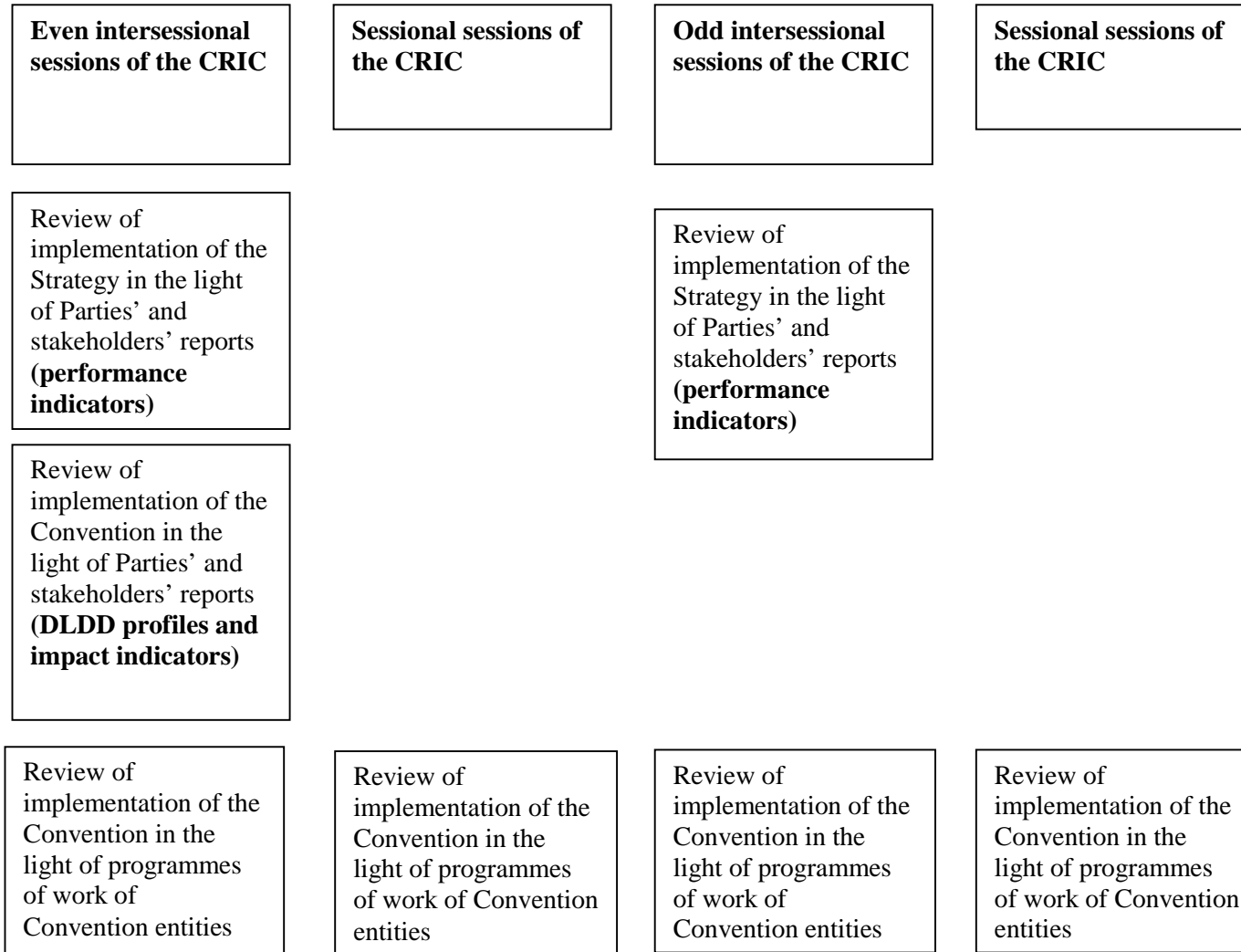
29. The three options described above would obviously have a different impact on the format for future meetings of the CRIC:

(a) The question of alternation of reporting needs to be addressed because option 1 maintains the status quo while options 2 and 3 would require a discontinuation of alternation.

(b) Option 2 implies that the intersessional sessions of the CRIC would deal with a larger number of countries and a larger quantity of information. This would need to be taken into consideration when deciding on the timeframe of intersessional sessions.

(c) Option 3 implies that countries and observers would provide information biannually on the operational objectives of The Strategy in order to feed the CRIC with information on its effectiveness, while the CST would have more time to prepare its global assessment of the impact of Convention activities.

Figure: Structure and sequence of CRIC sessions according to option 3



IV. Proposed format for future sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

30. The following options for the format for future meeting of the CRIC are based on a number of premises that still have to be addressed at CRIC 7 and COP 9:

(a) Inter-activity is fostered during CRIC sessions through such means as panel discussions, working groups, or by other means and is based on a more analytical assessment facilitated by improved reporting tools decided on by the Parties during COP 9;

(b) National reports will no longer be presented and assessed during intersessional sessions of the CRIC, but will be made available by the secretariat. The CRIC will review key issues derived from the operational and strategic objectives of The Strategy;

(c) The desired inter-activity during CRIC sessions and the outcome resulting from it will be monitored by the CRIC as an indicator of the successful contribution of deliberations to a lesson-learning exercise;

(d) The review process will enable Parties to identify targeted recommendations for each key themes or issues. A methodology that ensures the achievement of this deliverable should be prepared;

(e) Inter-activity must not jeopardize the intergovernmental nature of CRIC sessions.

A. Proposed format for intersessional sessions

31. Should the COP agree with the reporting principles proposed by the secretariat in document ICCD/CRIC(7)/3 and its addenda, the review of implementation and the format of future CRIC intersessional sessions could be structured accordingly, i.e. divided into five main segments:

(a) The first segment would be devoted to a review of performance in relation to The Strategy based on information contained in the reports of Parties and observers and on performance indicators identified by the Parties during COP 9. In order to have a full performance review of all UNCCD stakeholders and taking into consideration decisions 8/COP.8 and 3/COP.8, which require information on UNCCD implementation to be comparable across regions and over time, it is also proposed that the CRIC should review the performance reports of Convention institutions and bodies and those of all other stakeholders at its intersessional sessions.

(b) The second core segment of the meeting would address the key theme of review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention and its impact. It is anticipated that the CRIC should receive input from the CST for this element of the review, and the COP may consider organizing meetings of the subsidiary bodies in such a way as to facilitate exchanges and cross-feeding between the bodies, including through an intersessional session of the CST (as suggested in paragraph 3 of decision 12/COP.8 on the functioning of the CST).

(c) The third segment would review financial flows in support of the implementation of the Convention, in particular action programmes and other investment programmes to combat desertification, with a view to eliciting synergies with other funding mechanisms at the global level.

(d) The purpose of the fourth segment would be to facilitate exchanges of information on best practices.

(e) The fifth segment would allow civil society organizations (CSOs) to address the review of implementation of the Convention and The Strategy at the local level and to discuss related best practices.

32. Clearly, any move towards such a structure of intersessional sessions of the CRIC depends on the recommendations of CRIC 7 and the decision on terms of reference to be taken at COP 9.

33. Should the standing alternation of reporting between regions be discontinued as advised, sufficient time must obviously be provided for discussions among affected countries of the same regions and at the global level. The duration of intersessional sessions should then reflect these requirements for consultations and be addressed by the COP in the course of its deliberations on the format for future CRIC sessions.

B. Proposed format for sessional sessions

34. Taking into consideration decision 3/COP.8 and the new functions identified for the CRIC, meetings of the CRIC held in conjunction with the COP may focus on performance and operational issues and finalize the review of implementation of The Strategy on the basis of reports of Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies initiated at the intersessional session of the CRIC. Furthermore, the CRIC may be tasked with providing the COP with information on substantive issues, policy orientations and operational modalities for the review process relating to implementation of The Strategy.

35. In the light of the foregoing, the possibility might be considered of requesting the CRIC to review the multi-year programmes of work of the secretariat and the GM and their joint work programme, and the multi-year work plan of the CST, with a view to preparing targeted conclusions and recommendations regarding their activities and operational modalities governing the review process.

Table 1: Possible format for CRIC intersessional sessions held in conjunction with the CST

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5			Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Morning	Joint opening session	Meeting of the CST	Meeting of the CST	Review of operational objectives	Review of strategic objectives			Review of strategic objectives	Review of financial issues	Review of financial issues	Exchanges on best practices	Preparation of the report
Afternoon	Meeting of the CST	Meeting of the CST	Review of operational objectives	Review of operational objectives	Review of strategic objectives			Review of strategic objectives	Review of financial issues	Exchanges on best practices	CSO open session	Adoption of the report

Table 2: Possible format for CRIC sessional sessions

		Day 1	Day 2	Day 2								
Morning		Opening session	Review of multi-year programmes of work	Review of multi-year programmes of work								
Afternoon		Review of multi-year programmes of work	Review of multi-year programmes of work	Review of multi-year programmes of work								

V. Conclusions and recommendations

36. This document contains an analysis of possible options for future intersessional and sessional sessions of the CRIC based on a number of assumptions regarding the review process that need to be addressed by the Parties at CRIC 7. Furthermore, the mandate of the CRIC as a subsidiary body of the COP and its terms of reference should be considered at COP 9, bearing in mind the strategic plan and role of the CRIC as specified in the relevant decisions of COP 8 and in the outcomes of CRIC 7 and 8.

37. The document emphasizes that the adoption of The Strategy has already changed the mandate of the CRIC in ways that necessitate modifications to its future sessions. In addressing this matter, the Parties may wish to consider offering advice and making recommendations at CRIC 7 on the following issues of specific relevance to the format for future meetings of the CRIC and its organization of work:

(a) The duration of the reporting cycle and the nature of the information provided, bearing in mind the lifespan of The Strategy;

(b) The scope and frequency of the review process undertaken by the CRIC with a view to ensuring comparability of information across regions and over time;

(c) The future mandate of the subsidiary bodies in the review process and, in particular, the role of the CRIC in reviewing the programmes of work of Convention entities and the role of the CST in reviewing the strategic objectives of The Strategy.

Annex

Comments by country Parties on the nature of the review process and concrete suggestions for the schedule and format of CRIC meetings

I. Nature of the review process

1. The CRIC should continue fostering exchanges of information between stakeholders, while focusing more on an analytical assessment, enhanced by input from the scientific community and civil society. In general, a more impact-oriented review is preferred and the need for a set of indicators has been stressed in previous documentation including in The Strategy adopted by COP 8.
2. One of the shortcomings identified in previous submissions was the inadequate reflection of financial and technical support provided by developed country Parties and other development partners during official sessions of the CRIC, in particular concrete information on financial resources provided by the Global Environment Facility and the Global Mechanism. In the same vein, submissions emphasized the need for the review to focus more on UNCCD issues and, in particular, on action programme implementation. Other issues that warrant more attention included synergies and linking UNCCD to the global sustainable development agenda (for instance discussions on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)).
3. While previous submissions supported interactive dialogue and panels as a means of increasing the input to be reflected in the CRIC final report, there was a consensus that this should not jeopardize the intergovernmental nature of the CRIC. Some submissions advised leaving issues relating to institutional agreements and global progress assessments for a more formal setting so as to allow full participation by all stakeholders, while panels and expert groups were considered instrumental in conducting peer reviews and regional wrap-up scenarios.
4. Finally, it was felt that a follow-up mechanism to monitor implementation of CRIC recommendations that were translated into COP decisions was an important means of ensuring a continuous and comprehensive implementation process based on substantive discussions held during CRIC sessions.

II. Schedule and format of CRIC meetings

5. Overall, there was a consensus on the need to improve the schedules of CRIC meetings, especially those of intersessional sessions. Different timeframes ranging from five to ten days for intersessional sessions were suggested, taking into consideration the mandate given to the CRIC by decision 1/COP.5.
6. Logistic and substantive arrangements for CRIC sessions should aim at addressing problems in the implementation process and converting the working modality of the CRIC from a “progress-reporting” to an “action-taking” format. It was therefore suggested that formal

statements and presentations should be kept to the minimum, while interactive dialogue should be given more attention.

7. In a broader perspective, the importance for the reporting and review process of peer reviews of and regional wrap-up meetings on national reports was commonly recognized, while it was also suggested that peer reviews should be shifted to the regional or expert level. The secretariat was requested to compile specific information prior to CRIC meetings in order to prepare UNCCD Focal Points for more in-depth discussions during official sessions. This could be expected to lead to an improved final report and targeted recommendations that would enable the COP to steer the UNCCD process, using qualitative information produced by the CRIC.

8. Enhanced participation by civil society in the review process was viewed as important and it was suggested that a special NGO section should be included in the official agenda of CRIC sessions. Some concrete suggestions were also made regarding arrangements for panel and other interactive formats, which could include semi-formal, cross-regional thematic working groups moderated by experts or eminent persons.

9. As mentioned earlier, some criteria for reviewing implementation of the Convention may deserve a more in-depth review than others. Action programmes, synergies, technology and best practices as well as resource mobilization feature among the criteria mentioned.
