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COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Seventh session

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**Mechanism to facilitate the regional coordination
of the implementation of the Convention**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

1. Decision 3/COP.8 requests that each region develop a proposal, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary and the Global Mechanism (GM), on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.
2. The same decision gives specific tasks to the secretariat, the GM and affected country Parties in the preparation of relevant documentation to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its ninth session (COP 9) for consideration and any decision that the COP may wish to take on regional coordination mechanisms in the context of the budget and programme of work of the Convention.
3. The secretariat, in consultation with the GM, has taken action in responding to the various provisions of decision 3/COP.8 and has prepared relevant background documentation, which is annexed to the present document for information. The process of developing regional proposals on regional coordination mechanisms would be conducted with the procedural guidance of, and in consultation with, the representatives of the regional implementation annexes of the Convention.
4. At the invitation of the secretariat, and in coordination with the GM, representatives of the regional implementation annexes convened a meeting in Bonn, Germany, on 6 October 2008. The meeting reviewed the background documentation prepared by the secretariat and the GM, and took a number of decisions on how to lead the consultative process towards COP 9, which are summarized in the present document.

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I. Introduction and background information

1. In its guiding principles (article 3), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) calls for the Parties to “... *improve cooperation and coordination at subregional, regional and international levels ...*”. Moreover, article 11 of the Convention explicitly recommends that “[a]ffected country Parties shall consult and cooperate to prepare, as appropriate, in accordance with relevant regional implementation annexes, subregional and/or regional action programmes to harmonize, complement and increase the efficiency of national programmes”.

2. The regional implementation annexes to the Convention further define the modalities of the formulation and content of their respective regional action programmes (RAPs).

3. The need for cooperation among affected country Parties at the subregional and regional level has been referred to in many decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) and the matter of how to facilitate this cooperation has been debated since the inception of the UNCCD process. On many occasions, the COP has requested the Parties to express their views on institutional mechanisms to support regional coordination, and the secretariat to conduct specific appraisals and prepare proposals on operational means and instruments to meet the demand for consultation, coordination and cooperation among affected countries.

4. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) recognizes and reiterates the importance of coordination among countries. Decision 3/COP.8 states that “*regional coordination is an important component in implementing the Convention and The Strategy*”, and that “*coordination mechanisms must be responsive to existing and emerging needs, capacities and specific issues of regions*”.

II. Discharging the mandate of decision 3/COP.8

5. Decision 3/COP.8 requests “... *each region to develop a proposal, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary and the Global Mechanism, on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention ...*”

6. The same decision gives specific tasks to the secretariat, the Global Mechanism (GM) and the affected country Parties in the preparation of relevant documentation to be submitted to COP 9 for consideration, and any decision that the COP may wish to take in the context of the budget and programme of work of the Convention.

7. Parties should develop five proposals, one per regional implementation annex, on mechanisms for facilitating regional coordination and should provide these proposals prior to COP 9. To this effect, indications as to how to develop the proposals were provided in decision 3/COP.8 and in the Strategy¹ and relate to functions, outputs, reporting, housing, staffing and resources required for regional coordination mechanisms.

¹ Relevant provisions are contained in paragraph 30 of decision 3/COP.8, and in paragraph 22 (b) of The Strategy.

8. In accordance with decision 3/COP.8, the secretariat is entrusted, taking into account the views of the GM on its regional arrangements, with the preparation of:

(a) A review of the current regional coordination arrangements within the secretariat and the GM with a view to improving them.

The secretariat is also to prepare and submit to the COP at its ninth session:

(b) A compilation of regional proposals, as received by representatives of the regional implementation annexes

(c) Evidence-based options for improving regional coordination mechanisms, based on the above-mentioned review and the regional proposals, and taking into account the views of the GM on its regional arrangements.

9. The secretariat, in consultation with the GM,² has taken action in responding to the various provisions of decision 3/COP.8 as they relate to the facilitation of consultations on regional coordination mechanisms and the preparation of relevant documentation for COP 9.

III. Consultations for the review of relevant information and the preparation of regional proposals

10. It is proposed that this process be undertaken with the procedural guidance of, and in consultation with, the representatives of the regional implementation annexes of the UNCCD.

11. At the invitation of the secretariat, and in coordination with the GM, representatives of the regional implementation annexes convened a meeting in Bonn, Germany, on 6 October 2008. The meeting reviewed and endorsed the following documentation:

(a) Guidelines to assist Parties in the preparation of regional proposals on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention (contained in Annex I to this document)

(b) Factual information on services and engagements relating to coordination that are currently provided by the secretariat and the GM at subregional and regional levels (contained in Annex II to this document).

12. It was agreed that the substantive development of the proposals on regional coordination mechanisms would be carried out by the regional implementation annexes, while the secretariat and the GM would provide documentary, organizational and logistical support. In this respect, it was also agreed that:

² Assistance to Parties in the consultations on regional coordination mechanisms is part of the draft two-year work programme for the secretariat (2008-2009) and the draft joint work programme of the secretariat and the GM (2008-2009) as contained in documents ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.2 and ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.5 respectively, which are submitted to the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7).

(a) The representatives of the regional implementation annexes would transmit the aforementioned documentation to the countries of their respective regions,³ and invite them to initiate consultations on regional coordination mechanisms;

(b) Appropriate mechanisms of consultations, including task forces and e-forums,⁴ would be established in each region in order to carry out the exercise;

(c) Meetings of each regional implementation annex would be convened at the margin of CRIC 7, with a view to having preliminary exchanges of views on the matter, establishing the above-mentioned task forces and initiating the consultation process that would lead to the preparation of regional proposals;

(d) The result of the review of the current regional coordination arrangements conducted by the secretariat and the GM would be transmitted to the representatives of the regional implementation annexes and used as background documentation for the development of regional proposals;

(e) The regional proposals should be ready and transmitted to the secretariat by April 2009, to enable timely preparation of the final documentation and its submission to COP 9.

13. A second meeting of the representatives of the regional implementation annexes would take place during CRIC 7, in order to exchange feedback from the regional consultations on this matter, and to coordinate action on the development of regional proposals.

14. Finally, it is expected that discussions on regional coordination mechanisms will also take place at the meetings of the regional implementation annexes in preparation for the ninth session of the COP.

³ A communication from each representative of the regional implementation annexes was sent to focal points of the region on 10 October 2008.

⁴ E-forums would be hosted by the GM and managed, facilitated and moderated by the regional implementation annexes.

Annex I

Guidelines to assist Parties in the development of regional proposals on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention

1. Decision 3/COP.8 calls upon “each region to develop a proposal, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary and the Global Mechanism, on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention, taking into account, *inter alia*, existing regional coordination activities, tools and donor and regional funding arrangements, and providing details of staffing, hosting possibilities and other financial resources required, and to define their functions and output and reporting arrangements in terms of implementing the Convention and delivering The Strategy, and to provide these prior to COP 9 for consideration in the context of the budget and the programme of work”.

2. The following guidelines have been developed in order to facilitate the task of the five regional implementation annexes of the UNCCD and ensure a uniformed structure of the proposals on regional coordination mechanisms.

3. In developing their proposals, country Parties of each regional implementation annex in consultation with their representatives should:

(a) Identify ways and means for conducting the whole exercise and delivering regional proposals, including the required coordination among regions to implement the proposed road map;

(b) Consult previous decisions of the COP, as well as the documentation produced by the secretariat on this matter up to COP 8;

(c) Based on the above, define functions and outputs expected from regional coordination mechanisms, as well as the processes and tools required for delivering the expected outputs;

(d) Consult the compilation of factual information on services and engagements on coordination at subregional and regional levels that are currently provided by the secretariat and the GM;

(e) Review the existing subregional, regional and interregional activities and mechanisms as well as donors and regional funding arrangements used to facilitate the coordination of the implementation of the Convention;

(f) Identify the added value, scope and structure of regional coordination mechanisms being proposed, taking into account the needs of a broad range of actors involved in the implementation of the Convention, and in the context of the new work plans of the secretariat and the GM;

(g) Use as reference success stories of coordination among countries in similar environmental and sustainable development processes, if applicable;

(h) Once functions and outputs of the regional coordination mechanisms are identified, propose option(s) for their structures and operational arrangements, based on the following elements:

- (i) Their mandate/mission (mission statement), which should be similar for all regions
- (ii) A short/medium-term results-based management (RBM) framework
- (iii) Institutional arrangements
- (iv) Reporting arrangements, including reporting lines, reporting format and elements of reports
- (v) Staffing requirements
- (vi) Financial resources required (costs of equipment, missions, reporting and so on), and potential source(s) of funding
- (vii) Hosting arrangements with countries/institutions.

4. The proposals should be in line with the objectives and outcomes of The Strategy.

Annex II

Factual information on services or engagements relating to coordination that are currently provided by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism at subregional and regional levels

I. Input by the secretariat

A. Background

1. The frequency, magnitude and negative effects of desertification and drought vary from one region to another. Thus the UNCCD makes provisions for regional cooperation through five regional implementation annexes, for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Northern Mediterranean, and Central and Eastern Europe. This regional approach, which is peculiar to the UNCCD, was chosen in order to ensure implementation of the Convention through coordinated action programmes at national, subregional and regional levels.

2. The Convention stresses in several places the need for regional cooperation: its article 3 calls for the Parties to improve cooperation and coordination at subregional, regional and international levels, while article 11 explicitly recommends that affected country Parties should consult and cooperate to prepare, as appropriate, in accordance with relevant regional implementation annexes, subregional and/or regional action programmes to harmonize, complement and increase the efficiency of national programmes.

3. The above-mentioned annexes further define the modalities of the formulation and content of their respective regional action programmes.

B. The mandate received by COP 8

4. In accordance with decision 3/COP.8 and in line with their respective mandates, the secretariat and the GM have developed a roadmap for facilitating the development of regional proposals and delivering evidence-based options for improving regional coordination arrangements in accordance with decision 3/COP.8. This roadmap foresees the provision to Parties, through their regional representatives, of the following documentation:

(a) Factual information on services and engagements on coordination at subregional and regional levels which are currently provided by the secretariat and the GM;

(b) Guidelines to assist in the preparation of regional proposals on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention.

5. This document refers to the aforementioned item (a), while specific guidelines are provided in a separate document.

C. Coordination needs at regional and subregional levels

6. In general, coordination at supranational level, that is, subregional, regional and interregional levels, is required when issues can be addressed better through the concerted action of country Parties. Coordination is essential in fulfilling a series of obligations under the Convention and Parties – with the assistance of the secretariat and the GM where required – have established a number of ad hoc and standing mechanisms to ensure the required level of cooperation according to their needs.

(a) Preparation of national action programmes NAPs The preparation of NAPs has required a lengthy process at national level, which has benefited from concerted action with neighbour countries, particularly on methodological issues and coherent approaches to sustainable land management. Comprehensiveness, consistency and coherence of activities to combat land degradation in a region can be achieved only through the concerted efforts of affected countries which share similar ecosystems and socio-economic patterns. The Strategy calls for a review of action programmes and their alignment with its operational objectives; this process would definitely require a continued concerted and coordinated undertaking at subregional and regional levels, particularly as it relates to the assistance required by developing affected countries in this exercise.

(b) Preparation of reports to the COP A similar level of coordination was required in agreeing upon the methodology to devise national reports on the implementation of the Convention. In fact, help guides for the preparation of national reports on the implementation of the Convention were adopted at the level of regional consultations, in order to take care of some region-specific features and peculiarities. It is expected that a similar level of coordination is required to adopt new reporting guidelines under The Strategy, which require the use of performance and impact indicators, established baselines and specific methodologies for the review of implementation of The Strategy and the Convention.

(c) Preparation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes (SRAPs and RAPs) The preparation and implementation of SRAPs and RAPs entail the greatest effort in terms of coordination among countries of the same region. In some regions, subregional intergovernmental organizations have assisted in facilitating the necessary level of coordination of affected Parties, also providing expertise as required. Where subregional organizations do not exist as such, regional-specific programmes have supported countries' consultations in developing subregional action programmes (SRAPs). With regard to RAPs, Parties from three regions (Africa, Asia, and LAC) have agreed that these programmes would be developed around the main thematic issues that are most relevant for the implementation of sustainable land management (SLM) activities in their respective regions. For each theme a thematic programme network (TPN) of institutions and agencies, linked together via an institutional focal point, has facilitated coordination and the delivery of specific products and services. In the other regions, such a level of coordination could not be established, and the development of joint action programmes has not advanced. Further coordination at subregional and regional levels is now required for the alignment of the existing SRAPS and RAPs with The Strategy, and the implementation of monitoring systems at regional level which are required to support subregional and regional profiles of desertification.

(d) Preparation for the official sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies Consensus building and agreement on common positions prior to the sessions of the governing bodies has been achieved through regional consultations, which have taken place in the form of regional meetings or conferences since the inception of the UNCCD process. The review of implementation is to be conducted globally, and Parties need to hold extensive consultations on methodological and substantive issues that are before the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). The same level of coordination is required to address policy and institutional matters before the COP, including in the ad hoc working groups that have been established by the COP on specific matters. The enhanced role of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) for which the Strategy calls would also require additional coordination at subregional and regional levels.

(e) Specific policy issues relevant to the process A number of specific issues crucial in the UNCCD process also required broad consultation among Parties. This level of coordination has been achieved through ad hoc consultative meetings and thematic workshops at subregional, regional and global levels. Since the inception of the UNCCD process, cross-cutting themes such as synergies among conventions, linkages between desertification, poverty and migration, awareness- raising and sensitization, resource mobilization and so on have been debated in meetings of experts, focal points and relevant institutions. Positioning on key issues and taking consequent action require an adequate, permanent level of coordination among country Parties, particularly at regional and global levels.

(f) Regional and interregional platform for cooperation, establishment of partnerships with relevant partner institutions and resources mobilization Some region-driven initiatives relevant to the UNCCD process (in Africa, for instance, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) environmental initiative, the TerrAfrica process, the Africa Land and Water Initiative) require coordination and institutional linkages at regional level. In other regions, cooperation among countries and their partners in addressing sustainable land management and the required resources mobilization was facilitated mainly through standing consultation processes (the Central Asian Countries Initiative on Land Management - CACILM). Similarly, cooperation platforms were established to foster south-south concerted actions (the Africa-Latin America and the Caribbean Forum and the Africa-Asia Forum).

D. Services and engagements on coordination at subregional and regional levels provided by the secretariat

7. To respond to the needs and calls of Parties, and in accordance with the mandate given within each of the regional implementation annexes of the Convention, the secretariat has facilitated services and assistance with regard to the required coordination at subregional and regional levels.

8. In three regions, this mandate has been discharged mainly through Convention-specific arrangements that have been established at the request of regional meetings and conferences.¹

¹ In Africa the principle of the institutionalization of regional cooperation was first discussed at a preparatory meeting for the sixth African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) held in 1995. Then in 1997, in preparation for the first session of the COP, a Pan African Conference held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, adopted a resolution concerning the RAP and recommended the establishment of a RCU for Africa, to facilitate regional and subregional implementation of the UNCCD.

The three current regional coordination units (RCUs) are hosted by regional institutions² and staffed through supplementary funding. Country Parties of Annex V for Central and Eastern Europe have also called for the establishment of a region-specific back-up facility.

9. The region-specific tasks of current RCUs are highlighted in the following section. More detailed information is provided in table 1 below.

10. In some cases, subregional and regional cooperation among country Parties was facilitated through, and/or with the assistance of, subregional organizations and regional representatives of agencies and programmes of the United Nations (particularly the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)). Recently, under the results-based management system advocated by The Strategy and the short and medium-term programming, the Bureaus of the subsidiary bodies to the COP have been given a more proactive role in coordinating actions by Parties.

Africa

11. The formulation, implementation and follow-up of the RAP is facilitated mainly by the RCU for Africa, while the development and implementation of the five SRAPS were supported through the subregional organizations in Africa.

12. The Parties identified six TPNs around which the RAP for Africa is to be developed:

- (a) Integrated management of international river, lake and hydro-geological basins
- (b) Promotion of agroforestry and soil conservation
- (c) Rational use of rangelands and promotion of fodder crops development

In Asia, the Beijing Ministerial Conference on Regional Cooperation to Implement the UNCCD in Asia, recommended in 1997 the establishment of a Regional Backup Facility (RBF), in order to provide TPNs with operational support enhancing the linkage mechanism and other perceived needs amongst the participating countries. The International Experts Group Meeting on the Preparation of the Regional Action programme (RAP) for Combating Desertification and Drought in Asia, held in Bangkok in 1998, further recommended the creation of the RBF to be located within the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) given its long-standing involvement in desertification control.

In the LAC region, at the XI Meeting of the Forum of the Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima in 1998, the attending countries requested the secretariat to establish the RCU for LAC, to be based in Mexico, with the support of UNEP, UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other organizations of the United Nations system.

² For the RCU for Africa, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 1999 with the African Development Bank, which graciously agreed to host the RCU and provide it with furnished office space free of charge.

For the RCU for Asia, the establishment of the RCU was the result of consultations held at the Kitakyushu Ministerial Conference for Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific in 2000. The Asia RCU became operational in January 2001 following the signing of a MOU between ESCAP and the secretariat of the UNCCD in September 2000.

For the RCU for LAC, the Government of Mexico, in the II LAC Regional Meeting held in Mexico City in 1996, made the offer to host the RCU. At the III LAC Regional Meeting held in Havana in 1997, the Parties of the region agreed to establish the RCU in Mexico City. The secretariat and UNEP signed a memorandum of agreement on 20 July 1998 for the temporary establishment of the RCU in the Regional Offices of UNEP, where it stayed until the end of 2001. The Government of Mexico and the secretariat signed a Host Agreement on 23 April 1999 to establish the RCU in Mexico City. On 12 October 2002 the secretariat and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional office signed a MOU to host the RCU up to the present.

(d) Ecological monitoring, natural resources mapping, remote sensing and early warning systems

(e) Promotion of new and renewable energy sources and technologies

(f) Promotion of sustainable agricultural farming systems.

13. Other activities for better facilitation of the implementation of the Convention at regional and subregional level in Africa have been the facilitation of consultative processes among countries, leading to region-wide common positions on matters relevant to the Convention, the follow-up to specific UNCCD initiatives in the region, and policy advocacy and awareness raising. Liaisons between the African Development Bank and African country Parties have been maintained in order to ensure that the Bank duly invests in sustainable land management activities in the continent.

Table 1. Basic information on regional coordinating units (as at 31 July 2008)

General information		Institution		Facilities and equipment		Personnel	Finance (euros per year)			
Name	Address and contact details	Host country / Institution	HC A	Facilities (offices, meeting rooms etc.)	Equipment (IT and other equipment)	Personnel (name and title)	Cost of salaries to the organization	Rent of facilities and equipment (if applicable)	Running costs (including communications)	Source(s) of funding (per budget line)
RCU for Africa	African Development Bank 13 Avenue du Ghana BP 323, 1002 Tunis Belvedere Tunisia	African Development Bank		1 office room, 1 common space; shared meeting rooms available	2 work stations and office equipment	Mr. Stanislao Tarony, Programme Officer	78,000 €	N/A	N/A	Voluntary contribution Italy
RCU for Asia	United National Building Rahdanberb Av. Bangkok 10200 Thailand	United Nations Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)		2 office rooms	2 work stations and office equipment	Mr. Youlin Yang, Programme Officer Mr. Kiyeon Ko, Associate Programme Officer	67,000 € 78,000 €	N/A	1,500 €(a)	Republic of Korea Voluntary contribution Italy
RCU for Latin America and the Caribbean	CEPAL - Naciones Unidas Presidente Masaryk 29, Col. Polanco 11570 México, D.F.	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)		2 office rooms	2 work stations and office equipment (donated by ECLAC)	Ms. Mónica Acosta, Associate Programme Officer	67,000 €	5,500 EUR (b)	2,500 €(c)	Government of Spain

(a) Communication (50-60 US\$) + once a year 1,500 US\$ for LAN

(b) Rent - once every three months 2,090 US\$

(c) Communication and others (electricity, security, cleaning, fumigation, maintenance, etc.) 2,500 US\$

* Exchange rate of March 2008 (0,661) what does 0,661 indicate? Should the comma be a decimal point? Lines in footnotes should run across the page.

II. Input by the Global Mechanism

A. Preamble

1. Background

14. In addition to adopting the The Strategy, COP 8, through its decision 3/COP.8, also introduced a number of measures to guide the various UNCCD institutions and stakeholders in fulfilling the tasks and obligations deriving from The Strategy.

15. This includes specific measures to strengthen regional coordination, which is considered “*an important component in implementing the Convention and The Strategy*”. In particular, the decision calls upon each region to develop, by COP 9, “*a proposal on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention, ...[which] must be responsive to existing and emerging needs, capacities and the specific issues of regions*”.

16. According to paragraph 29 of decision 3/COP.8, these proposals shall be developed as a result of:

(a) a preliminary assessment of existing regional coordination activities, tools and funding arrangements;

(b) a clear definition of functions, expected outputs and reporting arrangements in terms of implementing the Convention and delivering The Strategy;

(c) a detailed analysis of human and financial resource requirements; and

(d) an exploration of hosting arrangements and other possibilities for meeting the above resource requirements.

17. Together with the Executive Secretary, the decision requests the GM to collaborate with the regions in this endeavour. In order to maximize synergies and complementarities in delivering this task, the two institutions decided to include it in the Joint Work Programme for the 2008-2009 biennium. Between July and August 2008, a roadmap and set of guidelines were jointly developed to facilitate the task of the five regional implementation annexes of the UNCCD and in order to ensure a uniform structure of the final proposals.

18. Decision 3/COP.8, paragraph 32, also asks the GM to provide the secretariat with its views on how to improve current regional coordination arrangements, which would be taken into account in the compilation of proposals to be submitted to COP 9 for consideration.

19. As a first step in this direction, the secretariat invited the GM to prepare a paper on “Factual information on services and engagements on coordination at subregional and regional levels that are currently provided by the Global Mechanism”. The objective of this paper is, therefore, to respond to this request and to provide Parties with a comprehensive overview of GM arrangements to facilitate coordination as indicated in decision 3/COP.8.

2. Regional coordination in the implementation of the UNCCD

20. It should first be clarified that “coordination” in this context refers to those activities aiming at organizing, regulating and harmonizing the UNCCD implementation process among country Parties. Secondly, it should be noted that decision 3/COP.8 refers to “regional” and not “subregional” coordination.³ In other words, the focus of the decision is on the regions as defined in the UNCCD regional annexes.

21. The importance that the UNCCD gives to regional coordination is revealed in its very foundations. Among the principles guiding implementation of the Convention, article 3 recognizes the need to improve regional cooperation and coordination as a concrete manifestation of the spirit of international solidarity and partnership. This principle permeates the whole UNCCD construction, and is further emphasized in The Strategy, which suggests the creation of a “*global partnership*” to reverse and prevent desertification.

22. More specifically, The Strategy invites the COP “*to consider the establishment of appropriate regional dialogue and coordination facilitation mechanisms*” of immediate added value in the context of the secretariat and GM work plans.

23. In the above connotation, therefore, regional coordination is an instrument to which country Parties can rally in order to advance UNCCD implementation. The form that regional coordination takes, however, varies considerably depending on the functions and/or objectives pursued. With regard, for instance, to policy dialogue, Parties engage in regional consultations in preparation for the various intergovernmental policy processes relating to the UNCCD.

24. The secretariat has been accorded a central role with regard to regional coordination, which is in line with its mandate. The GM, on the contrary, plays only a supportive role in this regard, as stated in The Strategy, and is not mandated nor equipped to drive any regional coordination arrangement or mechanism.

25. It is against this backdrop that it was decided, while developing the road-map for this particular element of the Joint Work Programme between the secretariat and the GM, to include not only regional coordination mechanisms, mainly the domain of the secretariat, in the factual information to be presented to Parties but also subregional collaboration and cooperation arrangements, which is the level above national, for some of the GM operations relevant to this exercise.

B. Collaboration arrangements of the GM

1. Introduction/Criteria for collaboration

26. The GM has no coordination arrangements or mechanisms at the regional level (that is, a mechanism which brings together an entire regional implementation annex). It is important to point out that the focus of GM work is the country level. However, the GM has some

³ Paragraph 29 of decision 3/COP.8 reaffirms that “regional coordination is an important component in implementing the Convention and The Strategy”.

subregional initiatives aimed at capacity-building and the exchange of information on resource mobilization.

27. The decision whether to work solely at the country level or to complement country-level work with subregional initiatives is made based on two sets of criteria. The first (or higher level) set of criteria comprises principles that are used to gauge the benefits of engaging at the subregional level, and includes the following:

(a) *Economies of scale*: Subregional cooperation may generate benefits or returns (for example in terms of access to a greater range of financial instruments) greater than those that would accrue from actions of individual country Parties;

(b) *Subsidiarity*: Subregional cooperation should take place only where the action of individual countries is deemed insufficient, or where those functions cannot be performed more effectively at lower levels;

(c) *Specificity*: Depending on the objective, duration or scale of the initiative, cooperation involves a specific group of countries;

(d) *Form follows function*: Depending on the specificity of the region and objective pursued, cooperation may take many different forms.

(e) Once the decision to engage at the subregional level is agreed upon, the GM uses the second (or lower level) set of criteria to decide on the nature and type of engagement. This set of criteria includes:

(f) *Mandate of collaborating partner*: The mandate should support, or it should be relevant for, UNCCD implementation and, better still, for resource mobilization;

(g) *Institutional capacity of the partner*: The collaborating partner should be able to add value to GM resource mobilization efforts and to provide quality service to country Parties in the subregion; and

(h) *Rallying power of the partner institution/organization*: The partner institution or organization should have proven technical and/or political ability to bring together country Parties in the subregion for a common cause.

2. Categories of GM subregional collaboration arrangements

28. Based on the two sets of criteria, the GM has strategically entered into partnerships and other forms of collaboration arrangements at the subregional level to ensure effective execution of its mandate. Since the subregional arrangements are mostly opportunistic and aimed at delivering the best service to country Parties, the subregional arrangements of the GM have no common format; rather they vary according to the specific nature of the initiative and/or activity to be implemented. They are also time-bound; the GM, therefore, has no permanent collaboration arrangements at any level.

29. Analysis of the arrangements pertaining in the subregions may, however, be classified into five categories (for discussion purposes) as follows:

- (a) Partnership with existing subregional economic/political organizations
- (b) Partnership with international organizations
- (c) Support through “lead” countries to provide services of a subregional nature
- (d) Support through the UNCCD secretariat, and
- (e) Arrangements based on special initiatives.

30. Table 2 below provides summaries of each type of arrangement in use in four of the five regional implementation annexes, namely Africa (Annex 1), Asia (Annex 2), LAC (Annex 3) and Central and Eastern Europe (Annex 5).

3. Details of GM subregional collaboration arrangements

a. Partnership with existing subregional economic/political organizations

31. In Africa, the existing subregional organizations, namely the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)/the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) are the principal partners of the GM in its resource mobilization efforts in support of UNCCD implementation by country Parties. GM collaboration with these subregional organizations is based on their individual mandates, including the fact that they have responsibility for coordinating implementation of their respective SRAPs. In addition, the institutional capacity of these subregional organizations with regard to UNCCD implementation (and the promotion of sustainable management and the use of natural resources) and their rallying power to bringing member states together for a common course are key considerations for collaboration.

32. The instrument for collaboration is typically the signing of a MOU between the GM and the subregional organization. A typical MOU would spell out the goal and objectives for collaboration, the services to be provided (terms of reference), the roles and responsibilities of each party (including the beneficiary governments), the principles guiding the collaboration, and the timeframe.

33. Table 2 provides specific examples of ongoing (and past) collaboration arrangements with COMIFAC/ECCAS, ECOWAS/CILSS, IGAD and SADC. Discussion is also ongoing with the Secretariat of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to mainstream UNCCD issues into the COMESA Climate Initiative with a view to supporting UNCCD country Parties in mobilizing climate/carbon-related funds for the implementation of projects based on adaptation/mitigation measures in degraded drylands.

b. Partnership with international organizations

34. This category of subregional collaboration arrangement pertains to regional implementation annexes 2 and 3, that is, Asia and LAC respectively.

35. In West Asia and Central Asia, the GM has principally collaborated with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) for implementation of GM resource mobilization programmes including capacity-building based on the design of integrated financing strategies (DFIS) for West Asia and CACILM in Central Asia.

36. In the LAC region, the GM has subregional collaboration arrangements with ECLAC (with respect to South America), the Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE) (for the Central America subregion) and Conservation International (for the Andean subregion). The three organizations (that is, ECLAC, CATIE and Conservation International) host GM consultants (who for political reasons are referred to as regional advisers). The consultants provide advisory services and support to countries in the implementation of measures leading to resource mobilization. For economics of scale, the consultants in some cases also use existing subregional structures such as the common market of the southern cone (MERCOSUR) and the Central American Integration System (SICA) and/or programmes to advance GM resource mobilization goals.

37. The hosting of GM consultants in partner institutions reduces GM transaction and overhead costs as the host institution provides administrative, logistic and (depending on the nature of the arrangements) technical support to the consultants. This type of arrangement also enables the GM to discharge its mandate in a very cost-effective manner.

c. Support through a “lead” country

38. The GM recently adopted this arrangement to provide financial and technical support to the regional initiative on financial resource mobilization for UNCCD implementation for Annex 5 countries (that is, Central and Eastern Europe). The support was provided through the Czech Republic, which facilitated the organization of a regional workshop to discuss resource mobilization opportunities and modalities for the region.

d. Support through the UNCCD secretariat

39. The GM has also channelled support through the secretariat to affected country Parties in order for them to implement specific activities. For example the secretariat facilitated the development (and implementation) of the six TPNs, especially in Africa and Asia. The GM provided financial support through the secretariat to enable the responsible focal countries/institutions to design the TPNs.

40. The GM has participated in all regional preparatory meetings organized by the secretariat for all regional annexes with respect to CRIC and COP sessions. In these meetings, the GM has provided information to country Parties on its policies and operational modalities, its approach to resource mobilization and its activities in various countries and subregions.

e. Arrangements based on special initiatives

41. This is the last form of subregional collaboration arrangement the GM is using to support affected country Parties. The GM is using its SolArid programme, which is based on south-south cooperation, to bring together West and North African countries (in the Sahel and Saharan subregions) and special interest groups in the “subregion” such as women, to mobilize resources for UNCCD implementation. One such example is the Tchém’sou Coalition on empowerment of women to invest in SLM.

42. The GM has also signed cooperation agreements with the secretariats of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) to undertake joint resource mobilization for UNCCD implementation within the framework of the SolArid programme.

43. In Central Asia, the GM uses its membership of the Steering Committee of CACILM to advance its resource mobilization objectives in the subregion through the multi-country secretariat, which is responsible for coordinating CACILM implementation.

44. The GM is also an active partner in the TerrAfrica Initiative. But although TerrAfrica is a sub-Saharan Africa initiative, much of the engagement of partners is at the country level and there is very little going forward with regard to subregional or regional cooperation.

C. Conclusions

45. The GM does not have any regional coordination arrangements in any of the five regional implementation annexes. It has worked, or is working, through five different categories of collaboration arrangements at the subregional level in Africa, Asia, LAC and the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries but none of these arrangements is permanent.

46. The five categories of subregional collaboration arrangements of the GM are largely opportunistic – aimed at delivering the best services to country Parties in an efficient, cost-effective and professional manner. Each of the five categories of subregional arrangements is also programme or activity-specific, time-bound and designed to induce change at the country level.

47. The two most commonly used categories of subregional arrangements are (i) partnership with existing subregional economic/political organizations and (ii) use of both United Nations and non-United Nations international institutions. The use of existing subregional organizations is specific to Africa while the use of international organizations is mostly in Asia (west and central) and in the LAC region. Collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat focuses largely on the channelling of financial resources to country Parties.

Table 2. Global Mechanism. Categories of collaboration arrangements used at the subregional level

Region/subregion		Existing subregional economic/political organizations	International institutions	Lead country	UNCCD secretariat	Arrangements based on special initiatives
1. Africa	Eastern & Southern	<p>The GM, through a MOU, collaborated with the secretariats of IGAD and SADC to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support capacity-building and the coordination of resource mobilization for implementation of the two SRAPs by member states. Coordinate implementation of CSO projects within the framework of the Community Exchange and Training Programme (CETP). <p>Currently, collaboration between GM and the COMESA Secretariat to facilitate the mainstreaming of UNCCD issues in the COMESA Climate Initiative is being discussed. The arrangements are aimed at jointly mobilizing climate-related finance for implementation of adaptation and other programmes based on synergies between the UNCCD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).</p>	GM partnered with the United Nations Development Programme DDC to organize subregional workshops on resource mobilization for IGAD and SADC member states.	-	The GM provided financial support through the secretariat for the elaboration of TPN 5 by African country Parties and for immediate follow-up actions including participation in an international conference on renewable energy held at UNEP, Nairobi.	The GM is an active member of the TerrAfrica Initiative and is supporting a number of countries through this arrangement. However, the cooperation arrangements of TerrAfrica are mostly between and among development partners in support of country level SLM programmes.
	West & Central	<p>The GM collaborated with CILSS (on behalf of ECOWAS) through a MOU to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Support Chad and Niger in mobilizing resources for implementation of their NAPs, and (ii) Establish a multi-donor fund for the implementation of the UNCCD in West Africa. <p>Collaboration is ongoing with ECCAS and COMIFAC to coordinate implementation of a subregional programme on resource mobilization for the ten Central African countries within the framework of the Central Africa SRAP.</p>	-	-	The GM has participated in all regional preparatory meetings organized by the secretariat with respect to the CRIC and the COP.	<p>As part of the GM SolArid programme which brings together 11 peri-Saharan countries of the West and North to mobilize resources through South-South cooperation for NAP implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The GM has launched the Tchem'sou Coalition on Empowerment of Women to invest in SLM (Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia),

	North Africa	-	-			(ii) The GM has also signed collaboration agreements with the Secretary Generals of CEN-SAD and AMU to use the expertise of their organizations to advance the mobilization of resources through SolArid for UNCCD implementation.
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Region/subregion		Existing subregional economic/political organizations	International institutions	Lead country	UNCCD secretariat	Other arrangements
2. Asia	West Asia	-	<p>The GM has collaborated with the United Nations Environment Programme-ROWA, ICARDA and the Arab Center for Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands (ACSAD) on implementation of specific subregional initiatives launched by the UNCCD secretariat and the World Bank.</p> <p>(i) For the West Asia SRAP, GM financial support was channelled through UNEP-ROWA, while ICARDA and ACSAD executed programme activities.</p> <p>(ii) ICARDA's Regional Facilitation Unit for the programme Promoting Sustainable Development in the Drylands of West Asia (WANA) provided logistical services for the organization of the DFIS workshops in WANA.</p>		<p>The GM provided financial support through the secretariat for the formulation of TPN 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 by the Asia country Parties.</p> <p>As in other regions, the GM has participated in all regional preparatory meetings organized by the secretariat with respect to the CRIC and the COP.</p>	

	Central Asia	-	ICARDA hosted a GM subregional environment officer (2001 to 2007) in its Project Facilitation Unit in Uzbekistan.			Subregional coordination for CACILM implementation is carried out through the Multi-country Secretariat in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The GM is a member of the CACILM Steering Committee together with the CACILM countries and donor partners.
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Note: There are no subregional collaboration or cooperation arrangements in South-East Asia and South Asia and the Pacific.

Region/subregion		Existing subregional economic/political organizations	International institutions	Lead country	UNCCD secretariat	Other arrangements
3. LAC	South America	-	A GM consultant (with the title of regional adviser), hosted by ECLAC in Santiago, Chile, is supporting GM efforts in providing support to MERCOUR through their Environment intergovernmental group for the development and implementation of a UNCCD sub-regional strategy in collaboration with the European Commission.	-		A GM consultant based in Mexico and working on a retainer basis facilitates the implementation of GM strategic programmes throughout the LAC region.
	Central America	-	A GM consultant (with the title of regional adviser), hosted by CATIE in San Jose, Costa Rica, is providing support to integrating SLM/ UNCCD issues into the programmes of SICA, for example the Regional Agro-Environmental Strategy.			
	Andean Region	-	A GM consultant (with the title of regional adviser) is hosted by Conservation International in Quito, Ecuador. Currently, arrangements are under way to relocate the adviser to the FAO country office.			

Region/ subregion	Existing subregional economic/political organizations	International institutions	Lead country	UNCCD secretariat	Other arrangements
4. Central and Eastern Europe	-	-	The GM provided financial and technical support to the regional initiative on financial resource mobilization for UNCCD implementation for the CEE countries through the Czech Republic. Future support may take a similar form.		-

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