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Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention - Performance review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention and of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)

**Performance review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention
and of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the
implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document was prepared in response to the request made by Parties in decision 3/COP.8 that the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) finalize proposals for the performance review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention and especially the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy). The document presents the two main aspects of the proposed performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS): the assessment of the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy, based on indicators for the strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy; and the review of performance of the Convention's institutions and bodies, based on results-based management (RBM). The document explains the roles and responsibilities of the relevant actors, in particular the CRIC as the body playing the central role in the PRAIS, and the necessity of establishing a knowledge-sharing system to capitalize on information and lessons learned in the review and assessment processes, with the aim of strengthening linkages with policymaking. Broad elements of such a knowledge-sharing system are put forward, together with related tools, and the main elements for the draft decision(s) of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties relating to the PRAIS are proposed.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AHWG	Ad Hoc Working Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CSO	civil society organization
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
DLDD	desertification, land degradation and drought
FC	Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism
GBIF	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GM	Global Mechanism
IHWG	Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations
JWP	joint work programme
PRAIS	performance review and assessment of implementation system
RBM	results-based management
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WP	workplan

I. Introduction

1. Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) recognized the need to strengthen the Convention's base and reach, as well as to increase its effectiveness, and in 2007 adopted the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) for the years 2008-2018. Decision 3/COP.8 represents a milestone inasmuch as it sets the direction in which the Convention process should develop, and provides the tools to achieve, the agreed goals. The Strategy defines the roles of all relevant actors in the Convention process and lays the foundation for a completely new – quantitative and results-based – approach towards the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy itself as well as for associated impact and performance reviews.

2. Recognizing the need to clarify the modalities of a new review and assessment system, Parties requested the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) to finalize proposals for the performance review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention and especially The Strategy, including recommendations emanating from the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), for discussion at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9).¹ It is expected that the CRIC, at its eighth session (CRIC 8), will discuss the proposals contained in this document and forward its recommendations to COP 9 for any decision the COP may wish to make in the context of adopting new Terms of Reference for the CRIC.

3. Chapter II presents a historical analysis of the review of implementation of the Convention, as well as of the performance of its bodies and institutions. Elements of the new approach towards the assessment of the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy and the review of performance of the Convention's institutions and bodies are elaborated in chapter III. Chapter IV presents the roles and responsibilities of all the actors involved in the review. In this context, the core tasks of the CRIC are detailed, taking into account the deliberations of the seventh session of the CRIC (CRIC 7) on the format of future sessions of the CRIC. In chapter V, the need to establish a knowledge-sharing system is addressed in order to capitalize on information and lessons learned in the review and assessment process. The broad elements of such a system are put forward, together with related tools. Finally, in chapter VI the main elements for the draft COP 9 decision(s) relating to the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) are proposed. Document ICCD/CRIC(8)/INF.1 provides an overview of the institutional set-up of review and assessment systems under the other two Rio conventions.

II. Background information

4. The review of the implementation of the Convention is embodied in article 22 of the Convention. The COP is entrusted with regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and on the basis of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge (article 22, paragraph 2(a)).

¹ Decision 3/COP.8

5. Article 26 of the Convention attributes an obligation to the Parties to communicate to the COP for consideration at its ordinary sessions, through the secretariat, reports on the measures which they have taken for the implementation of the Convention, distinguishing between the obligations of affected and developed country Parties.

6. Decision 11/COP.1 built on these provisions and provided the first guidelines for the communication of information and the review of implementation. This decision established the procedures relating to the structure, format and content of reports, as well as the timetable for their submission to the secretariat, which was in turn entrusted with compiling summaries of these reports and preparing a synthesis. The decision stipulates that reports by Parties, together with advice and information provided by the CST and the Global Mechanism (GM) consistent with their respective mandates, and such other reports as the COP may call for constitute the basis of the review by the COP of the implementation of the Convention.

7. Following the provisions of decision 11/COP.1, the COP initiated, at its third session (COP 3), a review of the reports submitted by affected African country Parties. The COP at its fourth session (COP 4) considered the reports of affected country Parties of the other regions. Developed country Parties and other UNCCD stakeholders reported at each session on measures taken to assist the action programmes of those affected developing country Parties under review. No specific mechanisms or procedures were prescribed for this review and progress was assessed through panel discussions.

8. By decision 6/COP.3, COP 3 decided to entrust an open-ended temporary subsidiary body, the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG), with the review of reports. The task of the AHWG was to review and analyse in detail the reports submitted to COP 3 and those to be submitted to COP 4. It presented its final report to the fifth session of the COP (COP 5).

9. The first forward-looking document on enhancing the implementation of the Convention was adopted by COP 4 in 2000 in the form of a Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the Convention (Bonn Declaration, decision 8/COP.4). The COP decided to give due consideration to the provisions of this Declaration by inviting Parties to include in their reports appropriate information relating to the seven strategic areas for action defined in the Declaration.²

10. The first attempts to use indicators in reviewing the implementation of the Convention were made at COP 4, when, following input from the CST, Parties were invited to develop a minimum set of impact indicators and to include in their reports information on progress in implementing the recommendations of the CST (decision 10/COP.4). Another effort was made at COP 6, at which Parties were requested to include in their reports indicators on, inter alia, the participation of women and youth as well as social indicators (decision 1/COP.6), together with information relating to the strategic areas of the Bonn declaration (decision 4/COP.6).

² The seven strategic areas for action were: sustainable land use management, including water, soil and vegetation in affected areas; sustainable use and management of rangelands; development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems; development of new and renewable energy sources; launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensification of soil conservation programmes; development of early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting; and desertification monitoring and assessment.

11. The CRIC was established as the new subsidiary body in charge of assisting the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention at COP 5 in 2001. It was charged with reviewing implementation along the seven key thematic topics defined by decision 1/COP.5.³ The CST, including through the use of the GM and a Group of Experts,⁴ was invited to provide the CRIC with advice and information on the basis of a report by the secretariat.

12. Based on considerations undertaken at the level of the CRIC, Parties drew conclusions and made concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention through a comprehensive report submitted to the COP. At sessions held during the COP, the CRIC considered the comprehensive report of the intersessional session and concentrated on the review of the performance of institutional arrangements under the Convention.

13. Although the CRIC reviewed institutional arrangements pertinent to the implementation of the Convention, no consistent performance review of the Convention bodies was undertaken. Subsequently, CRIC elaborated draft decisions for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

14. At COP 7, two ad hoc working groups were established, both linked with the review of the implementation process. The ad hoc intergovernmental intersessional working group (IIWG) was created with a mandate to review the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report and, building on the results of that review and other inputs, to develop a draft 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD (decision 3/COP.7). Another working group, the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) to improve the procedures for communication of information, particularly at the national level, as well as the quality and format of reports on the implementation of the Convention, was established by decision 8/COP.7, for: (a) provision of guidance to the COP on simplified, consistent reporting procedures and formats for reports after the completion of the third reporting cycle; (b) clarification and standardization of terms and issues targeted at current reporting with a view to their eventual application to the new formats of reports; and (c) facilitation of a more substantive assessment of the implementation of the Convention at national level through the review of reports by Parties and observers.

15. The work of the IIWG resulted in the adoption, at the eighth session of the COP (COP 8), of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (decision 3/COP.8) for the period 2008-2018, which provides the basis for the new performance review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention and which is discussed in detail below.

³ The seven key thematic topics were: participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations; legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements; resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including concluding of partnership agreements; linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies; measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought; drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; and access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

⁴ Established by decision 1/COP.5

16. The AHWG produced reports for the fifth and sixth sessions of the CRIC. These reports identified problems and deficiencies in the reporting processes conducted thus far and prepared substantive proposals for new, simplified and coherent guidelines to be prepared for all the entities that are requested to report regularly to the COP, or otherwise to provide information on their support to the implementation of the Convention. Decision 8/COP.8 requested the secretariat to develop draft reporting guidelines for all these entities, which should be in line with the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention, and should take into consideration the report of the AHWG.

17. CRIC 7, held in 2008, considered the draft reporting principles for reporting entities, developed by the secretariat, as well as the proposals for the format of future sessions of the CRIC, and provided its conclusions for and made recommendations to COP 9 (contained in ICCD/CRIC(7)/5). COP 9 is expected to adopt the new reporting elements (ICCD/CRIC(8)/5 and Add.1 to Add.7) as well as the new mandate and terms of reference of the CRIC (ICCD/COP(9)/7), which will serve as the basis for the next reporting and review cycles expected to start in 2010.

III. Elements of the new review and assessment system

18. The Strategy (decision 3/COP.8) represents the foundation of the new PRAIS, while the new terms of reference of the CRIC and the new reporting elements presented to COP 9 represent its two main pillars. Parties at CRIC 7 welcomed the proposed option by which the review of the implementation of The Strategy through performance indicators would be carried out every two years, and the review of the implementation of the Convention through desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) profiles and through impact indicators would be carried out every four years. The graph on page 10 illustrates the PRAIS.

A. Performance review

19. The part of PRAIS relating to the performance review (marked with dashed lines in the graph) is derived from The Strategy and the request from Parties that both the Convention bodies (the CRIC and the CST) and the Convention institutions (the secretariat and the GM) develop their respective draft results-based management (RBM) multi-year workplans and costed draft two-year work programmes in line with The Strategy and report on progress in implementation to the CRIC. The COP will consequently take relevant decisions based on the recommendations emerging from the CRIC.

20. While the secretariat and the GM prepare their own draft multi-year workplans and draft costed two-year work programmes and submit them to the CRIC and the COP (together with their draft joint work programme (JWP)), relevant units of the secretariat prepare, in consultation with and following instructions from the COP, the CST and the CRIC Bureaux, their respective CST and CRIC draft multi-year workplans and draft costed two-year work programmes for submission to the CST, the CRIC and the COP. The Strategy requested that performance indicators for UNCCD institutions and bodies be developed as part of the RBM framework and adopted by the COP. The CRIC will review progress by the Convention's institutions and bodies in the light of these indicators.

B. Assessment of implementation

1. Indicators

21. The part of PRAIS relating to the assessment of implementation (marked with full lines in the graph) is derived from The Strategy (decision 3/COP.8) and the request that Parties report on progress made in the implementation of The Strategy by, inter alia, addressing the outcomes under the five operational objectives of The Strategy (the “short- and medium-term effects”). The reporting by Parties on the implementation of the Convention (the “long-term effects”), as requested in article 26 of the Convention, should address expected impacts under the four strategic objectives of The Strategy.

22. Two sets of indicators will serve to monitor progress on expected impacts under strategic objectives, outcomes and operational objectives. The indicators for the strategic objectives were adopted in The Strategy and are refined further by the CST⁵. The same decision also requested the CST to provide advice to the CRIC on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3⁶. Parties at CRIC 7 highlighted the importance of launching intergovernmental exchanges on how to approach the achievement of strategic objective 4, and requested the secretariat to initiate action together with the GM on this matter⁷. As for indicators on operational objectives, and following the deliberations of CRIC 7, the secretariat consolidated indicators for operational objectives taking into account the work done by the IIWG, the submissions made by Parties and the deliberations of CRIC 7⁸.

2. National, subregional and regional monitoring and assessment systems

23. In line with outcome 3.1. of operational objective 3 of The Strategy, CRIC 7 recommended that monitoring and assessment systems at the national, subregional, regional and global levels be established and/or improved in order to support enhanced reporting. At the national level, information that supports the preparation of reports under different multilateral environmental agreements should be developed or maintained, and integrated into existing relevant databases. In the interim, and while affected country Parties benefit from a long-term capacity-building approach to assist them in the establishment of such monitoring systems, advantage should be taken of existing information, especially that provided by intergovernmental and United Nations organizations, with the eventual aim of enabling affected Parties to monitor UNCCD implementation at the national, subregional and regional levels.

3. Best practices

24. The identification and sharing of best practices and success stories are placed at the core of the knowledge-sharing systems to be established and/or developed at the global level (secretariat level) and also other levels, with a view to supporting policymakers and end-users, as requested by The Strategy. The CRIC will inter alia document and disseminate best practices

⁵ ICCD/COP(9)/CST/4

⁶ ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.6

⁷ ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.7

⁸ ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.1 to Add.3

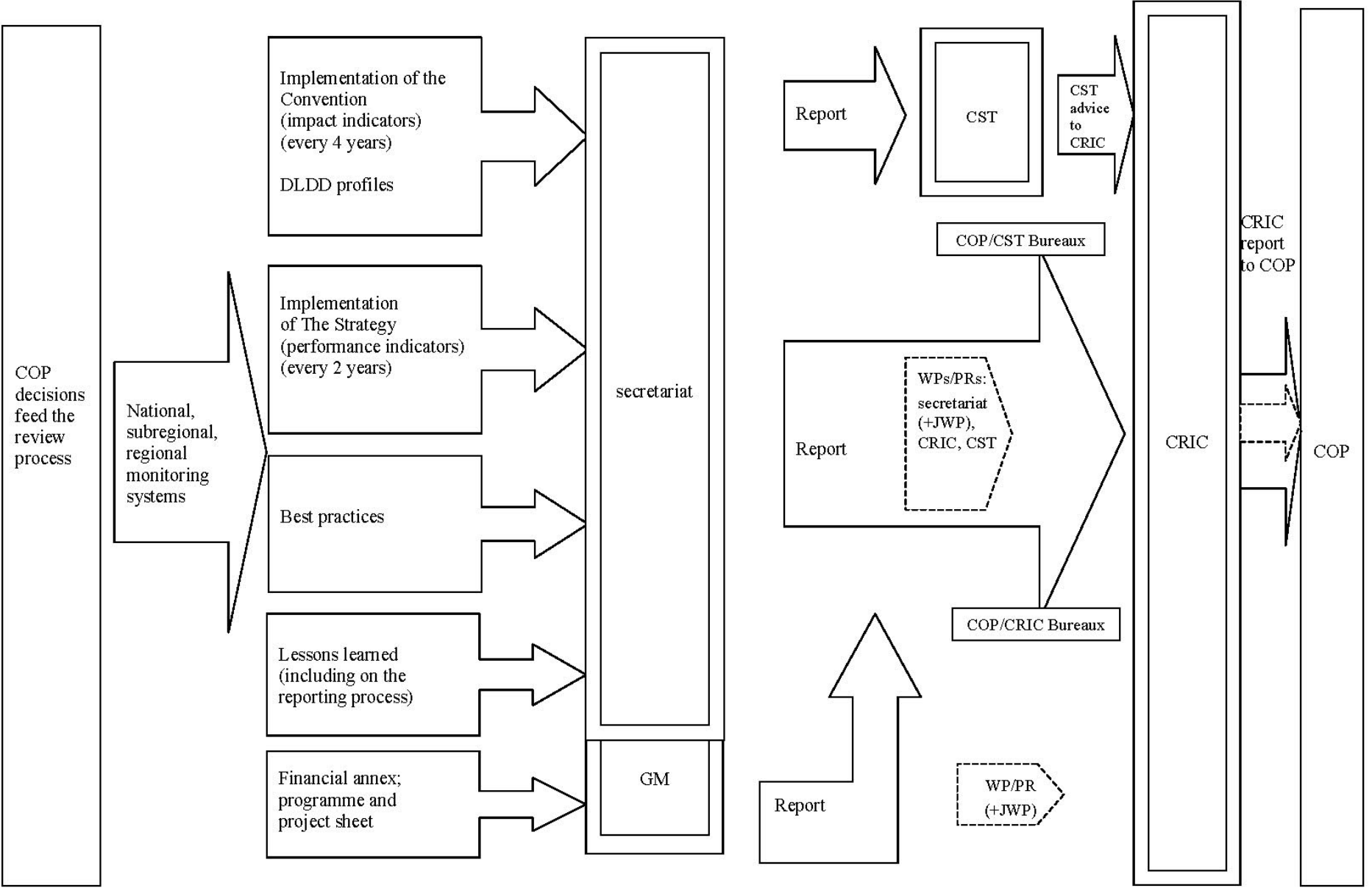
from experience in implementing the Convention, thereby making a cross-cutting contribution to all operational objectives.

4. Reporting guidelines

25. The COP requested the secretariat, by decision 8/COP.8, to develop reporting guidelines for all reports submitted in the context of assessment of implementation.

26. Following the reporting principles established for all reporting entities, reporting guidelines will be formulated taking into account their specificities, their respective mandates and functions and their particular contribution to the implementation of the Convention. In order to ensure that the CRIC review will monitor how COP decisions are translated into action at the various levels and by the various stakeholders, reporting guidelines need to be flexible and amended, where necessary, by the secretariat after each COP. This feature of the PRAIS system will ensure that the CRIC can monitor its own effectiveness by tracking how many of the COP decisions have been effectively taken up by Parties at the national, subregional or regional levels.

27. The Strategy has attributed to the secretariat the task of providing a compilation and synthesis of reports on the basis of the new guidelines. It is proposed that the GM will assist in this process by providing an analysis of financial flows based on information obtained from the financial annex and project and programme sheets. It is also proposed that the documents containing the compilation and synthesis of DLDD profiles (impact indicators) be submitted to the CST at its intersessional sessions (every four years, in conjunction with intersessional sessions of CRIC) for analysis and its advice to the CRIC. The documents containing the compilation and synthesis of information relating to the operational objectives of The Strategy (performance indicators) would be submitted to the intersessional sessions of the CRIC (every two years). CRIC would be supported in taking up the information on best practices and lessons learned by the knowledge-sharing system, the main features of which are addressed in chapter V.



IV. Roles and responsibilities

A. Parties

28. The assessments of the implementation of the Convention and of The Strategy by the Parties, both affected and developed, are central to the PRAIS. Whereas Parties took over the obligation to report on the implementation of the Convention from article 26 of the Convention, The Strategy provides orientation on the review to be conducted at CRIC level as well as on the content of the reports to be submitted.

29. Decision 3/COP.8 requested Parties to put into operation the implementation of The Strategy in accordance with their national priorities and urged affected country Parties to align their action programmes and other relevant implementation activities relating to the Convention with The Strategy by, inter alia, addressing the outcomes under the five operational objectives of The Strategy. CRIC 7 concluded that alignment of action programmes with The Strategy would facilitate implementation, monitoring and application of the new reporting guidelines. Therefore, clear linkages between the revised action programmes and the indicators for reporting should be established.

30. In order to improve and standardize the reporting process for Parties, it is necessary to establish and/or improve monitoring and assessment systems at the national, subregional and regional levels. These should support the enhanced reporting system. In decision 1/COP.8, the COP invited Parties and international institutions to strengthen and standardize UNCCD reporting and to improve comprehensive and participatory monitoring and evaluation. In the same decision, the COP invited the CST to assist in creating an international policy environment for the provision and transfer of adequate technology to affected country Parties for the establishment of effective monitoring and assessment systems. At CRIC 7, Parties recommended that existing monitoring and assessment systems at the national level be surveyed, especially those set up within the framework of international projects/assistance. Some Parties regarded the establishment or improvement of these systems as a prerequisite for successful reporting and welcomed the proposal to include in those systems information that may service the other Rio conventions. They also emphasized that increased capacity-building activities will be required in this context, including training of stakeholders involved at the national level, given the wealth of information that will be required under the new reporting system.

B. The Conference of the Parties

31. The role of the COP in reviewing the implementation of the Convention is unchanged. According to article 22, paragraph 2(a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention, the COP is the supreme body in charge of regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention. The Strategy extended this by affirming that “the COP will be the main body for assessing and reviewing the overall implementation of The Strategy, assisted in this regard by the CRIC and the CST and involving the COP Bureau as appropriate, in line with their respective mandates.” In particular, The Strategy stipulates in relation to the multi-year workplans of Convention bodies and institutions that the COP will take relevant decisions based on recommendations from the CRIC, but that all draft multi-year programmes of work should be presented to the COP for adoption. The Parties at CRIC 7 reiterated that the workplans and

work programmes of the Convention's institutions and bodies should be submitted to the CRIC for consideration and advice, while action on budgetary matters should be taken by the COP.

C. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

32. The CRIC has had responsibility for assisting the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention since 2001. The mandate and the terms of reference of the CRIC have been renewed several times and they are currently still valid. At its last session in Madrid in 2007, the COP reshaped and strengthened the CRIC and decided that COP 9 would consider and revise, as necessary, the terms of reference of the CRIC, bearing in mind The Strategy, the role of the CRIC as specified in the relevant decisions of COP 8 and the outcomes of CRIC 7 and CRIC 8. However, through The Strategy, the COP has already expressed its intention to continue to entrust the CRIC with the review of the implementation of the Convention by including this task among the revised CRIC functions:

- (a) determining and disseminating best practices on implementation of the UNCCD;
- (b) reviewing implementation of this strategic plan;
- (c) reviewing Parties' contributions to the implementation of the Convention; and
- (d) assessing and monitoring of CRIC performance and effectiveness.

33. Concerning the review of implementation of The Strategy, the COP has on numerous other occasions confirmed that the CRIC will play the central role in this respect. Decision 3/COP.8 states that "the CRIC will be responsible for reviewing implementation of The Strategy by the Parties and the Convention bodies and institutions" . . . "through an effective reporting process and documenting and disseminating best practices from experience in implementing the Convention, thereby bringing a cross-cutting contribution to all operational objectives." Also, in the same decision, the COP decided that "the CRIC is assigned the responsibility for assessing on a regular basis progress made in implementing this strategic plan, based on a set of indicators."

34. The function of the CRIC as defined in The Strategy, to determine and disseminate best practices on implementation of the UNCCD, is a logical continuation of the task of the CRIC expressed in decision 1/COP.5 – to "Identify and synthesize best practices, experiences and lessons learned".

35. The CRIC will accomplish these functions by taking up all the information provided to it (workplan and performance reports relating to performance review as well as compilation and synthesis reports and information on best practices and lessons learned relating to the assessment of implementation, including advice from the CST), drawing conclusions and making recommendations to the COP, through its comprehensive report to the COP, for any decisions the COP may wish to take. The CRIC is therefore at the centre of the PRAIS.

36. The fourth main function of the CRIC, to assess and monitor its own performance and effectiveness, will be undertaken particularly as part of the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy

at the eleventh session of the COP (COP 11). In its decision 3/COP.8, the COP decided that Parties at the tenth session of the COP should develop the appropriate modalities, criteria and terms of reference for an independent mid-term evaluation of The Strategy, and that the evaluation should be completed for consideration at COP 11. The Strategy stipulates that this mid-term evaluation is to be undertaken by the COP based on the performance monitoring system. This evaluation will review progress made in implementing The Strategy and will recommend appropriate measures to improve performance and further its implementation. It is expected that another assessment of the CRIC's performance and effectiveness will take place at the end of the 10-year period of The Strategy, enabling a comprehensive review of CRIC's performance twice in the lifespan of The Strategy.

37. In response to decision 9/COP.8, the secretariat prepared document ICCD/CRIC(7)/4 on format for future CRIC meetings and presented it to the Parties at CRIC 7 in 2008. Following their consideration of this document, the Parties at CRIC in general agreed on the five segments proposed for the intersessional sessions of the CRIC (review of the implementation of Convention, review of the implementation of The Strategy, review of financial flows, exchange of information on best practices and involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs)). Parties also recommended that the current alternation in reporting, as prescribed in decision 11/COP.1, be ended, and that all regions report at the same time starting with the next reporting cycle in 2010. This is in line with the request in decisions 3/COP.8 and 8/COP.8 that the reporting process should be based on information that is comparable across regions and over time. The proposals contained in this document have been developed based on these premises.

38. At CRIC 7, some Parties supported the proposal that the Convention's institutions (the secretariat and the GM) and subsidiary bodies should also report to intersessional sessions of the CRIC, to enable simultaneous analyses of the efforts undertaken by all UNCCD stakeholders and to orient their action as appropriate. Some other Parties preferred that the Convention's institutions and bodies report only to the CRIC sessions held during the COP. The present document proposes the former approach in order to ensure that review of the implementation of The Strategy by all UNCCD stakeholders, including the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies, may take place at the same time, thus allowing the comparison across regions and over time required by decisions 3/COP.8 and 8/COP.8.

D. The Committee on Science and Technology

39. According to article 24 of the Convention, the CST should provide the COP with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. Decision 15/COP.1 defined the terms of reference of the CST and attributed to it five functions: advisory, data and information, research and review, technology-related and evaluation, many of which are related to the review of the implementation of the Convention:

- (a) Advisory functions pertaining to the review of implementation
 - (i) Provide scientific and technological information needed to implement the Convention.

- (ii) Collect information, analyse, assess and report on the impact of developments in science and technology and give advice on the possible utilization of such developments for the implementation of the Convention.
- (iii) Advise the COP on the possible implications of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge for programmes and activities under the Convention, particularly in connection with the review of implementation pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2(a), of the Convention.

(b) Data and information functions

- (i) Make recommendations regarding the collection, analysis and exchange of data and information to ensure systematic observation of land degradation in affected areas and assess the processes and effects of drought and desertification.
- (ii) Make recommendations on pertinent, quantifiable and verifiable indicators which might be used in connection with action programmes.

(c) Research and review functions

Make recommendations regarding specialized research on the scientific and technological tools necessary to implement the Convention and on evaluation of the results of such research.

(d) Evaluation functions

- (i) Monitor the application of science and technology to research projects relating to the implementation of the Convention and report to the COP.
- (ii) Examine the scientific and technological relevance and feasibility of research conducted pursuant to action programmes under the Convention.

40. The Strategy gives the CST primary responsibility for fulfilling operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge, as well as a support role in implementing operational objective 1 on advocacy, awareness-raising and education.

41. The Strategy defines two priorities for the CST, both relevant to PRAIS:

(a) The CST develops, in cooperation with relevant institutions, tools and methods, and biophysical and socio-economic baselines on desertification/land degradation at the national level;

(b) The CST develops, in cooperation with relevant institutions, methodologies and guidelines for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation trends.

E. Cooperation between the subsidiary bodies

42. Cooperation between the subsidiary bodies was already anchored in decision 1/COP.5, by which the CST was invited to provide advice and information to the CRIC. The Strategy and decision 12/COP.8 prescribe that the COP decides the appropriate frequency of CST sessions, including the possibility of synchronized CST and CRIC meetings. Parties at CRIC 7 reiterated this approach and recognized the role that the CST will have in providing a preliminary analysis of the information contained in country profiles, information on impact indicators and assisting the CRIC in the review of the implementation of the Convention, thus enhancing the quality of targeted recommendations emerging from the CRIC. In this regard, some Parties expressed the need to hold intersessional sessions of the CST every four years, back-to-back or in parallel with intersessional sessions of the CRIC. This would enable the CRIC to take better advantage of the information already provided and the analysis performed at the level of the CST, and increase the cost-effectiveness of both processes.

43. In relation to the performance review aspect, The Strategy stipulates that Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies – therefore also the CST – are to report on implementation of The Strategy at CRIC sessions, based on their results-based framework.

F. The Bureaux of the COP, the CRIC and the CST

44. By affirming that the COP will be the main body for assessing and reviewing the overall implementation of The Strategy, The Strategy requests that the COP Bureau be involved as appropriate. An additional role of the COP Bureau is set down in The Strategy, by the request that the Executive Secretary prepare costed draft two-year work programmes for the CST and the CRIC in consultation with the respective Bureaux of the COP, the CST and the CRIC. The Strategy also requests that a draft multi-year workplan for the CRIC be prepared by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Bureaux of the COP and the CRIC. Moreover, the COP Bureau was mandated by decision 3/COP.8 to oversee implementation of the joint work programme (JWP) of the secretariat and the GM.

G. The secretariat

45. Article 23 of the Convention tasks the secretariat, inter alia, with compiling and transmitting the reports submitted to it; facilitating assistance to affected developing country Parties, on request, particularly those in Africa, in the compilation and communication of information required under the Convention; and preparing reports on the execution of its functions under this Convention and presenting them to the COP. By decision 1/COP.5, the COP decided that reports of the secretariat on the execution of its functions would be taken up by the CRIC at its sessions held in conjunction with the session of the COP.

46. The Strategy has attributed to the secretariat a prominent role in the new performance review and assessment of implementation process. It was given a lead role for operational objective 1 and specific outcomes of operational objectives 2 and 3 as well as a support role in other operational objectives.

47. In relation to the new performance review, the secretariat was requested to prepare, taking an RBM approach, draft multi-year workplans and costed two-year work programmes both for the CST and the CRIC, as is mentioned above, and for itself for consideration by the CRIC and adoption by the COP, the latter reviewing budgetary implications of work programmes of all convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies. Performance reports should replace the previously submitted documents by the secretariat on the execution of its functions. Multi-year workplans are submitted to the secretariat for integration into the comprehensive multi-year workplan for the Convention. The budget is prepared by the secretariat, integrating costed draft two-year programmes of work for the CST, the CRIC, the secretariat and the GM.

48. Concerning the assessment of implementation, the secretariat was entrusted with servicing and facilitating functions:

- (a) Providing compilation and synthesis of national reports on the basis of new guidelines;
- (b) Producing case studies, best policy practices;
- (c) Supporting the preparation of national reports;
- (d) Supporting the knowledge-management systems established by the CST and performing information and knowledge-brokering functions.

H. The Global Mechanism

49. The GM was established by article 21 of the Convention in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms, and to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, on a grant basis, and/or on concessional or other terms, to affected developing country Parties. The GM is accountable to the COP. At the second session of the COP, the GM was requested to report to the COP on policies, operational modalities and activities. Decision 24/COP.1 provides a detailed list of the functions of the GM, which are divided into five main groups: collecting and disseminating information, analysing and advising on requests, promoting actions leading to cooperation and coordination, mobilizing and channelling financial resources and reporting to the COP.

50. The GM was given a central responsibility for contributing to The Strategy, in particular operational objective 5, given its mandate to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms and to mobilize and channel substantial financial resources. The GM was also given a support role for operational objectives 1 and 2. In order to fulfil its role, the GM was realigned and requested to strengthen its capacity to mobilize existing as well as fresh sources of finance and to facilitate access to technology.

51. Concerning the performance review, the GM was requested to present its proposed draft multi-year workplan to the CRIC for review and subsequently to COP for consideration and adoption. Like the secretariat, its future performance reports should replace the documents

previously submitted by the GM on its policies, operational modalities and activities. At CRIC 7, Parties stressed that reporting by the GM should include an assessment of the extent to which the Convention and the implementation of action programmes have been supported by the GM; an assessment of the GM's quantitative and qualitative contribution to the achievement of the scope, strategies and objectives of the Convention, with specific reference to the operational objectives set out in The Strategy; information on actions taken to respond to the reviews of policies, operational modalities and activities of the GM; and reporting on global funding trends and financial flows to specific regions and countries supported by the GM, as well as on the other relevant requests of the COP; and that the GM should provide joint reporting with the secretariat on the implementation of the JWP. Emphasis in reporting should be put on financial matters but also on an analysis of the impact of activities undertaken.

52. As they did for the secretariat, Parties at CRIC 7 reiterated that the performance indicators defined for the GM should be taken into account and that the RBM indicators considered and adopted for the work programme of the GM should feed into the overall indicators identified by Parties for The Strategy. Additionally, Parties requested the GM to develop indicators that reflect the amount of funding that the GM seeks to mobilize, or of co-financing to be attained through support to countries in preparing project applications for implementation, and that better assess the specific input of GM action. The majority of GM indicators should be quantitative.

53. It is proposed that the GM be of assistance in the review process by providing synthesis and preliminary analysis of financing-related information coming out of the reporting process and also feed into the knowledge-sharing system under the PRAIS. Input received by the GM will be fed into the overall synthesis prepared by the secretariat.

I. The Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism

54. The Strategy invited the Facilitation Committee (FC) to revise its mandate and adopt a joint work programme aligned with the strategic plan. Individual members of the FC were invited to develop consistent and complementary financing platforms to align their activities with the UNCCD strategic plan. The FC should report in a coordinated fashion to the COP and the CRIC on issues relevant to its programme of work.

J. Cooperation between the secretariat and the Global Mechanism

55. The Strategy requested the secretariat and the GM, within their respective mandates, to implement The Strategy in order to ensure consistency and complementarity in the delivery of services, and to strengthen their coordination and cooperation from the headquarters to the country level. It requested the secretariat and the GM to submit a draft RBM-based JWP to the CRIC and for consideration by the COP, and to include indicators of successful cooperation with the objective of strengthening the effectiveness of the synergistic services provided by the secretariat and the GM. A clear distinction between the functions, responsibilities and activities of the secretariat and those of the GM needs to be established. The secretariat and the GM need to report to the CRIC and the COP in a clear and transparent way on the effective division of labour and on the use of the core and voluntary funds relating to the JWP. The two organizations

were requested to report jointly to the COP on the implementation of the JWP. The COP Bureau is mandated by the COP to oversee implementation of the JWP.

K. Civil society organizations

56. The role of CSOs in supporting the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy cannot be overestimated. They are in many cases those that take the concrete actions and undertake the various activities in the field which are directly in the service of implementing the Convention. Non-governmental organizations, local authorities, scientific institutions and organizations, educational institutions, and private sector and numerous other actors all contribute in their specific ways to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.

57. The CSOs have so far not been reporting directly to the COP and the CRIC. Relevant national authorities were supposed to take account of the information provided by the CSOs and include it in their reports, and also to involve these organizations in the validation process. Although it is not planned that this approach should change, Parties at CRIC 7 invited the secretariat to include indicators concerning civil society participation in the national reporting guidelines.

58. Decision 3/COP.8 requested that civil society be more strongly involved in the proceedings of the CRIC, and in the review of the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy, through a specific segment at the intersessional sessions of the CRIC. Given the expertise of CSOs and the strong emphasis in The Strategy on the CRIC's function to collect and disseminate best practices, some Parties at CRIC 7 proposed that civil society be given the opportunity to share information on best practices in this context.

V. Knowledge-sharing

59. The new reporting and review systems will produce more quantitative information and hence enhance the quality of the review. Reports submitted by reporting entities will enable the CRIC to identify targeted recommendations and enable the COP to make sound decisions based on the synthesis reports, as well as other documents, prepared by the secretariat, the GM and the CST.

60. However, since the COP and the CRIC focus primarily on the global review and cannot consider all the detailed information provided to it in reports, there is an opportunity for more extensive use to be made of this valuable information in subregional/regional forums such as the information platforms created through subregional and regional action programmes, and as information to be used as part of the communication strategy to enhance the profile of the Convention. The information submitted through reports, including the information on best practices, success stories and lessons learned, as well as information in the reports prepared by the Convention bodies and institutions, should therefore be included, together with other information, in a comprehensive knowledge-sharing system, which should be established for the Convention and to serve information needs at all levels.

61. The Strategy recognizes in its operational objective 3 (outcome 3.5) the need for effective knowledge-sharing systems, including traditional knowledge, to be put in place at the global,

regional, subregional and national levels to support policymakers and end-users, including through the identification and sharing of best practices and success stories. The secretariat was requested to develop its capacity to service the CST effectively by supporting the knowledge-management systems established by the CST and by performing information and knowledge-brokering functions.

62. Following on from this, there is a need to establish the main elements of this knowledge-sharing system, in particular as it relates to the collection, systematization, availability and analysis of information provided through reports submitted by Parties and observers, including on best practices and lessons learned, before the start of the new reporting cycle in 2010. The COP, while considering the budget proposals for the biennium 2010–2011, should provide for sufficient funding in order to develop the foundations of this system.

63. While not pre-empting the work of the CST in this respect, the present document would like to present two elements of this system and provide a non-exhaustive list of other potential elements that could be included.⁹

A. Collection, availability, classification and analysis of information provided through reports submitted by Parties and observers

64. The reports of reporting entities need to be collected in a way that will facilitate their classification and analysis. The reporting guidelines should, to the extent possible, rely on a common format, and Parties and observers should be encouraged, if not requested, to submit the information in electronic form, enabling the secretariat to classify information and make information available.

65. Once received, reports should be placed on the specialized section of the secretariat website. Classification of reports should enable the user to analyse information by topic and/or group of topics.

B. Best practices and lessons learned

66. The determination and dissemination of best practices are core functions of the CRIC. The Parties at CRIC 7 requested the secretariat to develop a common framework for the definition and selection of best practices for consideration by Parties. Parties stressed the need to include in the reports a section on success stories, and one on best practices with an emphasis on the lessons learned from both activities that were successful and those that were less successful. Reference is made to document ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.5 in which the comprehensive framework is outlined.

⁹ For an example of an existing knowledge-sharing system, see the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at <www.gbif.org>. The GBIF is a global network of data providers that builds biodiversity information infrastructure and promotes the growth of biodiversity information content on the Internet by working with partner initiatives and coordinating activities worldwide.

C. Other elements to be included in the knowledge-sharing system

67. Other possible elements that could, resources permitting, be included in the a future knowledge-sharing system are referred to in detail in documents ICCD/COP(9)/5/Add.1 and ICCD/CRIC(8)/2/Add.1. The COP, while considering the budget proposals for the biennium 2010–2011, should provide for sufficient funding to develop the foundations of this system.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

68. The present document should be reviewed with document ICCD/COP(9)/7, which contains the proposed Terms of Reference for the CRIC, and with particular regard to the format and schedule of the meetings of the Committee proposed therein.

69. In order for the PRAIS to be functional for the new reporting and review process, which is expected to start after COP 9, the COP may consider taking the following actions at its ninth session:

- (a) Terms of reference of the CRIC
 - (i) Review the functions of the CRIC as proposed in document ICCD/COP(9)7 and, based on these premises, decide that:
 - a. The CRIC will meet annually, once between the sessions of the COP (intersessionally) and once during the sessions of the COP (sessionally);
 - b. At intersessional sessions, the CRIC will undertake both the performance review (take up the performance reports of the Convention bodies and institutions) and the assessment of implementation (review the implementation of the Convention, review the implementation of The Strategy, review financial flows, exchanges of information on best practices and lessons learned and involvement of CSOs);
 - c. The assessment of implementation at the intersessional sessions of the CRIC should be based on reports submitted by all entities at the same time, including performance reports furnished by Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies;
 - d. At sessional sessions, the CRIC will only undertake the performance review (take up draft multi-year workplans, including a review of how many of the recommendations made at the intersessional sessions have been taken up in two-year work programmes) and review global issues, such as collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF);
 - e. The regional meetings are part of the review process and an essential element of reviewing progress made in the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy;
 - (ii) Decide that review of the implementation of The Strategy through performance indicators will be carried out every two years, and that the

review of the implementation of the Convention through DLDD profiles and impact indicators will be carried out every four years;

- (iii) Decide that appropriate modalities, criteria and terms of reference for an independent mid-term evaluation of The Strategy through the review of the PRAIS will be established at COP 10, and that the evaluation can be completed for consideration at COP 11.

(b) Reporting guidelines

Review and adopt elements of the reporting guidelines as contained in document ICCD/CRIC(8)/5 and its addenda, and entrust the secretariat with preparing reporting tools for use by Parties and observers. In particular, this includes:

- a. Adoption of the format of reporting guidelines with five elements (implementation of the Convention, implementation of The Strategy, a financial annex and project and programme sheet, best practices and lessons learned);
- b. Adoption of harmonized sets of performance indicators, baselines and targets for all the reporting entities, based on the work done by the Parties and the secretariat between COP 8 and COP 9;
- c. Adoption of a minimum set of impact indicators based on the work done by the CST;

(c) Bodies, institutions and organizations supporting the PRAIS: Committee on Science and Technology

- (i) Decide to hold intersessional sessions of the CST every four years, back-to-back or in parallel with intersessional sessions of the CRIC, at which the CST would analyse the information coming out of DLDD profiles and impact indicators and thus assist the CRIC in its review of the implementation of the Convention;
- (ii) Provide guidance to the CST on the establishment and/or improvement of monitoring and assessment systems at the national, subregional and regional levels in order to support the enhanced reporting, including through soliciting a survey of existing monitoring and assessment systems at the national level;
- (iii) Provide guidance to the CST on the establishment of the UNCCD knowledge-sharing system and provide for sufficient funding in order to develop the system;

(d) Bodies, institutions and organizations supporting the PRAIS: Global Mechanism

- (i) Entrust the GM with the task of assisting in the review of financial flows under the Convention by feeding with an analysis of the information contained in the financial annex to the documentation prepared by the secretariat;
- (ii) Consider ways and means for the FC of the GM to report on its JWP;

(e) Bodies, institutions and organizations supporting the PRAIS:
Global Environment Facility

- (i) Invite the GEF to report on its assistance in the implementation of the Convention and of The Strategy to intersessional sessions of the CRIC and on broader policy matters to CRIC sessions during the COP;
- (ii) Call on the GEF to provide support and funding for capacity building, reporting and the establishment and/or improvement of national, subregional and regional monitoring and assessment systems.

70. Finally, in order to ensure coherence and appropriate applicability, the COP may wish to declare no longer in force all those of its previous decisions that are in contradiction with those adopted at its eighth and ninth sessions in relation to the communication of information and review of implementation.
