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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Functioning of the Committee on Science and Technology:

Work of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology during the 2008 intersessional period

**Report on the work of the Bureau
of the Committee on Science and Technology**

Note by the secretariat

1. By decision 12/COP.8, adopted by the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8), the secretariat was requested to facilitate the convening of at least one intersessional meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) per year for the review of decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties (COP) and other related matters regarding the work of the CST, especially the planning and organization of the next session of the CST. The annex to the present document contains the reports of two meetings of the Bureau of the CST. The first meeting was held on 19 February 2008 at the headquarters of the UNCCD secretariat in Bonn, Germany, the second meeting was held on 25 June 2008 at the same location.

2. During the first meeting, the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD presented the 10-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the Convention (The Strategy). The Bureau considered, among other things, the development of a mechanism to upgrade land degradation as an issue of global importance in the international scientific community, and discussed the preparation of the first special session of the CST (CST S-1), the CST international scientific conference to take place during the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) and the involvement of the CST in the sixteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

3. The second meeting was to give an opportunity to Bureau members to review the draft documents for CST S-1 and, among other things, to consider the progress made with preparations for CST 9 in accordance with decision 13/COP.8. The Bureau selected a consortium to help with the preparation of the next ordinary session of the CST, which will be organized in a

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predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format. The Bureau also reviewed the four-year draft work plan for 2008–2011 and the draft costed two-year work programme for 2008–2009 as well as a paper to COP 9 on elements for advice on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2, and 3 of The Strategy. The relevant recommendations and conclusions are contained in the present document which is also available on the UNCCD website at <http://www.unccd.int>.

4. The Committee may wish to take note of the reports contained in this document and give further guidance with respect to the conclusions and recommendations of the Bureau.

Annex

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

[English, French and Spanish only]

I. Report of the first 2008 meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, 19 February 2008**A. Introduction**

1. By decision 12/COP.8, adopted by the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8), the secretariat was requested to facilitate the convening of at least one intersessional meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) per year for the review of decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties (COP) and other related matters regarding the work of the CST, especially the planning and organization of the next session of the CST.

B. Opening of the meeting

2. The meeting of the CST Bureau was convened under the chairmanship of Dr. William Dar (Philippines) who welcomed the members of the Bureau as well as the Chair of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), Mr Israel Torres (Panama), who was participating as an observer (see the list of participants attached as appendix II to this document). The UNCCD Executive Secretary, Mr. Luc Gnacadja, was asked to take the floor and make his preliminary remarks.

3. The Executive Secretary welcomed the Bureau Chair and members and the Chair of the CRIC, and expressed his confidence in the UNCCD process, particularly after the approval of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) at COP 8 in Madrid. The Executive Secretary mentioned the great momentum generated for the two environmental issues of biodiversity and climate change after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, and pointed out that land degradation issues will be what he referred to as the next "big wave" in the international arena. He stressed the role of science and technology in this process and the need to be prepared for this new momentum in the UNCCD process. He underscored the importance of science and technology to the success of the implementation of The Strategy.

4. The Chair of the CST pointed out that the vision presented in Madrid of a new way to propel the Convention through science represented a challenge and an opportunity. In this regard, harnessing the expertise available in the scientific community to support the work of the CST is of paramount importance. He stressed that, for the UNCCD, having a new Executive Secretary and a new 10-year strategy were both great opportunities, and that the future looked bright. He called on Bureau members to identify in their respective regions those activities that can be undertaken while the political process of approval of the work programme of the CST gets under way.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

5. The Chair submitted the provisional agenda for the consideration of the Bureau and proposed to move the item on “Consideration of the development of a mechanism to upgrade land degradation as an issue of global importance in the international scientific community,” from the late afternoon session to the morning session. The provisional agenda was adopted as amended.

D. Overview of the decisions of the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties as they relate to the work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology

6. The Secretary of the CST presented an overview on the decisions made by COP 8 that relate to the work of the CST. A background document containing a summary of the relevant decisions was circulated to Bureau members.

7. After the presentation, the CST Chair highlighted the key issue regarding Decision 3/COP.8, which requests the CST to provide elements for provision of advice to CRIC discussions on reporting at COP 9 on how to best measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy. He pointed out that the Bureau must establish the nature of the support that the CST should provide to the CRIC.

8. The CRIC Chair raised the need to develop guidelines and a methodology for data compilation to be presented at the CRIC session and requested the support of the CST. He observed that each indicator reflected in The Strategy implies the development of a methodology for selecting and compiling the appropriate data. He also pointed out the need for some sort of regional consultations in order to capture the regional specificities and allow countries to effectively contribute to the process of the implementation of The Strategy.

9. The Bureau exchanged views on the issues raised by the decisions of COP 8 and agreed as follows:

(a) It is necessary to develop a background document synthesizing the main possible indicators and ways in which or approaches to best measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy;

(b) The secretariat will develop terms of reference for the preparation of the document and coordinate its elaboration. The secretariat was encouraged to source the funds necessary to engage a consultant to undertake the task;

(c) There is a need to consult with countries at the regional level in order to obtain inputs and suggestions from them. Bureau members were urged to undertake consultations in their respective regions with a view to consolidating these inputs in the guidelines evolved by the secretariat. The drafts emanating from these regional consultations would be sent to the secretariat for compilation;

(d) The draft version of the document will be circulated among CST Bureau members before submission to the first special session of the CST (CST S-1) in Istanbul, Turkey.

E. Introduction to the 10-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)

10. The Executive Secretary made a presentation entitled “The Future of UNCCD – Introduction to the 10-Year Strategic Plan”. This covered the main results achieved since approval of The Strategy by COP 8 in September 2007. He presented the four-year work plan and the two-year work programme of the secretariat and the corresponding new administrative structure. The Executive Secretary underlined the need to strengthen the capacity of the secretariat in order for it to fulfil the expectations of country Parties and play its role in the implementation of The Strategy.

11. The Executive Secretary stated that with 193 Parties to the Convention, the UNCCD stands out as the UN treaty with the widest membership, and has the opportunity to build up global momentum on land issues. He reiterated the statement made by the UN Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki Moon, in his message to the Beijing International Conference on Combating Desertification: *The Climate Change pact’s sister treaty, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, is the most powerful tool for addressing land degradation in our international arsenal. The UNCCD offers a platform for adaptation, mitigation and resilience.* Referring to the situation of global soil degradation, the Executive Secretary underscored the need to embrace the overall problem of land degradation in all regions of the world, tying this to the major expected outcomes of The Strategy anchored on global benefits, affected ecosystems and affected populations.

12. Regarding the new structure of the secretariat presented by the Executive Secretary, the Bureau observed that knowledge management is a cross-cutting strategy with the core services of the UNCCD, and commended the Executive Secretary for reflecting this fact. Bureau discussions highlighted that the visibility of science and technology and of the CST seem to be low and should be increased. The Bureau pointed out that, considering the need to raise the profile of the CST in the implementation of The Strategy through various initiatives, such as the envisaged regional science and policy dialogue sessions; involvement of scientific institutions and networks; and the country-level engagement of science and technology correspondents, the expectation from the Parties is that there would be more visible recognition and corresponding support at the level of the secretariat. The Executive Secretary shared with the Bureau his reason for associating knowledge management and science and technology. The Bureau appealed to the Executive Secretary to bring the CST issues to the forefront.

F. Consideration of the development of a mechanism to upgrade land degradation as an issue of global importance in the international scientific community

13. The Executive Secretary in presenting this item underlined that for the vision and mission of the UNCCD to be realised and accomplished, there is a need to raise the profile of the issue of land degradation in the realm of the international community much higher than where it is at present. Biodiversity and climate change issues have had quite some profile in the international arena, and with positive results. A global coalition of the necessary high-level scientific expertise and political good will are required to push the issues of land and soil degradation, since they form the bedrock of land productivity and food security. The Executive Secretary pointed out that the political process through which this goal should be achieved must start with the CST

constituency, and then bring on board the other key players. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that he has started to build an alliance on land issues with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)-led Environment Management Group, in which the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have expressed a keen interest, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will soon be encouraged to come on board. He also intends to launch a scientific policy dialogue on The Strategy and will keep the Bureau informed of the developments in this regard.

14. The Bureau made general comments and exchanged views on the role of the CST in the improvement of land issues. Several initiatives and networks of scientific institutions were highlighted as possible partners in this endeavour. The Bureau should emerge as an important player in the science and policy dialogues, which should provide effective platforms for brainstorming on this important matter. One of the key outcomes of COP 9 should be guidelines and a clear roadmap on how such a global coalition can be established. The process could lead to the establishment of an intergovernmental panel focusing on land degradation and soil protection issues. In thanking the Executive Secretary for the presentation, the Bureau observed that this initiative heralds a new chapter for the UNCCD.

G. Substantive preparation for the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology

15. The Bureau reviewed a provisional agenda and programme of work for CST S-1, which is to be held in Istanbul later this year alongside the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7). The time allocated for the CST meeting is two days. The Bureau underlined the need to allocate enough time for CST in order to achieve the best inputs for the CRIC process. The CRIC Chair also indicated his willingness to support the CST work. He informed the Bureau that he has held consultations with the Executive Secretary on the possibility of holding regional consultations before the meetings in Istanbul, subject to the availability of funds. Should this yield fruit, more time would be allocated to the CST session. He also voiced concern about the short time dedicated to the regional consultations and the need to find a way to organize them as preparatory to the CRIC.

16. The Bureau considered the issue of mobilizing the scientific community and raising the profile of CST participation, and decided to involve the science and technology correspondents in the CST meeting in Istanbul. In this regard, the secretariat was requested to send a reminder to country Parties that have not yet done so to expedite their nomination of a science and technology correspondent. Parties will also be encouraged to show their support by having scientists participate in the CST S-1.

17. Concerning the issue of the submission to CRIC 7 of a draft costed two-year work programme for the CST, the Secretary of the CST stated that this document will be submitted to Bureau members before being tabled at CRIC 7. The Bureau requested the secretariat to send the draft document to the Bureau at the latest by 30 June 2008. The Bureau decided that the Chair of the CST might wish to present a summary of the discussions to the CRIC in the event that the draft document is not be ready for submission to the CRIC.

H. The International Scientific Conference of the Committee on Science and Technology

18. The Bureau considered a draft document on the terms of reference for the selection of a lead institution or consortium to assist the Bureau with the preparation of the next ordinary session of the CST in a scientific and conference-style format. The Bureau decided as follows:

(a) To select a consortium rather than a single lead institution, and requested the secretariat to send out an open call for expressions of interest. It was decided that 30 April 2008 would be the deadline for receiving proposals from interested consortia of institutions.

(b) That the secretariat would develop a methodology (a matrix) for the evaluation of the proposals in order to allow Bureau members to better evaluate the consortia, and that the selection process would be completed by 30 May 2008.

(c) To ensure that the results of the CST Conference are policy-relevant and oriented to provide synthesis and recommendations for policymakers.

I. Overview of decisions of the eighth Conference of the Parties on the functioning of the Committee on Science and Technology, the roster of independent experts, networking of institutions, the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands project and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification fellowship programme

19. The Secretary of the CST introduced the respective COP 8 decisions on the functioning of the CST, the roster of independent experts, networking of institutions, the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project and the UNCCD fellowship programme and, after deliberating on each one, the Bureau decided the following:

(a) The Bureau of the CST should hold two meetings per year. The secretariat was requested to make the necessary arrangements for holding the second meeting in 2008 before CST S-1.

(b) The Bureau members should support the Chair in discharging his activities and duties regarding cooperation with other conventions and relevant scientific processes, pursuant to the relevant COP 8 decision;

(c) The secretariat was invited to continue the updating and maintenance of the roster of independent experts:

(d) The secretariat should strengthen the interactions with the LADA project and its results should be disseminated to country Parties. The Bureau would also strengthen linkages with the LADA project, which will be invited to give a progress report during the next meeting of the Bureau;

(e) The secretariat was encouraged to continue looking for partners to support the establishment of the UNCCD Fellowship Programme. This item will be discussed in the CST special session in Istanbul.

J. Involvement of the Committee on Science and Technology in the sixteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

20. The representative of the secretariat informed the Bureau about a document on desertification presented to the sixteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) on behalf of “the scientific community”. It emerged that neither the UNCCD secretariat, nor the Bureau members were involved. It was recommended that the secretariat find out about the composition of the group of scientists that produced this report. It was also recommended that Bureau members be more involved in the UNCSD process, and that consequently they should make an effort to attend the next session of the UNCSD.

21. The Chair of the Bureau of the CST, having considered that all agenda items had been discussed exhaustively, expressed his gratitude to the Bureau members, the secretariat and the Chair of the CRIC and declared the meeting adjourned at 18.00.

II. Report of the second 2008 meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, 25 June 2008

A. Introduction

22. By decision 12/COP.8, the secretariat was requested to facilitate the convening of at least one intersessional meeting of the CST Bureau per year for the review of decisions taken by the COP and other related matters regarding the work of the CST, especially the planning and organization of the next session of the CST.

23. The second 2008 meeting of the CST Bureau convened under the chairmanship of Dr. William Dar (Philippines), who welcomed the members of the Bureau as well as the Chair CRIC, Mr. Israel Torres (Panama), who was participating as an observer (see the list of participants attached as appendix IV to this document). The Chair pointed out the importance of the work ahead and emphasized the importance of a good working relationship with the CRIC. He then gave the floor to the UNCCD Deputy Executive Secretary, Mr Gregoire de Kalbermatten, to make preliminary remarks.

24. The Deputy Executive Secretary welcomed the Bureau Chair and members and the Chair of the CRIC, and stressed that the COP has entrusted the current Bureau with a leadership role in casting the new orientation of the CST. The Deputy Executive Secretary pointed out that the success of the envisaged scientific conference during COP 9 opened a path for the marriage of science and policy in the area of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). He underscored that the CST has the power to bring excellent scientists to bear on the UNCCD process. He stressed that this is in the interest of both scientists and policymakers, with the first group getting better access to decision-making, and the second group benefiting from more robust data and less uncertainty on the scientific aspects of DLDD.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

25. The agenda of the meeting is attached as appendix III. The Chair summed up that the work ahead for the meeting was to consider the major documents for CST S-1. He stressed that activities such as the international scientific conference for the CST had to be planned early, and that important documents had to be prepared for COP 9, even before CST S-1 in Istanbul, with the consortium to be selected by the Bureau. Members of the Bureau proposed the inclusion of an exchange of views on the involvement of civil society, and of information on the state of the implementation of the Fellowship Programme in the discussions under other matters. The provisional agenda was then adopted.

C. Preparations for the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology

26. The Chair recalled that by decision 3/COP.8, the COP decided that the next session of the CST should be held in conjunction with the session of the CRIC. He noted that this would be the first special session of the CST and that a provisional agenda and programme of work had been prepared by the UNCCD secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Bureau of the CST. He pointed out that it was noteworthy that CST S-1 would have before it for consideration, among other things, documents on the future work of the CST in line with The Strategy: the draft multi-year (four-year) work plan (2008–2011) and the draft costed two-year work programme (2008–2009) for the CST; a report on elements for provision of advice on how best to measure progress with strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3, and how to provide information on the biophysical and socio-economic trends in affected areas. He requested the secretariat to present the agenda with its related documentation and stated that the Bureau was expected to review this provisional agenda and revise it as appropriate.

27. Bureau members sought clarification regarding the finalization and transmission of documents. The representative of the secretariat explained that in addition to the document on the provisional agenda of the CST special session, three other documents had been prepared for the consideration of the Bureau. The secretariat proposed that any comments and/or suggestions made by Bureau members on the four-year work plan (2008–2011), the costed two-year work programme (2008–2009) and the paper on elements on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy would need to be received by 3 July in order to be transmitted for editing on time. The secretariat also pointed out that two documents need to be prepared after the Bureau meeting. The first, entitled “Work of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology during the 2008 intersessional period”, would contain the report of the last Bureau meeting in February and the report of this Bureau meeting. The second, entitled “Progress on the preparation of the CST 9 session in a scientific and technical conference-style format”, is related to the selection of a consortium, which is to take place during this Bureau meeting. These two documents had to be prepared after the Bureau meeting, circulated and endorsed before 15 July 2008.

28. After exchanging views on the limited time allocated for the meeting, that is, two days, the Bureau endorsed the provisional agenda of CST S-1.

D. Draft four-year work plan (2008–2011) and costed draft two-year work programme (2008–2009) of the Committee on Science and Technology

29. The secretariat made a presentation on the two documents under consideration and, recalling the results-based management (RBM) approach, stressed that the four-year work plan (2008–2011) is a strategic document that gives the CST a strategic orientation during this transitional phase. This document will not be submitted to COP 9 for adoption. After CST S-1, following a rolling calendar process, an updated four-year work plan (2010–2013) will be prepared for submission to COP 9. The Chair pointed out that the Bureau is expected to offer advice on the feasibility of the expected accomplishments of the CST over the next four years. Bureau Members agreed that the draft work plan for 2008–2011 seemed to be feasible.

30. As for the two-year costed work programme, it was noted that RBM budgeting would only start after COP 9. The draft two-year work programme 2008–2009 presented to the Bureau for its consideration will be presented to COP 9 as a report of activities, because its activities would already have expired by that time. After CST S-1 a draft two-year work programme (2010–2011) will be prepared for adoption at COP 9, commencing the RBM budgeting cycle.

31. There was a discussion on the costs of the various activities and the mobilization of funds. The Bureau stressed that the two-year work programme should not only list the cost of the various activities, but also include a strategy to obtain those funds, in order to strengthen the Parties' confidence in the document. The Chair of the CRIC observed that the document should include references to the date that activities are planned to be implemented. This would give Parties an idea of the annual costs, which would make the process more realistic.

32. The Deputy Executive Secretary highlighted that the UNCCD is currently in a transition phase, which puts into place a new system. The draft version of the CST two-year work programme (2008–2009) would be completed by an indication of financing requirements. He clarified that the CRIC has no mandate to consider budgetary matters, which is why the current costed two-year work programme that will be added to the document will only be indicative and not detailed. However, the CRIC could be used to invite expressions of interest – not commitments – from Parties to support selected activities in 2008–2009. This would give the CST an indication of the extra budgetary resources that could be used in realistic planning. He also noted that future costed two-year work programmes could be as detailed as requested.

33. The Deputy Executive Secretary also explained that the total CST financing requirements are those indicated in the costed two-year work programme of the CST, complemented by those that could be found in the two-year work programme of the secretariat related to scientific issues (covered by both core and supplementary funds).

34. The Chair opened a discussion for the Bureau to exchange views on the technical and substantive activities of the draft two-year work programme 2008–2009. The Chair stressed that countries have to be ready to implement and capable of implementing the work programme and highlighted the importance of capacity building. This would be included in the CST draft two-year work programme under risks/assumptions for outcome area 3.1. The meeting asked for

the work programme to be adjusted with regard to capacity building to reflect the fact that the CST has a catalyst function in capacity building.

35. It was agreed that the CST Bureau should have an informal consultative process involving experts to ensure scientific input into the preparation of the reporting guidelines mentioned in the two-year work programme. The involvement of various stakeholders in the reporting guidelines was discussed as well as the need to develop regional scientific profiles.

36. Bureau members exchanged views on the concept of “friends of the Chair” as an informal way of getting assistance from the scientific community during COPs and CRICs. It was agreed to use the wording “friends of the CST” instead of “friends of the Chair” in order to facilitate the work of the CST. A representative from the secretariat recalled that formal expert groups can only be established by the COP. The CST may present a draft decision on task forces for approval at the next COP in order to institutionalize the relevant processes.

37. According to The Strategy, the CST agenda is to focus on one or two priorities reviewed every biennium. Decision 13/COP.8 states that CST ordinary sessions should take place in a conference-style format with a specific theme. Bureau members agreed to continue to deliberate on possible priority themes for future CST scientific conferences, to be discussed during CST S-1 and during the ninth session of the CST (CST 9) for submission to COP 9. The Bureau proposed, among other things, the topic “Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change” for further discussion during CST S-1. The Chair invited Bureau members to submit their proposal for themes for future years. The Bureau will prepare a calendar of themes for 2008–2013, recognizing that it takes time to agree themes at the level of the regions and then on the global level.

38. It was also agreed that a theme be proposed for the side events and exhibition stands as a tool to promote best practices, case studies, applied science and technological results; and to create an interface between scientists and decision-makers. Therefore, the Bureau endorsed the choice made by the secretariat to use the topic “combating land degradation with sustainable agriculture” for side events and exhibition stands at CST S-1/CRIC 7. The topic for side events and exhibition stands at COP 9 could be in line with the theme of the CST: “Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management”.

39. The Chair concluded this item of the agenda by recalling that the Bureau is facing a huge challenge in 2008 and 2009 in order to set up the functioning of the CST for the next 10 years. The transition period 2008–2009 is a historic one. The Bureau was sowing the seeds of success for the next 10 years. The Chair also noted that the four-year work plan and the two-year work programme would be helping to do that. Therefore, the Bureau endorsed the four-year work plan and the two-year work programme, taking into account that capacity building issues, the indication of funding and the structuring of activities by years should be integrated.

E. Elements for provision of advice to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2, and 3 of The Strategy

40. The secretariat presented a paper on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy. Strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 were recalled with their related indicators described within the strategy. The Bureau was reminded of the difference between monitoring the implementation of the Convention and monitoring the impact of the implementation of the Convention. The secretariat recalled that the paper must be considered as a scoping document, which provides a basis for discussion at CST S-1 in line with the discussion on reporting guidelines at CRIC 7. It was also expected that the paper would be further enriched after CST S-1 by the outputs of a scientific policy dialogue and the regional scientific meetings planned to be held in 2009. A fully fledged document will be submitted to the CST during COP 9. The Chair asked for comments on the document currently proposed to the Bureau to be forwarded to the UNCCD secretariat by 3 July 2008 in order for it to be finalized in time for CST S-1.

41. Agenda item 7 dealing with scientific advice on CRIC reporting guidelines was introduced and a presentation was made by the secretariat on “Improving the procedures for the communication of information as well as quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP – Reporting principles to be provided to CRIC 7” from a CRIC perspective. It was noted that the CST’s challenge is to bring scientific advice and input to the CRIC reporting process. Information was provided on the output of the meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force (26–27 June 2008).

42. A discussion followed on the issue of developing regional scientific guidelines. Decision 8/COP.8 requested the secretariat to prepare reporting guidelines for subregional and regional action programmes. It is therefore expected that the reporting process at the regional level will be formalized in the future. CRIC 7 and CST S-1 might want to help in identifying who would be responsible for reporting at a regional level. The Chair mentioned that a viable way to get data and information for each outcome area of the strategic objectives for which the CST is responsible is the use of the reporting process and that the work programme of the CST includes an issue for the regional scientific profile, which might be further discussed.

43. The Deputy Executive Secretary identified that it is possible to propose that subregional action programmes and regional action programmes should have a scientific annex, which would make regional action programmes more science driven. He also pointed out that governments can outsource regional reporting to an authoritative institution, and that global reporting necessarily needs to be centralized in a network or institution to which the task has been outsourced.

44. Bureau Members exchanged views on the reporting process and advised the secretariat that all levels, from local to global, must be considered in the reporting process. The Bureau proposed that the CST highlight institutions such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research in order to strengthen the link between the international, regional and national levels.

45. The Bureau highlighted the importance of capacity building, stating that country Parties should be trained in the new reporting guidelines, giving them precise information on how to apply them. The Bureau suggested that guidelines should be made simple enough to enable countries to provide the required scientific information.

46. The Chair summarized that there was a need for a harmonized integrated monitoring and evaluation system for the UNCCD. The Bureau referred the matter back to the secretariat for further work.

F. Preparations for the ninth session of the Committee on Science and Technology in a scientific and technical conference-style format

1. Selection of a consortium

47. Decision 13/COP.8 states that each future ordinary session of the CST shall be organized in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format by the CST Bureau in consultation with a lead institution/consortium. The Bureau at its meeting in Bonn, Germany, on 19 February 2008 decided to select a consortium and agreed on the content of the call for expressions of interest. A call for expressions of interest was sent out by the UNCCD secretariat and posted on the UNCCD website with 30 April 2008 as the deadline for submissions. Submissions were received by the secretariat and sent to the Bureau Members with a summary table, an analytical matrix and a scoring matrix template. The main task of the Bureau was to select a consortium, and the Chair requested that the secretariat present a summary table containing the list of institutions and the date of reception of submissions.

48. The Chair invited Bureau Members to exchange views on the submissions received. Bureau Members observed that of the seven proposals received, only two could be considered as consortia: Dryland Science for Development (DSD) and a consortium represented by Centro de Estudios de Zonas Aridas (CEZA). The other submissions were from individual organizations. Bureau Members agreed to consider as valid the submission of the second consortium, which was received in the early hours of 1 May 2008. The UNCCD secretariat pointed out that this process has to be in conformity with the rules and regulations of the United Nations, in particular those regarding procurement matters.

49. At this stage the Bureau started an exchange of views on their assessment of the two consortia, which were found to be very good. The review was based on the criteria contained in the call for expressions of interest.

50. Bureau Members took note of the diversity of institutions represented by CEZA from all over the world and that its submission also included a non-governmental organization (NGO) as part of the consortium.

51. Bureau Members took note of the worldwide experience of the DSD, that it involved other scientific networks and that it had presented a resource mobilization strategy.

52. The Bureau highlighted the fact that the proposal presented by the consortium represented by CEZA had not provided a strategy to mobilize funds. This element had been one

of the requirements in the call for expressions of interest, as well as in the relevant COP 8 decision.

53. The Bureau decided that the selection had to be based on the call for expressions of interest, where the major requirements were listed. The Bureau underscored the need to build consensus on the selection of the consortium.

54. The Chair, being a head of one of the institutions belonging to one of the consortia, informed the Bureau members that he would leave the meeting to allow them to decide on the selection of the consortium. He asked the Bureau members to designate a temporary chair for the final selection process.

55. The two consortia were recognized as very good candidates. Based on the requirements of the call for expressions of interest, the Bureau by consensus selected DSD to be the consortium to assist, in accordance with decision 13/COP.8, with the organization of the next ordinary session of the CST. It was recommended that the selected consortium should invite the other consortium to participate in the process. The Bureau requested the secretariat to inform all candidates of the result of the selection process and to post this information on the UNCCD website.

2. Tentative roadmap to the ninth session of the Committee on Science and Technology

56. Recalling the call for expressions of interest, which contained the tasks of the consortium, the Chair stated that the working modalities between the Bureau and the consortium should be discussed. Special attention should be given to the process of fundraising and the process envisaged for cooperation with the consortium, including details of the communication process and the exact distribution of respective responsibilities.

57. Representatives of the secretariat pointed out that decisions on the number of participants, including scientific NGOs, to be invited to CST 9, together with the number of days attributed to the special scientific session, conditioned the global estimated budget for the conference. Such decisions had impacts on fundraising requirements. Control over funds had impacts on responsibilities, and vice versa. These modalities would determine the kind of agreement that would be set up with the consortium.

58. A discussion followed on participation in the CST conference. The Bureau decided that scientists from affected developing countries as well as young scientists need to have the opportunity to participate in the conference, and that a budget should be allocated to cover their participation. In the debate about whether the conference would be open to the international scientific community, including scientific correspondents, scientific NGOs and other relevant stakeholders, it was remarked that it was open in the sense that Parties could appoint delegates and propose experts who had to be accredited to attend the conference. However, as a CST conference, it had to follow the relevant rules of procedure as set out by the COP. Therefore, it would be open to the participation of all Parties to the Convention and observers as appropriate. The Bureau observed that since the COP has asked the CST to bring on board the scientific community to share their expertise with it, relevant experts should be invited accordingly.

59. The Bureau stressed that it is vital to invite and include decision-makers at the conference, since the task of the conference is to provide policy-oriented conclusions. It was proposed to allocate one afternoon for discussion between scientists and decision-makers participating in the COP.

60. Bureau Members agreed that CST 9 should also have a part devoted to CST business. Two-thirds of the time will be allocated to the scientific conference, and the remaining one-third to a CST regular session in order to consider the other part of the CST work programme set out by COP 8 decisions.

61. The Bureau agreed that there is an urgency for the first announcement concerning the conference to go out before CST S-1, and that more detailed calls for participation should follow at a later stage of the preparations. This would also be discussed with the consortium.

62. It was proposed that the working modalities and next steps would be further discussed between the Bureau and the consortium as well as the secretariat.

63. The secretariat made a presentation on the different milestones of the proposed roadmap leading up to CST 9. The task ahead includes the preparations for the scientific conference at CST 9. Other tasks include the preparation of the main documents to be submitted to COP 9: the four-year work plan (2010–2013), the two-year costed work programme (2010–2011) following an RBM approach, and a document on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3. These documents will be enriched by the outcome of the discussions during CST S-1 and CRIC 7; the Scientific Policy Dialogue (SPD) to be organized in the first part of 2009; four regional scientific meetings preparatory to CST 9 and back-to-back regional meetings of national focal points preparatory to COP 9 (with an overlap between the two) as well as by the preparatory work for the scientific conference. This should be seen as a reinforcing process of inputs and outputs to scientifically feed the discussion on CRIC reporting guidelines as well as setting up a new process for the CST work programme.

64. The Deputy Executive Secretary noted that the SPD has an important role in the future of the CST. The SPD could help to frame the CST's priority theme for the scientific conference during COP 9. It could also work on important issues such as land degradation and climate change or land and food security. If such issues were picked up by the SPD, they would attract attention and gain in importance. As all the activities of the CST are interrelated, some level of coordination between the SPD and the consortium will be necessary.

65. The Bureau decided to hold another meeting before the SPD. This will be an opportunity to provide some guidance on the preparation of the agenda for the SPD and on the regional scientific meetings, among other issues. The Chair noted that Bureau meetings were vital during this critical transition period for the Convention, which has presented a heavy workload for the CST and its Bureau.

3. The role of the science and technology correspondents

66. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the Executive Secretary had sent out letters to national focal points immediately after the decision was taken at COP 8, to invite science and

technology correspondents to take a keen interest in the unfolding process of the reshaping of the CST and its work in line with The Strategy. The Bureau requested the secretariat to update the information on the science and technology correspondents and to send an invitation to them to participate in CST S-1. The role of the science and technology correspondents during CST 9 can be further discussed in line with discussions on the preparation of the scientific conference.

G. Report on the Bureau meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

67. The Chair of the CRIC gave an overview of the CRIC Bureau meeting on 26 May 2008. He expressed his gratitude to the CST Bureau for its work, and noted that the contribution of the CST would be crucial for the entire Convention.

68. CST Bureau members agreed the need to have an additional Bureau meeting to discuss, among other things, the structure of discussions during CST S-1, in particular the paper on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3, on the scientific input to the reporting guidelines and on the preparation of the roadmap to CST 9. It was agreed to have the meeting before the CRIC Bureau in order to have an overlap between the next CRIC and CST Bureau meetings.

69. The secretariat confirmed that conference services would be available from 29 September to 2 October 2008, and that the Bureaux of the CST and the CRIC could meet during that period. The CST Bureau will hold a joint meeting with the CRIC Bureau on reporting guidelines, as follows:

- 30 September and the morning of 1 October: CST Bureau meeting
- Afternoon of 1 October: joint meeting of the CST and CRIC Bureaux
- Morning of 1 and 2 October: CRIC Bureau meeting

H. Scientific advice on reporting guidelines for the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

70. The Chair noted that the matter of this agenda item had been discussed and that the appropriate decisions had been made (see para. 40).

I. Other issues

71. The Bureau highlighted the importance of civil society organizations and asked the secretariat to consider their participation in the process. At the request of the Bureau, the secretariat gave an update on the Fellowship Programme and pointed out that more detailed information on this matter would be available at the next Bureau meeting.

J. Conclusions and recommendations

72. The Chair of the CST Bureau summed up the decisions of the day. He underscored that the Bureau was making history, and that it was working at a strategic moment to embrace the new strategy. The Bureau had been mandated by the Parties to put the process in motion to lay down the foundation of the new UNCCD. During the meeting, there had been important milestones.

73. The Bureau endorsed the draft four-year work plan for 2008–2011, and the draft two-year work programme with an indicative budget that would be worked out by the secretariat.

74. The Bureau decided to highlight the importance of capacity building, which is particularly crucial to enhancing the capacities of the Parties. The CST will catalyse this process and lead the identification of the areas where capacity building is needed.

75. In the light of the above needs, it is important that the Bureau now put in place a system to consider all the requirements of the UNCCD and the Parties in terms of a harmonized monitoring and evaluation system. The CST and CRIC Bureaux can tackle this task. The discussion will begin with a joint meeting. The UNCCD secretariat will present options to the CRIC for a harmonized, integrated monitoring and evaluation system for the UNCCD.

76. The selection of the consortium to work with the CST Bureau on the roadmap towards CST 9 is a vital step forward. The Bureau must take this opportunity to grasp the relevance of the scientific and technological activities that the CST advocates to climate change, the current food crisis and the energy crisis. The Chair reminded the Bureau that it was making a difference.

77. Having considered that all agenda items had been discussed exhaustively, the Chair expressed his gratitude to the Bureau members, to the secretariat and the Chair of the CRIC and declared the meeting adjourned.

Appendix I

**Agenda of the first 2008 meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on
Science and Technology**
19 February 2008

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Overview of COP 8 decisions as they relate to the work programme of the CST.
3. Introduction to the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018).
4. Substantive preparation for the CST Special Session to be held in November 2008 in Istanbul, Turkey.
5. The CST International Scientific Conference.
6. Consideration of the functioning of the CST, the roster of independent experts, networking of institutions, the LADA Project and the UNCCD Fellowship Programme.
7. Consideration of the development of a mechanism to upgrade land degradation as an issue of global importance in the international scientific community.
8. CST involvement in the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Appendix II

**List of participants of the first 2008 meeting of the Bureau
of the Committee on Science and Technology**
19 February 2008

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Dr. William DAR (Philippines)
Chair | Director General
International Crops Research Institute
for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) |
| 2. Dr. Maria Nery URQUIZA
RODRIGUEZ (Cuba)
Vice chair-cum rapporteur | Especialista
Centro de Informacion, Gestion, y Educacion Ambiental
Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente |
| 3. Dr. Michel Papaoba SEDOGO
(Burkina Faso)
Vice chair | Directeur de Recherche
En Agro-Eco-Pedologie a l'INERA/CNRST
Ministere des Enseignements Secondaire, Superieur et de la
Recherche Scientifique (MESSRS) |
| 4. Dr. Richard ESCADAFAL (France)
Vice chair | Directeur de Recherche
Centre d'Etudes Spatiales de la BIOSphère, UMR CNES-
CNRS-IRD-UPS (CESBIO)
Institut de recherche pour le Developement |
| 5. Dr. Israel TORRES (Panama)
Chair CRIC (observer) | Autoridad Nacional del Ambiente |

Appendix III

**Agenda of the second 2008 meeting of the Bureau
of the Committee on Science and Technology**
25 June 2008

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Preparations for CST S-1.
3. Draft CST work plan (2008–2011) and draft CST (2008–2009) costed work programme.
4. Advice by the CST to the CRIC on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2, and 3 of The Strategy.
5. Preparations for the Scientific and Technical Conference-style format (CST 9);
6. Selection of a consortium.
7. Tentative Roadmap to CST 9.
8. Role of the science and technology correspondents.
9. Report on the CRIC Bureau meeting.
10. Scientific advice on CRIC reporting guidelines.
11. Other issues.

Appendix IV

**List of Participants of the second 2008 meeting of the Bureau
of the Committee on Science and Technology**
25 June 2008

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Dr. William DAR (Philippines)
Chairperson | Director General
International Crops Research Institute
for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) |
| 2. | Dr. Maria Nery URQUIZA
RODRIGUEZ (Cuba)
Vice chair-cum rapporteur | Especialista
Centro de Informacion, Gestion, y Educacion Ambiental
Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente |
| 3. | Dr. Michel Papaoba SEDOGO
(Burkina Faso)
Vice chair | Directeur de Recherche
En Agro-Eco-Pedologie a l'INERA/CNRST
Ministere des Enseignements Secondaire, Superieur et de la
Recherche Scientifique (MESSRS) |
| 4. | Dr. Vladimir SAVCHENKO
(Belarus)
Vice chair | Head
Department of Land, Forest and Landscape Protection
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection |
| 5. | Dr. Richard ESCADAFAL (France)
Vice chair | Directeur de Recherche
Centre d'Etudes Spatiales de la BIOSphère, UMR CNES-
CNRS-IRD-UPS (CESBIO)
Institut de recherche pour le Developement |
| 6. | Dr. Israel TORRES (Panama)
Chair CRIC (observer) | Autoridad Nacional del Ambiente |
