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**The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention – Committee on Science and Technology**

**Consideration of the document on the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention – Committee on Science and Technology**

**The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of  
the Convention - Committee on Science and Technology**

Note by the secretariat

**Addendum**

**Consideration of the draft multi-year work plan for the Committee on  
Science and Technology (2008–2011)**

*Summary*

Decision 3/COP.8, by which Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted the 10-year strategic plan and framework for enhancing the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy), requests the UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to formulate a multi-year (four-year) work plan, complemented by a costed draft two-year work programme. Both plans should take a results-based management approach and be consistent with the objectives and outcomes of The Strategy.

The four-year work plan is designed to enhance the CST's responsiveness to the needs of the Parties in a changing international context, and at a time when the UNCCD process moves further towards concrete implementation. The CST will contribute to the strengthened mobilization of the scientific community for the implementation of the Convention and provide policy-relevant advice at all levels. The CST will encourage scientific partnership and system-wide cooperation to deliver the objectives of The Strategy,

while enhancing coordination with the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in order to integrate sound scientific knowledge into all the decisions of the Conference of the Parties and into the reporting process.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
DLDD	Desertification, land degradation and drought
MA	Millennium Assessment
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NMVA	National monitoring and vulnerability assessment
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## I. Introduction

### A. Context

1. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was developed as a result of the Rio Summit. It is a unique instrument that provides a universal legislative reference framework on land degradation, desertification and drought, particularly in the drylands where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems in the world exist alongside groups with some of the lowest incomes in the world.
2. A decade after entering into force, it is increasingly being recognized by its Parties and the international community that the UNCCD is an instrument that can make a lasting contribution to the achievement of sustainable development, but one that needs a more robust and scientific baseline development and assessment process. Convening scientific excellence under the UNCCD will make an important contribution to the delivery of ecosystem services and poverty reduction in a global context of climate change.
3. The UNCCD operates today in an environment that has evolved since it was first negotiated and faces different opportunities and constraints. The policy environment has changed considerably since the Rio Summit and the enactment of Agenda 21. The key outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, the release of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and its Desertification Synthesis and a stronger commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation are all noteworthy. The Desertification Synthesis of the Millennium Assessment (MA) also emphasizes the need to reduce uncertainties and establish a baseline on desertification and linkages with climate change and biodiversity, while mapping out key gaps in data and knowledge on dryland ecosystems and the people who live there.
4. The shrinking availability of arable land for food production, decreased soil fertility, the reduced supply of safe water, the aggravated impact of natural catastrophes and a range of socio-economic and political consequences are all factors that shed a sharper light on the combined effects of poverty and environmental degradation. They also demand better solutions and policy-relevant advice from the scientific community.
5. The scientific environment has benefited from the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the MA and the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development. These have contributed to an improved understanding of the biophysical and socio-economic trends relating to land degradation in drylands, and of the impact of these trends on human and ecosystem well-being, as well as of the dynamics of the agricultural and biodiversity landscape and food security.
6. Against this background, by decision 3/COP.8, Parties to the UNCCD adopted the 10-year strategic plan and framework for enhancing the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy). By the same decision, they requested the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to present its planned contribution to The Strategy in a multi-year (four-year) work plan. The work plan for the period 2008–2011 is provided in the present document.

## **B. Orientations for the work plan of the CST**

7. While establishing the Convention, the Parties recognized that strategies to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought would be most effective if based on sound, systematic observation and rigorous scientific knowledge, and if they were continually re-evaluated. In this regard, the CST was established as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to provide it with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought (Article 24). The CST is composed of government representatives competent in the relevant fields of expertise. The COP regularly determines the work programme of the CST.

8. The Convention outlines a number of objectives with respect to science and technology. More specifically, in articles 16, 17 and 18 it provides Parties with the tools for partnership building, network building and collaboration as well as facilitation and/or capacity building on knowledge sharing, research and development, and the transfer, acquisition and adaptation of appropriate technologies. The text of the regional annexes reinforces these engagements and tools.

9. These articles of the Convention and the decisions of the COP have created a comprehensive and well-constructed basis for working that will need to be adapted to the constantly evolving political, social and environmental context.

10. The Strategy was the outcome of an extensive process that has its origins in the sixth session of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties, held in Havana in 2003. It provides a vision statement for the UNCCD: “The aim for the future is to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.”<sup>1</sup> It further states that the UNCCD mission is “to provide a global framework to support the development and implementation of national and regional policies, programmes and measures to prevent, control and reverse desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought through scientific and technological excellence, raising public awareness, standard setting, advocacy and resource mobilization, thereby contributing to poverty reduction”.<sup>2</sup>

11. In line with this overall orientation The Strategy contains the following four strategic objectives:

- (a) To improve the living conditions of affected populations;
- (b) To improve the condition of affected ecosystems;
- (c) To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD;

(d) To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

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<sup>1</sup> ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1, annex to decision 3/COP.8, paragraph 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., paragraph 10.

12. These strategic objectives will guide the actions of all UNCCD stakeholders and partners throughout the 2008–2018 period.

13. With a view to supporting the attainment of these strategic objectives, The Strategy also contains five operational objectives to guide the actions of all UNCCD stakeholders and partners in the short and medium term (3–5 years). These objectives focus on:

- (a) Advocacy, awareness raising and education;
- (b) The policy framework;
- (c) Science, technology and knowledge;
- (d) Capacity building; and
- (e) Financing and technology transfer.

14. The strategic work plan makes operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge a central component of the UNCCD strategy. The CST was given primary responsibility for fulfilling this objective as well as a supporting role in implementing operational objective 1 on advocacy, awareness raising and education. The reshaping of the CST as outlined in the strategic plan and decisions 12/COP.8, 13/COP.8 and 14/COP.8 intends to give the CST the necessary capacities and planning tools to face this challenge with enhanced efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

15. In accordance with decision 3/COP.8, the work plan has been prepared taking a results-based management approach. It presents the expected accomplishments of the CST for the four-year period together with related performance indicators. The expected accomplishments represent those strategic outcomes on which the CST will focus and to which its contribution is necessary, although the accomplishments often require the active participation of other stakeholders. The performance indicators provide the tools for measuring the extent to which each accomplishment has been achieved, and also indicate the specific involvement of the CST.

16. The draft four-year work plan of the CST is accompanied by a draft costed two-year work programme (2008–2009), which is contained in document ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.2. This work programme presents the operational aspects of the work of the CST.

## **II. The operational objectives and expected accomplishments of the CST**

17. The draft work plan below is built on the outcomes identified under operational objective 3 of The Strategy: science, technology and knowledge. It also outlines the supporting role given by the COP to the CST in implementing operational objective 1: advocacy, awareness raising and education. In addition, as specified in paragraph 13 (responsibilities and role) and paragraph 14 (institutional arrangements, programme of work and budget) of The Strategy, the proposed work plan sets out ways and means, including institutional arrangements, for giving the CST the capacity for ‘assessing, advising and supporting implementation, on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis, of the scientific, technical and socio-

economic information relevant to understanding the causes and impacts of desertification/land degradation, and for informing COP decisions'.<sup>3</sup>

#### A. The operational objectives of the CST

18. With respect to operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge, The Strategy envisages the UNCCD to “**become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought.**”<sup>4</sup>

19. To this end, The Strategy calls for a number of outcomes to be generated in the course of the next 10 years:

**Outcome 3.1:** National monitoring and vulnerability assessment on biophysical and socio-economic trends in affected countries are supported.

**Outcome 3.2:** A baseline based on the most robust data available on biophysical and socio-economic trends is developed and relevant scientific approaches are gradually harmonized.

**Outcome 3.3:** Knowledge on biophysical and socio-economic factors and on their interactions in affected areas is improved to enable better decision-making.

**Outcome 3.4:** Knowledge of the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded land in affected areas is improved to develop tools to assist decision-making.

**Outcome 3.5:** Effective knowledge-sharing systems, including traditional knowledge,<sup>5</sup> are 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.

**Outcome 3.6:** Science and technology networks and institutions relevant to desertification/land degradation and drought are engaged to support UNCCD implementation.

20. According to decision 3/COP.8, the CST will take the lead role in achieving these outcomes while developing its capacity to assess, advise and support implementation on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis, and to inform COP decisions.

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<sup>3</sup> ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1, annex to decision 3/COP.8, paragraph 13.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., operational objective 3.

<sup>5</sup> Excluding traditional knowledge on genetic resources.

**B. The expected accomplishments of the CST and related performance indicators**

21. Expected accomplishments have been identified for each of the broader outcome areas listed above. These are presented below. Performance indicators have been defined for each of the expected accomplishments in order to facilitate monitoring of programme implementation.

<b>Outcome area 3.1: National monitoring and vulnerability assessment (NMVA) on biophysical and socio-economic trends in affected countries are supported.</b>	
<b>Expected accomplishments (outcomes) 2008–2011</b>	<b>Performance indicators</b>
<b>3.1.1</b> Relevant methodologies and parameters for NMVA are integrated within national reporting guidelines, enabling the involvement of the national scientific community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A CST report to COP on guidelines</li> <li>- The number of reports with scientific input on NMVA</li> </ul>
<b>3.1.2</b> Scientific community discussions during CST, regional and/or subregional meetings support NMVA through an interface between policymakers and scientists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of related recommendations involving both policymakers and scientists brought to the attention of the CST</li> <li>- The number of countries reporting on scientific consultations</li> <li>- The number of representatives from policymakers and from scientists</li> </ul>
<i>UNCCD Secretariat Information on national monitoring and vulnerability assessment is shared</i>	<p><i>An increased number of publications and reports on case studies, best practices and lessons learned on national monitoring and vulnerability assessment posted on the UNCCD website;</i></p> <p><i>Increased number of UNCCD website visits and downloads</i></p>

<b>Outcome area 3.2:</b> A baseline based on the most robust data available on biophysical and socio-economic trends is developed and relevant scientific approaches are gradually harmonized.	
<b>Expected accomplishments (outcomes) 2008–2011</b>	<b>Performance indicators</b>
<b>3.2.1</b> New innovative CST dialogue processes are used by the scientific community to assess and discuss biophysical and socio-economic trends of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of scientific articles and briefs produced</li> <li>- The number of scientists and institutions involved in the peer review mechanism of the UNCCD baseline data</li> <li>- The number of recommendations related to the baseline brought to the attention of the CST</li> </ul>
<b>3.2.2</b> New scientific reporting guidelines are used to harmonize regional scientific approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of regional profiles endorsed</li> <li>- The number of regional inputs to the preparation of the baseline</li> </ul>
<i>UNCCD secretariat</i> A commonly agreed and globally recognized baseline is established	<i>A COP decision</i>

<b>Outcome area 3.3:</b> Knowledge on biophysical and socio-economic factors and on their interactions in affected areas is improved to enable better decision-making.	
<b>Expected accomplishments (outcomes) 2008–2011</b>	<b>Performance indicators</b>
<b>3.3.1</b> The relevant methodological aspects of land degradation assessment integrated within the national reporting guidelines enable improved knowledge on biophysical and socio-economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A CST report to the COP</li> <li>- The number of reports with scientific input relating to biophysical and socio-economic factors</li> </ul>
<b>3.3.2</b> CST meetings and events, acting as an interface between decision-makers and scientists, to make them aware of relevant interaction between biophysical and socio-economic factors in affected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of representatives of decision-makers and of scientists</li> <li>- The number of recommendations involving both constituencies</li> </ul>
<i>UNCCD secretariat</i> The UNCCD poverty and land degradation assessment methodology is used by national authorities to enable better decision-making processes	<i>The number of national reports reflecting the use of the methodology (2010–2011)</i>

<b>Outcome area 3.4:</b> Knowledge of the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded land in affected areas is improved to develop tools to assist decision-making.	
<b>Expected accomplishments (outcomes) 2008–2011</b>	<b>Performance indicators</b>
<b>3.4.1</b> Cooperation between the scientific bodies of the UNCCD and those of the UNFCCC, contributes to improving knowledge of their constituencies on the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded lands in affected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decisions by Parties to the UNCCD and to the UNFCCC</li> <li>- The number of experts and institutions from both Conventions involved in the process</li> <li>- The number of reports containing references to joint issues</li> </ul>
<b>3.4.2</b> New and innovative CST dialogue processes are used to enhance the discussion on interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of scientific articles and briefs produced</li> <li>- The number of scientists and institutions involved in the peer review mechanism of the UNCCD</li> <li>- The number of recommendations brought to the attention of the CST</li> </ul>
<i>UNCCD secretariat</i> Key constituencies are aware of the importance of the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded lands in affected areas	<p><i>The governing bodies of the UNFCCC and the UNCCD include this item on their agendas</i></p> <p><i>Frequency of the topic being discussed in UNCCD regional meetings</i></p>

<b>Outcome area 3.5:</b> Effective knowledge-sharing systems, including traditional knowledge, <sup>a</sup> are 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.	
<b>Expected accomplishments (outcomes) 2008–2011</b>	<b>Performance indicators</b>
<b>3.5.1</b> A knowledge-sharing system approach is integrated into the national reporting guidelines, enabling the involvement of scientists and end users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A CST report to the COP on guidelines</li> <li>- The number of reports referring to a knowledge-sharing system</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> Excluding traditional knowledge on genetic resources.

<p><b>3.5.2</b> CST conferences and regional and/or sub regional meetings are used by the scientific community and decision-makers to review knowledge-sharing systems, best practices and case studies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of peer reviewed reports</li> <li>- The number of recommendations submitted to the CST conference</li> </ul>
<p><i>UNCCD secretariat Information on appropriate technology, including traditional knowledge, is used by affected country Parties</i></p>	<p><i>The number of countries reporting on the use of information on appropriate technologies and traditional knowledge</i></p> <p><i>The number of references on selected internet search engines and the number of hits on the UNCCD knowledge-sharing portal</i></p>

<p><b>Outcome area 3.6:</b> Science and technology networks and institutions relevant to desertification/land degradation and drought are engaged to support UNCCD implementation.</p>	
<p><b>Expected accomplishments (outcomes) 2008–2011</b></p>	<p><b>Performance indicators</b></p>
<p><b>3.6.1</b> The scientific community on DLDD is enabled and contributing its support to the implementation of the Convention through the new CST dialogue processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of scientific inputs</li> <li>- The number of representatives of each type of the scientific community involved in CST sessions and related events</li> <li>- The number of capacity building initiatives catalysed at individual, institutional and systemic levels</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.6.2</b> CST meetings and events ensure, by providing an interface between decision-makers and scientists, that COP decisions are based on sound, up-to-date and policy-oriented scientific knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of representatives of decision-makers and scientists</li> <li>- The number of recommendations involving decision-makers and scientists</li> <li>- The number of Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) decisions that make reference to CST decisions and vice versa</li> </ul>
<p><i>UNCCD secretariat The CST is recognized as the main forum for scientific assessments and exchanges on land and soil matters</i></p>	<p><i>The number of scientific participants, the number of accredited scientific non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the number of scientific side events that take place during COP, CST and CRIC sessions.</i></p>

### III. Conclusions and recommendations

22. Taking into account the guidance of The Strategy, as well as the decisions of the COP and the provisions of the Convention, the proposed draft work plan for 2008–2011 identifies 12 expected accomplishments for the CST, constructed around the six outcome areas of the operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge. This proposed work plan sets out a concrete roadmap for the implementation of The Strategy while setting clear priorities for the work of the CST over the next four years. Effective implementation of the work plan would substantially improve the quality of the whole process through the mobilization of the scientific community. Sound policy-oriented recommendations should facilitate the implementation of activities on the ground. The draft four-year work plan should also encourage scientific partnership and system-wide cooperation with delivering the objectives of The Strategy. The draft work plan thus seeks to enhance coordination with other subsidiary bodies for true integration of sound scientific knowledge into the decisions of the COP, as well as opportunities to catalyse capacity building and harmonize the policy and scientific elements of the reporting process.

23. In the light of recommendations from the Bureau of the CST, the Committee may wish to consider endorsing the proposed strategic orientation of the draft four-year work plan and to provide further advice on how the work plan could more effectively support the implementation of The Strategy.

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