

**Convention to Combat
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Committee on Science and Technology**Report of the Committee on Science and Technology on its
second special session, held in Bonn from 16 to 18 February
2011****Contents**

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I. Opening of the session

1. The second special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-2) was held under the chairmanship of Klaus Kellner (South Africa) in Bonn, Germany. The Committee held six meetings, from 16 to 18 February 2011.
2. On 16 February 2011, the second special session of the Committee on Science and Technology was opened by the Chair of the Committee, who welcomed all Parties and observers.
3. A statement was made by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
4. A statement was made by the Mayor of the City of Bonn, Jürgen Nimptsch.
5. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Hungary (on behalf of the European Union and its member States) and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean States).

II. Organizational matters

A. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

6. At its first meeting, on 16 February 2011, the Committee considered agenda item 1, "Adoption of the agenda and organization of work", for which it had before it a note by the secretariat contained in documents ICCD/CST(S-2)/1 and ICCD/CST(S-2)/1/Corr.1.
7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the agenda and approved the organization of work for the session, as contained in annex II of the provisional agenda. The agenda read as follows:
 1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
 2. Reshaping the operation of the Committee on Science and Technology in line with the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018):
 - (a) Assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference;
 - (b) Preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference: "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas".
 3. Outcome of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference.
 4. Measures to enable the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought.
 5. Science and technology correspondents.
 6. Progress made on the implementation of the knowledge management system, including traditional knowledge, best practices and success stories on desertification, land degradation and drought issues.

7. Issues associated with the development and implementation of impact indicators related to the measurement of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy:
 - (a) Consideration of the status of work on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3;
 - (b) Progress made on the refinement of the set of impact indicators for strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3;
 - (c) How to further streamline the cooperation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in a longer-term framework to support progress in measuring the implementation of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy.
8. Information on regional scientific initiatives.
9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology.

B. Attendance

8. The representatives of the following 131 Parties to the Convention attended the second special session of the Committee (see ICCD/CST(S-2)/MISC.1/Rev.1-ICCD/CRIC(9)/MISC.1/Rev.1):

Albania	Bulgaria	Dominica
Algeria	Burkina Faso	Dominican Republic
Angola	Burundi	Ecuador
Antigua and Barbuda	Cameroon	Equatorial Guinea
Argentina	Canada	Eritrea
Armenia	Cape Verde	Ethiopia
Austria	Central African Republic	European Community
Azerbaijan	Chad	Fiji
Bangladesh	China	Finland
Belarus	Colombia	France
Belgium	Comoros	Gabon
Belize	Congo	Georgia
Benin	Cook Islands	Germany
Buthan	Costa Rica	Grenada
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Côte d'Ivoire	Guatemala
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Cuba	Guinea-Bissau
Botswana	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Guyana
Brazil	Djibouti	Haiti

Honduras	Mongolia	South Africa
Hungary	Montenegro	Spain
India	Mozambique	Sri Lanka
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Myanmar	Suriname
Israel	Nepal	Switzerland
Italy	Niger	Syrian Arab Republic
Jamaica	Nigeria	Thailand
Japan	Niue	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Jordan	Pakistan	Togo
Kazakhstan	Palau	Trinidad and Tobago
Kenya	Panama	Tunisia
Kiribati	Peru	Turkey
Kuwait	Philippines	Tuvalu
Kyrgystan	Portugal	Uganda
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Republic of Korea	Ukraine
Lebanon	Republic of Moldova	United Arab Emirates
Lesotho	Rwanda	United Republic of Tanzania
Liberia	Saint Kitts and Nevis	United States of America
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Saint Lucia	Uruguay
Madagascar	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Uzbekistan
Malawi	Samoa	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Mali	Sao Tome and Principe	Viet Nam
Marshall Islands	Saudi Arabia	Yemen
Mauritania	Senegal	Zambia
Mexico	Serbia	
Micronesia (Federated States of)	Seychelles	
	Sierra Leone	

9. The session was also attended by observers from two other countries.
10. The following United Nations organizations, offices and specialized agencies were represented:
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
 - Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
 - United Nations Common Information Space (CIS)
 - United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
United Nations University (UNU)
World Bank
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

11. Eleven intergovernmental and twenty civil society organizations were also represented.

C. Documentation

12. The documents submitted for the consideration of the second special session of the Committee on Science and Technology are listed in the annex.

D. Regional meetings preparatory to the second special session of the Committee on Science and Technology

13. Each morning of the second special session of the Committee, the preparatory regional meetings were held from 8 a.m. to 9.50 a.m. Science and technology correspondents of 131 Parties participated at the CST S-2 out of a total of 144 Parties present at CST S-2 and the ninth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 9) (see ICCD/CST(S-2)/INF.2-ICCD/CRIC(9)/INF.16).

E. Contact group

14. During the evenings of CST S-2, at the invitation of the Chair of the Committee, a contact group met from 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. to work on the draft report of the Committee on Science and Technology on its second special session.

15. At its second meeting, on 16 February 2011, the Committee agreed to appoint Moussa Hassane of Niger as Chair of the contact group.

III. Recommendations on agenda items 2–7

16. The conclusions and recommendations listed in this report are a summary compilation of ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by various delegations during CST S-2. This report identifies potential action that could be undertaken at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, after consideration and appropriate decisions by the COP, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention.

A. Assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference

17. The Committee reviewed document ICCD/CST(S-2)/2 and discussed the recommendations produced by independent evaluators concerning the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. The purpose was to take lessons learnt from the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference in order to improve the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference.

18. The scientific conference format used for the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference to bring more scientists into the Committee process on a punctual and thematic basis was supported. In parallel, other recommendations linked to the assessment of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice were made.

19. Following clarification on some issues provided by one of the independent evaluators, and after thorough discussion, the following recommendations were made.

20. With regard to the conference organization, it was recommended to the secretariat that it put in place a conference steering committee to coordinate the organization of the conference. The steering committee should be composed of members of the Bureau of the Committee, the UNCCD secretariat and the selected lead institution/consortium.

21. It was also recommended that, following its terms of reference, the lead institution/consortium establish an independent scientific committee composed of scientists representing the different regions, who will plan publications well in advance, provide guidance and inputs to ensure complementarity amongst the working groups, and provide a neutral sounding board for the development of messages to be shared with the press on the conference topic and progress made. The independent scientific committee should regularly inform the conference steering committee about the progress made.

22. It was further recommended that the conference be held every two years, in the years between sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP), to allow enough time to prepare recommendations to be addressed by the COP at its following session. Holding the conference in an intersessional period, preferably following the sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), will ensure the participation of scientists and provide a good opportunity for participation by decision makers.

23. The early organization of working groups for the next scientific conferences was recommended. This acceleration in the launch of the working groups is required in order to provide enough time for the preparation and circulation of their results to the overall scientific community at large. For the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, the lead institution/consortium, in consultation with the steering committee and the independent scientific committee as well as other scientific institutions supporting the conference organization, should put in place these working groups as soon as possible.

24. The format of the conference should be a plenary session followed by breakout groups (working groups) based on the themes of the conference. The conference wrap-up session should be devoted to preparing technical summaries and associated proposals of the work of each of the working groups.

25. It was recommended that the secretariat, when implementing decision 16/COP.9, seek the assistance of the lead institution/consortium to secure adequate funding both for the conference and the attendance of scientists from developing and eligible countries.

26. In preparation for the tenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST 10), it was recommended that the Committee, with the support of the secretariat, call upon the scientific community to consider potential themes to be proposed for future UNCCD scientific conferences.

B. Preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference

27. The UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference is to be held in 2012 at a special session of the Committee on Science and Technology and is to consider the thematic topic "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas".

28. The need to involve relevant networks, institutions, agencies, bodies and scientific organizations at the regional and subregional levels, non-governmental organizations and other civil society stakeholders in addressing the thematic topic of each future UNCCD scientific conference was considered. Balanced geographical representation is essential.

29. It was recommended that the secretariat avoid the risk of duplication of effort with the ongoing economics of desertification/land degradation and drought (E-DLDD) initiative.

30. Regions were called upon to mobilize experts through the CST Bureau to contribute to the process on the theme of the conference.

C. Outcome of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference

31. The Committee took note of document ICCD/CST(S-2)/2 and the survey replies from Parties received by the secretariat on the matter and thoroughly discussed the results of the survey and the recommendations of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. The recommendations and outcomes of the regional discussions on the establishment of an independent, international, interdisciplinary scientific advisory mechanism and on science networking under agenda item 4, the recommendation on the sharing of local and scientific knowledge under agenda item 6, and the recommendations on monitoring and assessment under agenda item 7 were considered.

D. Measures to enable the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought

32. Recalling decision 18/COP.9 on this issue, the Committee took note of the progress made on this matter and on the guidance provided by the CST Bureau as well as the discussions at regional level held preparatory to the meeting. It was recommended that the secretariat, under the guidance of the CST Bureau, organizes a global e-forum to discuss and further identify possible scenarios and assessment criteria, and ensures participation in the assessment through regionally based facilitation. The outcome of the assessment process should be presented in a document for CST 10.

33. It was recommended that Parties take into account the contents of the CST 10 document on the outcome of the assessment process in their discussions at regional level preparatory to CST 10, in order to take a decision at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10).

34. It was discussed that the scope of this assessment should not be limited, but rather that different possible options be worked on for strengthening the provision of scientific advice to the Convention and related processes:

(a) In particular, by strengthening the organization of scientific conferences within the framework of UNCCD, the improvement of networking of scientific organizations at all levels (national, subregional and regional) mobilized on desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD), and on the basis of a thorough analysis of the gaps/needs in scientific matters related to DLDD;

(b) Further, by linking to existing mechanisms dealing with DLDD, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in the context of climate change and the ongoing operationalization process of the intergovernmental platform on biodiversity

and ecosystem services (IPBES), according to General Assembly resolution 65/162, in order to see how DLDD scientific issues could be included within those frameworks.

E. Science and technology correspondents

35. The Committee took note of document ICCD/CST(S-2)/5 as well as the discussions at the regional level.

36. It was recommended that the survey on the roles and responsibilities of science and technology correspondents be circulated again in order to receive more contributions from Parties. It was also recommended that a compilation review of the recirculated survey be presented for consideration and decision at COP 10.

37. Parties were invited to regularly update the list of science and technology correspondents and the roster of experts, through the official channels.

38. It was emphasized that the process of communication with science and technology correspondents needed to be clarified.

F. Progress made on the knowledge management system, including traditional knowledge, best practices and success stories on desertification/land degradation and drought issues

39. The Committee took note of the progress made on this matter. The survey on knowledge management needs that will be launched by the secretariat was welcomed. All stakeholders were encouraged to give their feedback, in particular on the scientific knowledge brokering system, as requested in The Strategy.

40. The need to ensure synergies between the development process of the knowledge management system undertaken under the supervision of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the compilation and review process on best practices undertaken under the supervision of the CRIC was discussed. It was recommended that the respective roles and responsibilities of the two committees be clearly defined in this regard.

41. The work carried out by the secretariat towards the development of the UNCCD knowledge management system, including the module that will support the Committee in delivering its scientific brokering functions, was acknowledged. Parties, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and civil society organizations, as well as other stakeholders, were encouraged to participate actively in defining the content of the system.

42. The need to complement existing knowledge management systems and similar initiatives already available at the local, national, subregional, regional and global levels when developing the UNCCD knowledge management system was highlighted, so as to ensure that the system is comprehensive, avoids duplication, reduces costs and benefits from past experience.

43. The necessity of engaging in partnership building in the development and implementation of the knowledge management system was stressed, benefiting from the comparative advantage of the scientific institutions, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders when documenting and fostering exchange of best practices, traditional knowledge and any other relevant information, where this information is not already being collected.

44. When developing the knowledge management system, the secretariat should take into consideration the technology and capacity limitations that the end-users may have and make it as simple as possible with the aim of facilitating its broad access and usability.

G. Issues associated with the development and implementation of impact indicators related to the measurement of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy

1. Consideration of the status of work on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3

45. The Committee took note of the progress made on the work on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 contained in document ICCD/CST(S-2)/7. It also took note of the preliminary findings of the scientific peer review on the refinement of the set of impact indicators, contained in document ICCD/CST(S-2)/INF.1.

46. The Committee took note that two main alternatives were identified for reporting on “land cover status”: (a) those based on indicators derived from land cover/land use maps, and (b) those using biophysical indicators (also called ecosystemic indicators). The use of biophysical indicators was recommended. Nevertheless, taking into account the different levels of technical capacity of affected country Parties and that the deadline of compliance by 2012 is very tight, the provisional adoption of a stratified approach to reporting on land cover status was recommended. This approach would allow a start to be made using readily-available land-cover data. As technical capacity improves, countries could provide more detailed reports and mapping, reflecting the other classifiers such as “land utilization types” and vegetation cover measurements along with production and biomass data, as appropriate to the type of cover.

47. It was recommended that the UNCCD secretariat continue work on methodologies for measuring, monitoring and reporting on the “proportion of the population in affected areas living above the poverty line”, addressing the topics related to the establishment of the poverty line and to the spatial disaggregation of the data in line with the outcomes of the scientific peer review of the provisionally accepted set of UNCCD impact indicators.

48. Based on the findings of the scientific peer review process, the need to clarify the term “in affected areas”, specifically where it is used in the definition of the core and provisional indicators, was emphasized. It was recommended that all the proposed indicators be measured in affected country Parties and that the operational use of the term “in affected areas” should be refined through input from the scientific community and used to interpret the impact indicator measurements. In this approach the related but different challenges of (a) defining, measuring and monitoring the indicators and (b) defining and delineating affected areas would be distinct and therefore more operationally viable. It was recommended that the secretariat further work on this issue in collaboration with the scientific community in view of CST 10.

49. It was recommended that indicators should be compiled as far as possible from sources typically accessible to, and in use by, national actors. Internationally compiled indicators could constitute the basis for default monitoring in the case of data gaps at the national level for the first reporting process.

50. It was recommended that the secretariat, under the guidance of the CST Bureau, produce reporting templates and guidelines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators to be presented at COP 10. It was also recommended that, in preparing reporting guidelines for the Parties, the secretariat engage stakeholders on a continuous basis to clearly identify their needs. In the reporting guidelines, indicators and their scale of operation as measurements should be carefully noted and precautions taken if indicator measurements are aggregated to a wider landscape.

51. The importance of reaching commonly agreed definitions for terms used for impact indicators and the potential associated metrics or proxies used to measure those indicators was emphasized. Thus, it was recommended that the secretariat, under the guidance of the CST Bureau, with input from the scientific community, further refine the glossary of terms and definitions for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators.

52. It was recommended that an overview be compiled of the number of affected countries and regions already measuring the subset of impact indicators, the related applied methodologies and the existing experiences and capacities. The capacity needs of those countries and regions should be assessed and the potential for harmonized approaches identified. Regional reference centres could be mobilized in that regard.

2. Progress made on the refinement of the set of impact indicators for strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3

53. The Committee reviewed document ICCD/CST(S-2)/8 on the refinement of the set of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 and took note of the preliminary findings of the related scientific peer review process, contained in document ICCD/CST(S-2)/INF.1.

54. Progress made in the refinement of the set of impact indicators through the scientific peer review was welcomed. It was recommended that a role be built into the UNCCD process for periodic scientific peer reviews as a means not only to facilitate integration of new ideas in response to evolving science, user needs and specific objectives arising from the implementation of the Convention, but also to build credibility for the indicator system, as well as other scientific issues addressed by the Convention.

55. The scientific community was called upon to continue providing inputs to the refinement of the set of impact indicators and encouraged all interested stakeholders to contribute to the review process by participating in the global e-forum launched by the secretariat (<http://eforum.unccd.int>).

56. It was recommended that the secretariat also carry on the review process through official channels.

57. Some alignment between the GEF portfolio level indicators and the UNCCD set of impact indicators would be beneficial to the two institutions and to Parties that would be requested to use or report on the selected impact indicators. Thus, a closer involvement of the GEF was recommended, through its Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), in the iterative process for the refinement of the UNCCD set of impact indicators, with a view to harmonizing objectives and methodologies for collecting and reporting on indicators.

58. Interest was expressed in the establishment, subject to the consideration of financial implications, of a geographically balanced ad hoc advisory group of technical experts to be tasked with continuing the iterative, participatory contribution from the science and technology community to the impact indicator refinement process.

59. Interest was also expressed in the establishment of an institutional partners group, made up of the organizations that would be contributing to the generation and management of the data sets based on the impact indicators of desertification/land degradation and drought and the success of remedies to address it.

60. It was recommended that the secretariat develop proposals for the establishment of the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts and the institutional partners group for consideration at COP 10 and, especially, provide information on the financial implications of these proposals.

61. The use of the term “impact indicators” was discussed. Based on the findings of the scientific peer review process, the term should suggest that the complete set of indicators, when taken together, should provide insights into the progress made towards the achievement of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy. In this sense, some of the indicators in the set may not be, strictly speaking, “impact” indicators (e.g., they might be drivers). However, when considered with the other indicators, their inclusion in the set would aid in understanding impact.

62. The Committee also discussed the use of the terms “harmonization” and “standardization”. Based on the findings of the scientific peer review process, harmonization means to make comparable (harmonize) the same variable measured in different ways. Standardization means to agree on and use only one single common methodology for the same variable or indicator. The causes and consequences of dryland degradation have multiple characteristics and vary in space and time. Hence, the indicator selection needs to accommodate these particularities while following coherent principles and criteria. The pursuit of harmonization was recommended, with the potential for standardization when appropriate and feasible.

63. The Committee discussed the intent behind proposing a “minimum” or “limited” set of indicators. There is a demonstrable need for harmonized measures that are comparable across countries and regions. However, this approach is not meant to limit monitoring, evaluation and assessment. To functionally address this concern, it was recommended initiating the development of a mechanism where the minimum set of globally harmonized indicators can be systematically complemented by regionally, nationally, and/or locally relevant and developed indicators.

64. It was recommended that the initial framework be an amended driving forces-pressure-state-impact-response (DPSIR) framework integrated with ecosystem services provisions. The framework selected initially should be regularly re-evaluated for appropriateness as monitoring and evaluation efforts mature, for its usefulness for the decision-making processes, and because needs may change.

65. It was recommended that a scheme for categorizing indicators be adopted, based on their “readiness” for operational use. Such a scheme would ensure a place for indicators that are currently challenging to measure, but are viewed as essential to monitoring impact.

66. It was recommended that tests be undertaken as soon as possible in order to assess the feasibility of the proposed refinement impact indicators in meeting the objectives of the indicator set under the hierarchy resulting from the refinement process. The pilot impact indicator tracking exercise should be linked to existing research projects.

67. In line with decision 17/COP.9, paragraph 3, and considering the results of the scientific peer review of the indicators, and resource availability, the necessity was emphasized of offering the possibility to affected country Parties to report voluntarily on impact indicators from the entire set, in addition to the two required for the fourth reporting cycle in 2012. To that end, minimum reporting tools should be made available.

IV. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology and closure of the session

68. At its sixth meeting, on 18 February 2011, the Committee considered the draft report of its second special session (ICCD/CST(S-2)/L.1). At the same meeting, on the proposal of the Chair, the Committee adopted the draft report and authorized the Rapporteur to complete the report of the session, with the assistance of the secretariat.

69. The Chair made a statement and declared closed the second special session of the Committee on Science and Technology.

Annex

Documents before the Committee on Science and Technology at its second special session

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/CST(S-2)/1	Provisional agenda and annotations. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CST(S-2)/1/Corr.1	Provisional agenda and annotations. Note by the secretariat. Corrigendum
ICCD/CST(S-2)/2	Assessment of the organization and the outcomes of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CST(S-2)/3	Progress report on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CST(S-2)/4	Progress report on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support the Convention process. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CST(S-2)/5	Progress report on the development of recommendations on the role and responsibilities of the science and technology correspondents. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CST(S-2)/5/Corr.1	Progress report on the development of recommendations on the role and responsibilities of the science and technology correspondents. Note by the secretariat. Corrigendum
ICCD/CST(S-2)/6	Progress report on the implementation of the knowledge management system. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CST(S-2)/7	Progress report on the status of the work on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CST(S-2)/7/Corr.1	Progress report on the status of the work on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3. Note by the secretariat. Corrigendum
ICCD/CST(S-2)/8	Progress report on the refinement of the set of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CST(S-2)/INF.1	Scientific review of the UNCCD provisionally accepted set of impact indicators to measure the implementation of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3
ICCD/CST(S-2)/MISC.1/Rev.1- ICCD/CRIC(9)/MISC.1/Rev.1	List of participants. Provisional
ICCD/CST(S-2)/INF.2- ICCD/CRIC(9)/INF.16	List of participants