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## Convention to Combat Desertification

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### Committee on Science and Technology

#### Third special session

Fortaleza, Brazil, 4–7 February 2013

Item 2 (a) of the provisional agenda

**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):**

**Preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference**

## **Report on the 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”**

**Note by the secretariat**

### *Summary*

By its decision 18/COP.10, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification decided that the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, which had been scheduled under decision 16/COP.9 to take place in 2012, should take place no later than March 2013.

The progress report on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference up to mid-June 2011 was presented to the COP at its tenth session, in Changwon, Republic of Korea (ICCD/COP(10)/CST/5). The present document reports on the preparation process for the Conference from mid-June 2011 to 15 October 2012.

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## I. Background

1. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) contained in decision 3/COP.8 highlights the importance given to the development and implementation of scientifically-based and sound methods for monitoring and assessing desertification, and underlines the need for a holistic view.

2. At its eighth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to strengthen the scientific basis underpinning the Convention. To this end, by its decision 13/COP.8, Parties decided that each future ordinary session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) should be organized in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format by the CST Bureau in consultation with a lead institution/consortium that is qualified in and has expertise in the relevant thematic topic selected by the COP.

3. By its decision 16/COP.9, the COP decided that the thematic topic to be considered by the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference would be “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”.

4. Further, the COP:

(a) By its decision 16/COP.9, paragraph 2, decided that the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference should take place in 2012 at a special session of the CST, in accordance with the provisions of decision 13/COP.8, paragraph 1 (a), (b), (c) and (d);

(b) By its decision 16/COP.9, paragraph 6, requested the CST Bureau, with the support of the secretariat and on the basis of the outcomes of the assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, to establish terms of reference and procedures for selection, taking into account regional balance, of a lead institution/consortium which is qualified in and has expertise in the relevant thematic topic selected by the COP to organize the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference under the guidance of the CST Bureau;

(c) By its decision 16/COP.9, paragraph 7, requested the CST Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to select the lead institution/consortium at least two years prior to each future UNCCD scientific conference;

(d) By its decision 16, paragraph 8, directed the CST Bureau to ensure that the selection of the institution/consortium is done in a transparent manner, and in strict accordance with the established criteria, if any, and to avoid any conflict of interest between the institution/consortium selected and any Bureau member .

5. By its decision 18/COP.10, the COP decided that the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, which had been scheduled under decision 16/COP.9, paragraph 2, to take place in 2012, should take place not later than March 2013.

6. A progress report on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference up to mid-June 2011 was presented at the tenth session of the COP, Changwon, Republic of Korea (ICCD/COP(10)/CST/5). The present document reports on the preparation process for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference from mid-June 2011 to 15 October 2012.

## II. Progress made on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference

7. The memorandum of understanding between the secretariat and the Global Risk Forum (GRF) Davos, which includes agreement on scientific publications strategy, communications and media strategy, financial arrangements, budget and milestone planning was signed on 8 October 2011, in Changwon, Republic of Korea.

8. An official proposal by the Government of Brazil to host the third special session of the CST (CST S-3) and the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference was received by the secretariat in July 2012. Based on this proposal, it was decided that CST S-3 and the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference would be held in Fortaleza, Ceara, Brazil.

9. As part of both the communication strategy and a service level agreement between the GRF Davos and the UNCCD secretariat, it was agreed that a special website would be developed for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference <<http://2sc.unccd.int>>. This website provides information on the current status of planning for the conference and makes all relevant information available to a wide audience. While the UNCCD secretariat provides GRF Davos with the hosting infrastructure for the website, the content of the website is maintained and updated by GRF Davos.

10. The UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference logo was developed by GRF Davos, approved by the secretariat, and used on conference-related documents, promotional material and the conference website.

11. The secretariat has organized five Steering Committee meetings since the last progress report on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference was presented to the COP at its tenth session (see ICCD/COP(10)/CST/5). The role of the Steering Committee<sup>1</sup>, which was discussed and defined at its first meeting on 18 May 2011, is threefold: (i) to provide an effective channel for information between the secretariat, GRF Davos, and the CST Bureau, thereby enabling effective coordination of efforts in the organization of the conference, and ensuring effective working relationships, (ii) to ensure alignment of the actions of each of the members in fulfilling their roles in the preparation of the conference, and (iii) to provide a systematic process and opportunity for the resolution of any unforeseen problems that may arise.

12. Also at its first meeting, the Steering Committee discussed and agreed on the terms of reference of the Scientific Advisory Committee. At its meeting on 17 February 2012, the final complete list of 12 members of the Scientific Advisory Committee – as selected by the GRF Davos – was endorsed by the Steering Committee (see annex I, below).

13. Two Scientific Advisory Committee meetings were organized by GRF Davos and held in Zurich, Switzerland, on 1 and 2 September 2011 and 12 and 13 April 2012. At its first meeting in September, the Scientific Advisory Committee defined and endorsed the topics for White Papers I and II, and set the milestones for the drafting of both papers. White Paper I addresses “Economic and social impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought” and White Paper II is entitled “Costs and benefits of policies and practices addressing desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD)”.

14. At its second meeting, the Scientific Advisory Committee set up two working groups to outline and draft White Papers I and II. The Scientific Advisory Committee

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<sup>1</sup> For details of the terms of reference of the Steering Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee, see document ICCD/COP(10)/CST/5. Available online: <<http://www.unccd.int/Lists/OfficialDocuments/cop10/cst5eng.pdf>>.

selected experts to serve as members of the working groups bearing in mind the need to ensure regional, geographical and gender balance (see annex II, below). The groups were formed according to preferences for one topic or the other and to the requirement to have approximately 14 members in each group.

15. The white papers were discussed in detail during a meeting of the working groups in March 2012 and deadlines were set for the draft, review and finalization by the Scientific Advisory Committee. Preparation of the white papers has been an ongoing process since mid-October 2012. An overview of both papers, together with a list of members of the review group, is contained in document ICCD/CST(S-3)/3. A background document, “The economics of desertification, land degradation and drought: methodologies and analysis for decision making”, is being prepared for the Conference by GRF Davos.

16. Based on the agreement in the Steering Committee, the call for abstracts for oral presentations, poster presentations, a special session, and a workshop was prepared by the Scientific Advisory Committee and launched on 29 May 2012. The topics of the call for abstracts are listed in the table. The call for abstracts was disseminated through the affiliates and the contacts newsletter of GRF Davos (reaching about 30,000 experts and practitioners in disaster and risk management) and also through the working groups, the Scientific Advisory Committee and members of the Steering Committee. Hard copy flyers were disseminated at international meetings, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress 2012.

Table

**Topics of call for abstracts**

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*Drivers of change and resilience increase*

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Economics of the commons, community land management

Land prices, markets, foreign investment in land

Land rights, land reforms, and governance

Implications of demographic changes (including rural-urban shift)

Land degradation in industrialized countries

Water scarcity and land (the nexus aspects)

Climate change, related risks, and impacts on DLDD

Financial drivers of land degradation and resilience

**Economic, environmental and social assessment of DLDD**

Macro-economic policy drivers of land management

Economic and social impacts of DLDD

Identification and valuation of ecosystem services

Indicators for DLDD / sustainable land management

Water and land, water related ecosystem services

Soil functions and related ecosystem services

Economics of land-use changes

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*Drivers of change and resilience increase*

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Traditional knowledge relating to DLDD / sustainable land management

**Economics of sustainable land management (policy and practice)**

Incentives for sustainable land management

Application of a green economy and impacts on sustainable land management

Policy analysis, good policy examples

Investment opportunities in drylands, public- private partnerships

Awareness-raising, research and education on the economics of DLDD

Good practice in sustainable land management and lessons learned

Land and habitat planning

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17. The call for submission of abstracts closed on 30 September 2012. A total of 391 abstracts were submitted: the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) submitted 165 abstracts (42%), Western Europe and Other Group (WEOG) submitted 81 (21%), the Asia Group submitted 79 (20%), the Africa Group submitted 53 (14%) and the Eastern European Group (EEG) submitted 13 (3%).

18. The review committee for accepting or rejecting submitted abstracts was composed of the members of the working groups, members of the Scientific Advisory Committee and a review board proposed by the Scientific Advisory Committee and both working groups.

19. The format of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference includes different types of sessions, such as parallel sessions, special sessions, poster sessions, workshops, and plenary sessions. Further information will be posted on the website of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference in due course. A verbal update on preparations for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference since mid-October 2012 will be provided at CST S-3.

20. Fifty organizations were invited by GRF Davos to be affiliates. Affiliates could show their support by, inter alia, announcing the event through their own channels and encouraging their partners, staff members and associates to participate in the conference (see annex III, below).

### **III. Status of contributions to the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference**

21. As at 15 October 2012, the secretariat has received the following contributions: USD 30,525 from Finland, USD 34,014 from France, USD 70,186 from Germany, USD 120,000 from the Republic of Korea, USD 318,096 from Spain, USD 62,150 from Sweden and USD 211,151 from Switzerland, in total USD 846,122.

22. As at 15 October 2012, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland have also made voluntary contributions to facilitate the participation of a selected number of scientists from eligible country Parties. The Latin America and Caribbean Initiative on Science and Technology has also offered to cover the travel costs of science and technology correspondents from the Latin America and Caribbean region.

23. The Government of Brazil will provide meeting facilities in Fortaleza, Brazil.

24. In addition to the different Parties to the Convention who are being requested to contribute financially to the organization of this conference, the organizing committee is seeking partnerships with multilateral institutions and private sector entities to guarantee wider stakeholder engagement.

#### **IV. Conclusions and recommendations**

25. **The CST, at its third special session, may wish to consider and accept the report on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference as a guide for the organization of future UNCCD Scientific Conferences.**

## Annex I

### List of members of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference

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*Member*

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Nana Bolashvili

Tbilisi State University, Vakhushti Bagrationi Institute of Geography of Ivane Javakishvili,

Georgia

Hamid Custovic

University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Jonathan Davies

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature

Kenya

Patrik Klintonberg

Desert Research Foundation of Namibia

Namibia

César Morales Estupiñán

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC),

Chile

Teresa Namiko Nagashiro Kanda

Ministry of Environment and Water

Bolivia

Laban Ogallo

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD),

Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC)

Kenya

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*Member*

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Soo Jin Park

Department of Geography, Seoul National University

Republic of Korea

Mélanie Requier-Desjardins

Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen de Montpellier (IAMM)

France

Richard Thomas

United Nations University, International Network on Water, Environment and Health  
(UNU-INWEH)

Canada

Joachim von Braun

Center for Development Research (ZEF Bonn)

Germany

Vute Wangwacharakul

Kasetsart University, Agriculture and Resource Economics Department, Faculty of  
Economics

Thailand

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## Annex II

### List of members of the Working Groups I and II of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference

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*Member*

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Elena Maria Abraham

Instituto Argentino de Investigaciones de las Zonas Áridas (IADIZA,)

Argentina

Dorothy Amwata

South Eastern University College, Constituent College of the University of Nairobi

Kenya

Mercedes Zoraida Aranibar Seminario

GLOBAL MECHANISM/United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and  
the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Peru

Ferdo Bašić

Faculty of Agriculture, University of Zagreb

Croatia

Hatem Belhouchette

Centre international de hautes études agronomiques méditerranéennes, Institut  
Agronomique Méditerranéen de Montpellier (CIHEAM-IAMM)

France

Viorel Blujdea

European Commission, Joint Research Centre

Romania

Guillermo Dascal

Naciones Unidas Comisión Económica para América y el Caribe (CEPAL)

Argentina

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*Member*

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José Roberto de Lima

Center for Strategic Studies and Management (CGEE)

Brazil

Herminia Francisco

Economy and Environment Program for Southeast Asia (EEPSEA)

Singapore

Alemu Mekonnen Getnet

School of Economics, Addis Ababa University

Ethiopia

Ian Hannam

Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law, University of New England

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Jane Kabubo-Mariara

School of Economics, University of Nairobi

Keyna

Klaus Kellner

School of Environmental Sciences and Development, North-West University

South Africa

Daniel Kimeu Mbuvi

National Drought Management Authority

Kenya

Pak Sum Low

Faculty of Science and Technology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

Malaysia

Rodrigo Morera

Poch Ambiental

Chile

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*Member*

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Antonia Corinthia Crisanta Navarro Naz

Resources, Environment and Economics Center for Studies Inc.

Philippines

Stacey Noel

Stockholm Environment Institute

Sweden

Nathalie Olsen

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Switzerland

Lene Poulsen

Karl International Development

Denmark

Olena Rakoid

National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine

Ukraine

Mary Seely

Desert Research Foundation of Namibia and Gobabeb Training and Research Centre

Namibia

Peijun Shi

Beijing Normal University

China

Mariya Sokolovska

Forest Research Institute, Bulgarian Academy of Science

Bulgaria

Lindsay Stringer

Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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*Member*

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Heather Tallis

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USA

Borut Vrščaj

Agricultural Institute of Slovenia  
Slovenia

Grace Wong

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Poverty and Environment Initiative  
Programme  
Laos

Xiaohui Yang

Institute of Desertification Studies, Chinese Academy of Forestry  
China

Valentin Yatsukhna

Belarusian State University  
Belarus

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## Annex III

### List of affiliates of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference

Academy of Disaster Reduction and Emergency Management (ADREM), Ministry of Civil Affairs and Ministry of Education, China

Africa Desertification Control Initiative

ILEIA - AgriCultures Network: Centre for learning on sustainable agriculture

Institut des sciences et industries du vivant et de l'environnement (AgroParisTech)

Argentinian Institute of Arid Zones (IADIZA)

Australian Center for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

Belarusian State University, Geographical Faculty, Research Landscape Ecology Laboratory

Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI)

Ceará Meteorological Foundation (FUNCEME), Brazil

Center for Arid Lands Research of the Universidad de Chile

Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern, Switzerland

Centre for Environmental Economics and Policy Analysis (CEEPA)

Comité Scientifique Français de la Désertification (CSFD)

Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Argentina

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in South Africa

Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DFRN)

DesertNet International

The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative

Environmental Aid

Environmental Management Legal Expert Cameroon

Environmental Monitoring and Sustainable Development Center

Environmental Monitoring Group

Environmental Sciences and Management, North-West University, South Africa

European Commission Directorate-General (DG) Development and Cooperation

Gobabeb Research and Training Centre, Namibia

Hydro-Engineering Institute, Sarajevo

Institut agronomique méditerranéen de Montpellier, Centre international des hautes études agronomiques méditerranéennes (CIHEAM-IAMM), France

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics  
International Organization for Migration  
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)  
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Israel  
Oxford University Centre for the Environment, Oxford, United Kingdom  
PhD Programme in Ecology, University of Zurich  
Resources, Environment and Economics Center for Studies, Inc  
Responding to Climate Change (RTCC)  
South Asian Forum for Environment  
Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research, Switzerland  
Tbilisi State University, Georgia  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
United Nations Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)  
United Nations University, Institute for Environment and Human Security  
United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment & Health (UNU-INWEH)  
University of Leeds, United Kingdom  
University of Sarajevo  
University of Zagreb, Faculty of Agriculture  
World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT)  
World Tourism Organization  
Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung, University of Bonn, Germany

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