



SUMMARY OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 2-11 MAY 2005

The third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification (CRIC-3) took place from 2-11 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany. Nearly 600 participants attended, including delegates from 130 state Parties, as well as representatives of UN agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Delegates convened in plenary sessions, regional consultations, and informal consultations, to review the implementation of the Convention in Africa, consider issues relating to the Convention's implementation at the global level, share experiences, and make concrete recommendations for the future work of the Convention. Many side events also took place during the meeting. CRIC-3 concluded its work by adopting its report, containing recommendations and conclusions on the implementation of the Convention both in Africa and at the global level, for consideration at the seventh Conference of the Parties, to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 2005.

After the week-and-a-half meeting, many delegates agreed that CRIC-3 had been a useful exercise. It gave countries affected by desertification the opportunity to share information, experiences and lessons learned. It highlighted problems, shortcomings, and challenges in the implementation of the Convention, and made recommendations on how to improve work in this area. However, many also expressed their disappointment over the slow pace of implementation, with some attributing such to the lack of human, financial and technical resources. It was agreed by many, as Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo stated in his closing remarks, that more progress and efforts are needed and that we should keep "pedaling" and must not stop.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNCCD/CRIC-3

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the centerpiece in the international community's efforts to combat desertification and land degradation. The

UNCCD was adopted on 17 June 1994, opened for signature in October 1994, and entered into force on 26 December 1996. The UNCCD currently has 191 Parties. The UNCCD recognizes the physical, biological and socioeconomic aspects of desertification, the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand-driven, and the involvement of local communities in combating desertification and land degradation. The core of the UNCCD is the development of national, subregional and regional action programmes by national governments, in cooperation with donors, local communities and NGOs.

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: In 1992, the UN General Assembly, as requested by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of a convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (INCD). The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994, and drafted the UNCCD and four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the UNCCD/CRIC-3	1
CRIC-3 Report	3
Regional Consultations	4
First Segment: Review in Africa	6
Second Segment: Global Issues	11
CRIC-3 Recommendations/Conclusions	16
Closing Plenary	19
A Brief Analysis of CRIC-3	19
Upcoming Meetings	21



Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. A fifth annex for Central and Eastern Europe was elaborated and adopted during COP-4 in December 2000.

Pending the UNCCD's entry into force, the INCD met six times between January 1995 and August 1997 to hear progress reports on urgent action for Africa and interim measures in other regions, and to prepare for COP-1. The preparations included discussion of the Secretariat's programme and budget, the functions of and administrative arrangements for the financial mechanism under the UNCCD, the Global Mechanism (GM), and the establishment of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST).

COP-1: The first Conference of the Parties (COP-1) met in Rome, Italy, from 29 September to 10 October 1997. The CST held its first session concurrently from 2-3 October. The COP-1 and CST-1 agendas consisted primarily of organizational matters. Delegates selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the UNCCD's Permanent Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the organization to administer the GM. At the CST's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the continuation of the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators, and decided that CST-2 should consider linkages between traditional and modern knowledge. One plenary meeting was devoted to a dialogue between NGOs and delegates. Delegates subsequently adopted a proposal that plenary meetings at future COPs be devoted to similar NGO dialogues.

COP-2: COP-2 met in Dakar, Senegal, from 30 November to 11 December 1998. The CST met in parallel with the COP from 1-4 December. Delegates approved arrangements for the institutional linkage between the UNCCD and the UN Secretariat and the headquarters agreement with the German Government. The Secretariat moved to Bonn in early 1999. The COP approved adjustments to its budget and adopted the outstanding rules of procedure concerning Bureau members, but retained bracketed language regarding rule 47 on majority voting in the absence of consensus. Central and Eastern European countries were invited to submit to COP-3 a draft regional implementation annex. The CST established an *ad hoc* panel to follow up its discussion on linkages between traditional and modern knowledge. Delegates considered, but deferred to COP-3, decisions on the Secretariat's medium-term strategy, adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the COP and IFAD regarding the GM, and a proposal by the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China) to establish a Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC).

COP-3: Parties met for COP-3 in Recife, Brazil, from 15-26 November 1999, with the CST meeting in parallel to the COP from 16-19 November. The COP approved the long-negotiated MOU regarding the GM. It decided to establish an *ad hoc* working group to review and analyze in depth the reports on national, subregional and regional action programmes and to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the UNCCD. Delegates also agreed to continue consultations on the additional draft regional implementation annex for Central and Eastern Europe,

with a view to adopting it at COP-4. The COP appointed an *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge and an *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems.

COP-4: COP-4 convened from 11-22 December 2000, in Bonn, Germany. The CST met from 12-15 December. The COP's notable achievements were the adoption of the fifth regional annex for Central and Eastern Europe, commencement of work by the *ad hoc* working group to review UNCCD implementation, initiation of the consideration of modalities for the establishment of the CRIC, submission of proposals to improve the work of the CST, and the adoption of a decision on the GEF Council initiative to explore the best options for GEF support to the UNCCD's implementation.

COP-5: COP-5 met from 1-13 October 2001, in Geneva, Switzerland, and the CST met in parallel from 2-5 October. The COP focused on setting the modalities of work for the two-year interval before COP-6. Progress was made in a number of areas, most notably, in the establishment of the CRIC, identification of modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and in the enhancement of the UNCCD's financial base following strong support for a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as a new focal area for funding.

CRIC-1: The first meeting of the CRIC was held at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11-22 November 2002. The CRIC was established in accordance with decision 1/COP.5 to regularly review the implementation of the UNCCD, draw conclusions, and propose concrete recommendations to the COP on further implementation steps. CRIC-1 considered presentations from the five UNCCD regions, addressing the seven thematic issues under review: participatory processes involving civil society, NGOs and community-based organizations; legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements; linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies; measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land, drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought; access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how; and resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements.

The meeting also considered information on financial mechanisms in support of the UNCCD's implementation, advice provided by the CST and the GM, and the Secretariat's report on actions aimed at strengthening the relationships with other relevant conventions and organizations.

CRIC-1 adopted recommendations on the programme of work for CRIC-2, noting that CRIC sessions held during the ordinary sessions of the COP will: consider the comprehensive report of the intersessional session; review the policies, operational modalities and activities of the GM; review reports prepared by the Secretariat on the execution of its functions; and consider reports on collaboration with the GEF.

COP-6: COP-6 met from 25 August-6 September 2003, in Havana, Cuba. Progress was made on a number of issues, including: the designation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD; activities for the



promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies; enhancing the effectiveness of the CST; and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The COP adopted 31 decisions, of which eight were developed in the CST and six in the CRIC.

COP-6 marked the UNCCD's transition from awareness raising to implementation. Among the issues marking the transition were the designation of the GEF as a financial mechanism to the UNCCD and identification of criteria for the CRIC's COP-7 review. Two factors served as an additional impetus to making significant progress: the presence of Cuban President Fidel Castro, known for his ability to do "much with very little," and the first anniversary of the WSSD, which identified combating desertification as a tool for eradicating poverty.

CRIC-3 REPORT

On Monday morning, 2 May 2005, CRIC-3 Chair Mohamed Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth (Mauritania) opened the session. He pointed out that the next step for UNCCD is to have an impact in the field and ensure continuing involvement of stakeholders. He also noted that due to financial difficulties, CRIC-3 had been postponed from 2004 to 2005, and support for the participation of developing countries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was limited. He linked the significance of CRIC-3 to: the Convention's potential to encourage an integrated approach to implement the goals of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); formulation of decisions to be submitted through CRIC-4 to COP-7 for adoption; and consideration of the future of the CRIC process at COP-7. He encouraged CRIC-3 to make contributions to the needed strengthening of the sustainability aspects of the MDGs.

Participants then elected Evgeny Gorshkov (Russian Federation) as the Rapporteur, and adopted the agenda and organization of work (ICCD/CRIC(3)/1).

In his opening statement, UNCCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo noted that inadequate levels of contributions to the trust fund for participation have prevented many eligible country Parties and NGOs from being effectively represented. He expressed gratitude to donors for their support for the CRIC process and mentioned a GEF Medium-Sized Project co-financed by the World Bank, which enabled the organization of three subregional workshops on lessons learned and best practices in Africa. He introduced the structure of the session, which included two segments: review of the implementation of the Convention in Africa, and the review of selected issues relating to the Convention implementation process at the global level. He appealed to the affected country Parties that have not yet adopted their national action programmes (NAPs) to intensify their efforts with a view to finalizing their NAPs by the end of 2005. He emphasized that the UNCCD is a tool that can greatly contribute to poverty eradication.

Following regional consultations, the plenary resumed on Tuesday morning, 3 May, to hear statements by the representatives of regional and interest groups. Jamaica, on behalf of the G-77/China, and Luxembourg, on behalf of

the European Union (EU), stressed the importance of the implementation of the Convention in achieving the MDGs, with the EU proposing to emphasize desertification both at the national and international levels at the Millennium Review Summit in September 2005. The G-77/China welcomed the creation of GEF Operational Programme 15 (OP 15) on land degradation, suggesting that it should be driven by a bottom-up approach. She said that the GEF and its implementing agencies should ease bureaucracy and avoid additional conditionalities in disbursing and allocating funds according to countries' needs. She stressed the need to: continue to address funding sources besides the GEF; actualize technology transfer commitments; and renew commitments to the UNCCD, seizing the opportunity of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) in 2006. Recalling the Paris Decision on Aid Effectiveness, the EU stressed that resource mobilization for NAPs should become a part of national development strategies, and that the scientific edge of the Convention, including traditional knowledge, should be sharpened. He also recommended that CRIC be a forum for substantive, results-oriented discussions, with less formalities and increased interactivity, with the G-77/China stressing that the viability of the CRIC process has been clearly demonstrated.

Syria, on behalf of the Asian Group, noted that the effective implementation of NAPs, subregional action programmes (SRAPs), and regional action programmes (RAPs) is still lagging behind, and stressed the urgent need to harmonize programme activities at all levels. Drawing attention to difficulties experienced in the African region in preparing their national reports, due to the prolonged process of resource mobilization, he called for enhanced institutional processes and financial support for the effective implementation of the Convention.

On behalf of the African Group, Swaziland noted that the review of the implementation of the Convention in Africa was helpful in raising awareness of the economic needs of people who depend on the use of natural resources. He called upon all stakeholders to target income-generating projects for the poor to achieve sustainable land management (SLM). He encouraged delegates to find an appropriate strategy for timely and adequate funding for the preparation of national reports. Noting that only few African countries have accessed GEF's OP 15 funding, he said many African countries have finalized their NAPs and need investment to implement them.

On behalf of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Armenia said the review of implementation in Africa will be useful in the preparation of national reports of countries in the region. Drawing attention to the geographic location of the region and the similarity of the problems faced in the CEE and Mediterranean regions, he expressed the interest of CEE countries in participating in the programme for Northern Mediterranean countries. Concerning global issues, in addition to resource mobilization and transfer of technology and know-how, he emphasized the need for support for the development of NAPs through the Global Mechanism and for the preparation of national reports. He also requested the Secretariat to hold a regional workshop to assist CEE countries in this regard.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of Latin America and the Caribbean, said the recommendations of CRIC-3 should take into account the position of the UN General Assembly



in relation to the IYDD. He emphasized cooperation and partnership in the effective implementation of the Convention, and said a concrete effort should be made to address the recurrent problem of resource mobilization and shortage of finances. He also said the region looks forward to the full and committed support of the GEF and the World Bank in preparing national reports.

Norway, on behalf of JUSSCANNZ, stressed that issues of combating desertification must be considered in light of broader international commitments such as the MDGs and the IYDD. Highlighting the UNCCD's role in reminding the international community that combating land degradation and eradicating poverty are complementary, he said the Convention is a major tool to integrate dryland development into poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs). He also noted that NAPs should be integrated into macroeconomic policy and national poverty alleviation strategies, and said that greater emphasis should be placed on civil society participation in the implementation of the Convention.

REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

Following the opening plenary on Monday, 2 May, and Tuesday morning, 3 May, Parties participated in parallel regional consultations.

AFRICA: The consultation was chaired by Bongani Masuku (Swaziland). He made a presentation on results of the three subregional workshops: Subregional Workshop for North and West Africa, from 9-11 February 2005, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; Subregional Workshop for Central Africa, from 15-17 February 2005, in Douala, Cameroon; and Subregional Workshop for Eastern and Southern Africa, from 21-23 February 2005, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. UNCCD Executive Secretary Diallo said contributions from African country Parties will provide a landmark in the history of the CRIC.

Regarding the participatory process involving NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), delegates emphasized the importance of strengthening their capacity to participate. On rehabilitation of degraded land, delegates noted that it is essential to understand and address the primary causes of degradation. Regarding the GEF, they emphasized that assistance should be provided to African country Parties to strengthen their capacity in accessing GEF funding. They called for assistance to be provided to those countries in Africa that have not developed their NAPs. On the implementation of UNCCD, they called for close links and synergies with other environmental conventions, especially the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). They noted that it is necessary to improve the proper functioning and efficiency of the National Coordination Bodies (NCBs), and that a mechanism for monitoring and assessing the efficiency of NCBs should be set up. They also stressed the need for the integration of NCBs within the three Rio conventions, i.e. UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD.

On the implementation of the RAP and its thematic programme networks (TPNs) to combat desertification in Africa, the following comments were made: institutions responsible for the TPNs should make plans for the implementation of RAP; the RAP should be implemented at the subregional and

regional levels; and operation and effectiveness of TPNs should be emphasized. Delegates highlighted that it is necessary to do more electronic networking for the exchange of information, and that there is a need for a detailed and objective evaluation of the performance of TPNs and information sharing and dissemination, especially to policy makers.

The regional consultation continued on Tuesday morning, 3 May. Regarding ways and means of improving procedures for communicating information, as well as the quality and format of national reports, the Secretariat pointed out some problems, including that very few reports provide details on how Parties are using impact indicators, or whether these indicators are being tested in the field; and that the funding for reporting activities has not been predictable and consistent. During the discussion, participants requested donors and international organizations to provide adequate funding and assistance in strengthening their capacity to produce high quality reports. They requested the Secretariat to facilitate the organization of workshops and other capacity building activities, in which the National Focal Points (NFPs) should be fully involved.

On necessary adjustments to the elaboration and implementation of action programmes, the Secretariat said that in the national reports submitted by the Parties, issues such as energy, monitoring, and early warning, have not been adequately addressed. While supporting the development of renewable energy sources, some countries said that some technologies, such as solar energy equipment, are not affordable in African countries, and emphasized the importance of developing practical and affordable renewable energy sources. One delegate emphasized the importance of the protection and rational use of rangelands. Participants requested assistance in the development of monitoring and early warning systems.

ASIA: Khaled Al-Shara'a (Syria) chaired the consultation. Executive Secretary Diallo summarized the regional perspectives in the implementation of the convention in Asia and noted that the issue of land degradation has become a priority in the region's sustainable development agenda. He stressed the need for mobilizing financial resources and promoting greater involvement of international partners in the implementation of NAPs, SRAPs and the RAP, and highlighted the importance of south-south cooperation for promoting know-how and technology transfer.

On the participatory approach to the drafting and implementation of action programmes, an NGO representative said participation can be enhanced through initiatives for local people's involvement such as community and school gardens. One country highlighted the importance of indicators for follow-up and evaluation of national activities.

Regarding legislative and institutional frameworks, one delegate said the absence of national legislation affects resource mobilization and financing, while another stressed the importance of law enforcement. On linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions, some countries highlighted the need for developing synergies at both the international and national levels. On measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and early warning systems to mitigate the effects of drought, an NGO stressed the need for practical recommendations that can be applied.



Regarding resource mobilization, several delegates stressed the need for: identifying the needs and demands for funding; changing the financing strategy; linking activities to combat desertification with poverty eradication; and providing financial support for the implementation of NAPs. Some countries also noted that the procedure for accessing funding should be made easier.

On ways and means to promote know-how and technology transfer, one country stressed the need to prioritize the immediate and long-term actions. Another noted that creating favorable conditions and allocating adequate financial resources are necessary for technology transfer, while others stressed that technology transfer requires resource mobilization. An NGO representative highlighted the best available technologies and those that have multiple effects.

On Tuesday morning, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) presented the UNDP/GEF portfolio project aimed at assisting the least developed countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in developing their NAPs and mid-term investment plans for NAPs implementation, stressing the need for capacity development in these countries.

On monitoring and assessment of drought and desertification, one delegate highlighted the importance of south-south cooperation, while another stressed that there are no benchmarks for regional and subregional monitoring and assessment.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: This regional consultation was chaired Edmund Jackson (St. Vincent and Grenadines). On participatory processes, many delegates noted that public awareness needs to be enhanced. One delegate noted that lack of human resources is a major obstacle, and another said financing is a key issue. One delegate suggested that governments and CSOs should establish focal points for participation and reach out to local communities. Some delegations said participatory processes can only be successful when governments institutionalize the processes and commit funding. One country also stressed the need to conduct evaluations on people's knowledge of land degradation.

On early warning systems for drought and rehabilitation of degraded lands, one country emphasized the importance for the region to continue its efforts in this area, especially on agricultural lands. Another stressed the importance of early warning system in combating desertification. One delegate drew attention to both prevention and cure measures, as well as financial and technical support in this regard.

In the afternoon, delegates considered resource mobilization and coordination. Executive Secretary Diallo stressed the need to identify and explore ways of mobilizing funds to enable countries to complete national reports and NAPs. Many expressed concern over the lack of funding. One delegate said that requests for funding to the region's Parties should be reflected in the CRIC-3 recommendations, especially for projects at the national and regional levels. Some speakers commented that very little funding has been provided to NGOs.

On access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how, the Committee for Science and Technology outlined ways to promote different types of technologies and approaches to technology transfer. One country said that

work done by the CST and its experts should be published. Another country underscored that the region has a lot to offer in traditional knowledge to stop desertification.

On consideration of ways and means to improve procedures for communicating information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP, delegates emphasized the need to gather and disseminate information within the region through an information exchange center. One delegate advocated the use of official government websites for sharing information, and another suggested conventional tools such as radio broadcasting.

The Secretariat gave a presentation regarding consideration of necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes, including review of the enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention. She drew attention to several new areas for the implementation process, including poverty eradication, renewable energy, and early warning systems for land degradation.

On Tuesday morning, one delegate highlighted the importance of subregional and national programmes, given that desertification goes across borders. Another stressed coordination among programmes. The Secretariat said that these programmes are demand-driven, and cannot be carried out without funding from governments. One speaker stressed synergies among various issues, conventions, and intergovernmental organizations, and that the SRAPs should strive to involve cooperation among neighboring countries.

Chair Jackson highlighted the key issues to be discussed within the regional context, including: the GEF replenishment, the role of GM, the Bonn Declaration on NAPs, and subregional and national programmes.

NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN & CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: The consultation for these regions was co-chaired by Mario Quagliotti (Italy) and Ashot Vardevanyan (Armenia). On the CRIC-3 agenda, the Secretariat highlighted the review of both African and global issues, and pointed out that the CRIC mandates and functions will be subject to renewal, and the CRIC terms of reference to review, at COP-7. On the review of UNCCD implementation in affected African countries, the Secretariat stressed the need to focus on the: linkage between poverty reduction and desertification, promotion of income-generation activities, and involvement of local communities. The Secretariat stressed the need to include discussions on the World Trade Organization (WTO) within the UNCCD, and invited Parties to provide input to the report on implementation of the Bonn Declaration for submission to COP-7. Co-Chair Quagliotti noted that submission of NAPs was far beyond expectations. Experts from the two regions presented regional background information, with one highlighting the consensus among countries on the need to improve legislation on desertification.

On sustainable use and management of rangelands, a Northern Mediterranean expert underscored the need to encourage effective measures to disseminate a code on agricultural practices, and a CEE expert highlighted overgrazing as the most urgent problem. One country stressed the need for numerical indicators to ensure transparent and comparable reports.

Regional experts reported on desertification monitoring and assessment and on reforestation/afforestation programmes. The



CEE highlighted regional scientific research cooperation, with one participant prioritizing reforestation. On financing, the Secretariat suggested linking desertification to climate change, preventing natural disasters, poverty reduction and the MDGs. Other participants stressed the need for external funding, highlighting EU-funded projects. On technology transfer, one participant reported on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the role of traditional knowledge. The Secretariat expressed concern about limited progress in reporting at the national level.

The consultation continued on Tuesday morning, when the Secretariat introduced the global interactive dialogues on mainstreaming NAPs and on impacts of desertification on migration and conflict. He also updated participants on regional cooperation, listing proposed activities by Northern Mediterranean and CEE countries. Several delegates shared their experiences in realizing the proposed activities, highlighting progress achieved and challenges faced due to financial constraints and limited national capacity. Some delegates withdrew proposed activities, and others confirmed their commitment but indicated expected delays. The Secretariat outlined the planned activities for 2006, as discussed by a steering committee, comprising the World Bank, UN Volunteers, UNESCO, FAO and the CBD. He stressed the new aspect of cultural heritage in deserts.

FIRST SEGMENT: REVIEW IN AFRICA

On Tuesday afternoon, 3 May, Chair El Ghaouth introduced documents on the review of reports on implementation of affected African country Parties, including on the participatory process (ICCD/CRIC(3)/2, Add.1 to Add.4), review of reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected African country Parties (ICCD/CRIC(3)/3, Add.1 and Add.2), and review of information provided by UN organizations, IGOs and NGOs on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of the Convention in African countries (ICCD/CRIC(3)/4).

PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES, INVOLVING CIVIL SOCIETY, NGOs AND CBOs:

This thematic topic was considered in the plenary on Tuesday afternoon, 3 May. Delegates heard presentations by selected African countries.

Gabon presented its experience of involving stakeholders in drafting the national strategy for poverty reduction, and in different environmental programmes. She said the lessons learned suggest: making use of existing discussion forums; promoting information exchange between different stakeholders; establishing virtual discussion forums for information exchange; and promoting awareness-raising initiatives.

Ghana presented its experience in involving communities in bushfire management projects and empowering communities in the management of their natural resources, drawing attention to a tree growing programme initiated by a Yameriga women's group. She also emphasized the importance of using traditional beliefs in protecting natural resources.

Zimbabwe introduced the Muposhi District Project, focusing on the institutional framework for NAPs' implementation. The project aims at mobilizing all partners, with funding from the GM, focusing on law enforcement, capacity building of traditional leaders, public awareness, and support to district

environmental committees. The benefits of the project include poverty eradication, income generation, and reduction in the rate of desertification. On promoting participation in Convention implementation, she recommended: mobilizing adequate resources; investing in local institutional capacity building; promoting participation of all institutions; promoting ownership of initiatives by local communities; and developing synergies between multilateral environmental agreements and efforts by governments and NGOs.

The Drylands Coordination Group Sudan presented a case study in Ethiopia, focusing on different stakeholders' participation in "the hillside distribution to landless youth project." This project identified the roles and responsibilities in this participatory process of various groups, including: beneficiaries, associations, surrounding communities, governmental administrations, and NGOs. She said that participation at different levels and in different locations is all interrelated, recommending the legal recognition of local communities' institutions.

In the ensuing discussions, Colombia presented the conclusions reached during the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) consultations, such as the need for permanent participation, lack of targeted funding and of adequate communication with local communities, and the possibility to use mass media. The EU recommended: the decentralization and allocation of funds to local governments and communities; the involvement of the private sector in SLM; and improved transparency in, and evaluation of, civil society participation in the Convention's implementation.

The G-77/China called on the international community to support the sustainability of participatory processes at the local level. India and Namibia supported empowerment of local communities through legislative initiatives. Indonesia stressed the links between poverty, livelihoods and participation, and the empowerment of women, youth and indigenous people. Kyrgyzstan emphasized poverty, migration and economic aspects of desertification as cross-cutting issues.

Tunisia said that the NAP is a good tool to promote participation by all stakeholders, suggesting that NGOs can be delegated for environmental tasks on a contractual basis. Algeria stressed that participation needs to be supported by programmes with clear procedures, targets and training. Tanzania noted that participation at the national level should be legalized in order to be effective. Iran pointed out to the role of research centers in promoting participation. Zimbabwe stressed decentralization of natural resources management to ensure participation.

LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

OR ARRANGEMENTS: This thematic topic was considered in the plenary on Wednesday, 4 May. The Secretariat outlined key points generated from the African subregional workshops, particularly the need to establish NCBs and to update and harmonize national legislation.

Benin shared the experiences in adopting measures to reduce the continuing pressure on natural resources, which are carried out through natural resources and land management programmes. He said that legal reform has been undertaken to update laws



and strengthen law enforcement, and, on the institutional side, various structures have been established with involvement of all actors.

Kenya outlined the main principles of its framework law on environment, highlighting the involvement of various institutions at all levels in law enforcement. Despite the successes achieved, the country still faces challenges, particularly: mobilizing resources; increasing national budgetary allocation to desertification; improving management of cross-border natural resources; and increasing local community involvement in environment management.

In its presentation, Seychelles highlighted: loss of land due to sea level rise, as a result of climate change; difficulties in enforcing laws and regulations due to lack of manpower and resources; and the protection of forty percent of its land.

Following the presentations, one delegate expressed interest in Kenya's Citizens Tribunal and asked how it functions. Another delegate commented on the importance of traditional measures in the protection of land. Some delegations stressed that coordination and synergies among the three Rio conventions should be more concrete. China, on behalf of the Asian Group, highlighted the importance of legislation and law enforcement, as well as institutional arrangements and good coordination. Panama, on behalf of GRULAC, highlighted the importance of legislation and institutional frameworks, calling for strengthening global cooperation and actions in the field.

Lesotho and Uganda highlighted the consideration of social aspects. Uganda stressed that institutional and legal frameworks should aim to change the long-established traditional practices of land use that contribute to land degradation, and at increasing incentives at the community level. India outlined its national programmes for combating desertification and poverty eradication in affected areas, highlighting that India has definite and elaborate institutional and legal frameworks, but lack of adequate financial resources is the biggest constraint.

Calling for a particular attention to small island developing States (SIDS), Comoros noted that climate change, deforestation and the expansion of agricultural activities are the main causes of land degradation in SIDS. Cape Verde said plans and projects should focus on sustainable management of natural resources.

Tunisia stressed the role of NCBs in combating desertification, and highlighted that NAPs should be fully integrated into national development strategies. Noting the link between poverty and land degradation, the EU recommended that issues of land degradation be integrated into PRSPs, and some NAPs should be redesigned accordingly. He also emphasized the importance of empowering local authorities and communities in managing their own resources.

LINKAGES AND SYNERGIES WITH OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS AND, AS APPROPRIATE, WITH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES: This thematic topic was taken up by the plenary on Wednesday, 4 May. The Secretariat introduced the main outcomes of the subregional workshops in relation to linkages and synergies.

The Gambia presented its national experience in developing synergies and linkages between various environmental conventions and national programmes, highlighting: the

participatory process based on the bottom-up approach; the joint implementation of UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD action programmes; the synergy in the implementation of these action programmes with the PRSP, the national development strategies, and macroeconomic policies; integrated management of natural resources; and subsectoral and intersectoral policies and strategies. He said that the NAP has been integrated into the Gambia Environmental Action Plan and Local Environmental Action Plans.

Swaziland outlined its approaches to problems in promoting synergies: mainstreaming of the NAPs; enhancing capacity building of NFPs; engaging all stakeholders; and using national consultants to implement NAPs. Although some progress had been made, he identified shortcomings, including: lack of involvement of development partners and private sector; poor implementation of development strategies and policies; and low capacity of NFPs to coordinate and lead in the implementation of NAPs. He recommended strengthening national institutions and attracting development partners to increase direct funding for NAPs.

Highlighting common objectives of the three Rio conventions, France stressed the need for a collective system for information and data, which can also be used for early warning systems and adaptation to climate change. He suggested conducting studies on economic-social and environmental costs caused by loss of natural resources, and better coordination among donors and funds, and capacity building.

In the subsequent discussion, Algeria said that synergies among the three Rio conventions have not been achieved in Africa, stressing the need for projects on synergies. Burkina Faso emphasized the importance of internal cooperation and coordination. El Salvador said that water is the key issue in the three Rio conventions. Brazil introduced its experience in achieving synergies among national government departments, and international and regional organizations.

Argentina, supported by Tanzania, stressed that synergies between the three Rio conventions should be considered from the viewpoint of their specific objectives, as well as within the mandate and responsibilities of the focal points of the different conventions. Uganda said synergies add value in terms of efficient use of resources, and stressed the need for awareness raising for the effective coordination in the implementation of all environmental conventions. The EU highlighted the crosscutting nature of desertification, underscoring that the multidisciplinary coordination of environmental conventions at the national level would bring together different stakeholders.

Cambodia, on behalf of Asia, drew attention to the National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) project for the implementation of the three Rio conventions, aiming at identifying country-level priorities and capacity development needs, as well as at developing national strategies, to address global environmental issues. Senegal said that an assessment to identify synergies and better mobilization of resources should be carried out. Guinea-Bissau stressed the technical, institutional and financial aspects of synergies. Colombia stressed a serious consideration of the nature and objectives of synergies.

Switzerland expressed concern about promoting synergies as a formal approach at the local level. Cuba said synergies



should be addressed in light of global issues, including poverty, food security, sustainable use of natural resources, pollution and climate change. Ethiopia introduced its experience in the synergetic implementation of the three conventions at the local level. Canada said that harmonization of the reporting activities and development of an information system is the key for synergies. Pakistan stressed coordination, awareness raising and capacity building at the local level. India was of the view that synergies should be placed at the strategic level, while coordination is required at the operational level.

In responding to the questions and comments raised, the Secretariat described activities for synergies between the three conventions including a joint liaison group, a joint work programme, an action paper on common activities, and a joint workshop on forests.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND COORDINATION, BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL, INCLUDING CONCLUSIONS OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS: This thematic topic was discussed in the plenary on Wednesday, 4 May. The Secretariat highlighted that African countries reported on the establishment of coordination mechanisms, but noted difficulties in accessing external funding and called for increased allocation of resources to GEF OP 15 in its fourth replenishment.

Ethiopia presented its experience in developing an environment fund through seed money from the government. He recommended operationalizing environmental funds, designing more participatory projects, and devoting the majority of funds to communities.

In his presentation, Morocco highlighted the territorial, participatory and dynamic approach of its NAP, and reported on budgetary reform that allowed public funds to be devoted to participatory processes and NGO projects. Niger stressed the role of the private sector in reforestation/afforestation projects and the decentralization process underway in the country, but noted that these efforts are still insufficient to tackle the magnitude of desertification in Niger.

The EU reiterated that drylands development should become an integral part of national development frameworks and the international development agenda, and called for setting up early warning systems, applying indicators, and increasing north-south scientific cooperation on desertification. He emphasized SLM in improving absorptive capacity through capacity building, noting procedural obstacles in accessing to existing national financial resources and the potential of the CBD budget line on drylands. He also drew attention to the need for baseline financing to couple GEF funds, and encouraged innovative financing, particularly through partnerships with the private sector.

The Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Application presented a case study on resource mobilization and coordination for sustainable pastoralism in Iran. Highlighting the international support provided by UNDP/GEF, bilateral cooperation agencies and others, she outlined national resource mobilization mechanisms for pastoralism, including a programme called Community Investment Funds. She said this multi-source support programme aims at: promoting awareness and knowledge of nomadic pastoralism as a means of SLM and

for poverty eradication; building capacity for nomadic pastoralist communities; and promoting a supportive policy environment for pastoralism.

On Thursday, 5 May, delegates continued discussion on this thematic topic, focusing on comments on the presentations made on Wednesday. On the question raised by Swaziland regarding the possibility of considering a specific programme for combating desertification using EU financial resources, the EU said that capacity building should be carried out beforehand, in order to implement such an initiative, and that initiatives for combating desertification should also include issues of watershed management and desertification in water basins. Supporting the EU's view, Germany stressed aligning rules and procedures of various financing mechanisms and mainstreaming initiatives on land management into national development strategies.

Syria highlighted the importance of SLM in drylands, and drew attention to issues of conflict and migration caused by land degradation. The Gambia stressed that Convention implementation should focus on fulfilling the commitments made and realizing concrete actions in the field. Guinea underlined the importance of synergy and coordination between donors, as well as the need for capacity building for countries to prepare eligible project proposals. Highlighting its bilateral financial support to African countries for sustainable management of natural resources, Switzerland sought clarification on whether financing should go through a formal channel such as NAPs and SRAPs, noting that sometimes it is easier to provide funds through bilateral arrangements. Pointing out that many countries in Asia and the Pacific have not yet developed their NAPs, Palau considered it premature to talk about NAP implementation, and called for resources through the GM for the development of NAPs before CRIC-5.

Pakistan emphasized the sustainability and continuity of programmes without external financial support, and said resource mobilization needs capacity building and should be demand-driven. Central African Republic said international support is important for implementing NAPs, as well as for awareness raising on the importance of addressing environmental issues. Many countries highlighted the importance of mainstreaming NAPs into national development strategies, and income-generating activities. Several speakers also stated that in addition to multilateral financing mechanisms, there must be national investment to combat desertification.

The EU said that combating land degradation requires an integrated approach. Uganda noted difficulties in accessing available financial resources. Burundi suggested shifting from a project-based approach to a programme-based approach to financing. Azerbaijan urged countries to change business practices in order to preserve forests and avoid land degradation. Guinea-Bissau noted that there is no component for fighting desertification within the European Development Fund. Viet Nam said that financing requires high-level political commitment. Madagascar shared its experience in managing programmes jointly with donor countries. Kyrgyzstan proposed that countries generate funds through promoting eco-tourism, trade and exports of products. China advocated legislation on



combating desertification to hold governments responsible at different levels, as well as tax and land policies to mobilize private sector for financing.

Algeria called for promoting south-south cooperation. Timor Leste reported on the integration of desertification to its national development plan. Tajikistan stressed the need to increase donors' trust in recipient countries, with India stressing the importance of countries' capacities to effectively utilize financial resources. Egypt prioritized national economic reforms to start partnerships with the private sector. Eritrea shared its experience in mobilizing local human resources, particularly local communities and students. Finland underscored the link between resource mobilization and governance, especially broad participatory processes, both at the national and international levels, as well as rights-based approaches to ownership of natural resources. In response, the EU reiterated that international development cooperation and EU funding are increasingly guided by the priorities of national development strategies, recommending mainstreaming of desertification into national agendas and strengthening the role of NFPs to ensure their participation in strategic decision-making. Niger emphasized the role of "*chefs de file*" in enhanced donor coordination.

The Conference of Ministers for the Forests of Central Africa (COMIFAC) suggested countries create their own national funds for combating desertification. An NGO expressed concern over lack of participation by African NGOs in CRIC-3, despite the focus of the Convention on Africa. He also pointed out that development of NAPs in Central Asia needs financial resources.

MEASURES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF DEGRADED LAND AND FOR EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS:

The Secretariat introduced this thematic topic to the plenary on Friday morning, 6 May. A representative of the CST highlighted that for the first time an analysis of the scientific and technical content of reports is being undertaken and that indicators and benchmarks are being identified. Cape Verde made a presentation on national progress in combating desertification, highlighting techniques such as terracing and construction of dams. Chad reported on the creation of an early warning system to forecast drought and food shortage, recommending decentralization of crisis prevention strategies and strengthening national capacity to coordinate food security and soil restoration policies. Djibouti presented a case study on forest restoration, underscoring the importance of involving local communities, raising awareness among the population and decision-makers, and the creation of a forest department within the Ministry of Environment to ensure the sustainability of the project. Italy presented a successful project on rehabilitation of degraded land in Keita, Niger, concluding that quantitative and qualitative scientific knowledge is a prerequisite for rehabilitation.

On the review of the scientific and technical content of the reports, the CST Group of Experts noted that: only few countries have applied the results of monitoring to decision-making; ecological indicators remain under-developed; there is no link between traditional knowledge and scientific research; and most countries did not report, or did not establish, early warning systems. He recommended: strengthening capacity building and participatory approaches; standardizing information and data; and improving institutional coordination.

During the subsequent discussion, the Gambia emphasized the importance of participatory approaches, land ownership and long-term assistance in SLM. Malaysia introduced its experience in SLM at the national and local levels. Guatemala stressed prevention plans, training on SLM, and land rehabilitation plans. Swaziland drew attention to its lack of resources for rehabilitation. Kyrgyzstan, on behalf of Asia, highlighted alternative energy sources and improved productivity, combating soil salinity, overexploiting land, increasing information on land use, monitoring and prevention measures, and private sector involvement. Djibouti recommended a systematic approach to combating desertification. Morocco prioritized targeting root causes of land degradation in rehabilitation activities.

Guinea emphasized the role of local communities in the rehabilitation of degraded land, and, supported by the EU, stressed the need for harmonization of data. The EU said land tenure, decentralized planning and decision making, and the development of local markets are important in the implementation of SLM. Kenya recommended that country profiles should provide information to decision makers, and stressed the need for involving communities in land rehabilitation measures. Gabon shared its experience in reforestation, including implementation of relevant laws, and stressed the importance of the globalization of warning systems. Belgium and Argentina stressed the importance of disseminating and duplicating best practices and success stories. Ghana shared its experience in the rehabilitation of degraded land, emphasizing land tenure, benefit-sharing, and alternative livelihoods. Ethiopia stressed the lack of statistical data on land degradation. China asked whether developed countries will continue their support to affected countries for developing scientific and technical tools required for the implementation of rehabilitation initiatives. Eritrea shared its experience in effective and successful efforts of creating protected areas. Senegal stressed the viability of, and access to, scientific information, and the exchange of information on tools and methodologies.

Argentina called for communication among experts. Armenia drew attention to exploitation of natural resources and soil pollution as the main causes of land degradation in his country, and Grenada highlighted the impact of human activities in general. Indonesia said effective monitoring and data is required, and stressed the gap in the availability of tools and methodologies. Saint Lucia stressed the lack of quantitative data and the gap between the CST and various players working in the field, suggesting that the CST provide standards to harmonize data. Mali underlined the need to assess the social impacts of rehabilitation projects. Tunisia shared its experience in the successful implementation of reforestation efforts, highlighting involvement of local communities. Uzbekistan requested the Secretariat to mobilize funding for monitoring activities and tools, particularly remote sensing.

Answering to the questions, the CST representative stressed the need for reliable data and methodologies for data harmonization, and highlighted difficulties in analyzing data statistically. Chad called for the continued support of NGOs in gathering technical data. Italy said communities should be sensitized about the rehabilitation measures. Djibouti said that in his country the land belongs to the state and the communities are



regarded as *de facto* owners of land. Cape Verde reported on the construction of the first dam in the country and highlighted the role of the government in supervising reforestation processes.

DROUGHT AND DESERTIFICATION MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT: This thematic topic was considered by the plenary on Friday morning, 6 May. Mali made a presentation, reporting that in 1999 a national network for environmental surveillance was established, and has collected some biophysical data. He informed delegates of the creation of a monitoring and assessment component in the network, but stressed that funding is a major problem.

Namibia introduced its experience in local-level monitoring for enhanced decision making in semi-arid rangelands. He noted that indicators on livestock condition scoring and carrying capacity have been developed in his country. Involving local communities, the LLM method uses traditional knowledge and practices that give direct early warning to the most affected people. He emphasized that monitoring systems should be implemented by local farmers based on their information needs.

Tunisia reported that a monitoring system, which is mainstreamed into the national development plan, was established to obtain information for SLM and for rehabilitation measures. He noted that rural development has been promoted for combating desertification, and highlighted: identifying tools for evaluation, using indicators to evaluate efforts in rehabilitating degraded land, and capacity building.

The Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) introduced its two strategic thrusts, i.e. development and information, and its observatories in 11 countries in Africa, engaging in long-term monitoring and surveillance. He outlined OSS work in: developing operation tools, information systems, regional databases, and indicators on soil erosion; applying remote sensing to monitoring of vegetation change and desertification; conducting resource assessment; mapping; monitoring and assessing the achievement of NAPs; assisting countries to develop environmental country profiles, providing scientific information for decision-making; and developing training modules. He recommended an indicator-oriented approach to the development of early warning systems.

In the subsequent discussion, Cuba, on behalf of GRULAC, highlighted the importance of baseline information, and stressed the need for updating information-gathering systems and strengthening human capacity. Underscoring the importance of monitoring and assessment in the implementation of the Convention, Morocco stressed the lack of knowledge and specific provisions on monitoring. Seychelles shared its experience in developing monitoring systems using satellite data. Regarding OSS activities, the US highlighted monitoring social impacts, including the impact of land use changes on traditional farming, and Madagascar asked whether the OSS has plans to expand its activities to other regions and countries. The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) stressed the importance of self-evaluation. The EU recommended that national monitoring and evaluation within the NAP should not be limited to desertification, and reiterated the importance of indicators.

Israel drew attention to long-term measurements to monitor land

productivity, as well as monitoring and assessment of impacts of climate and human activities on land degradation. Germany stressed the need for economic indicators.

In response to GRULAC's question, Mali noted the availability of data on land regeneration after bushfires. Namibia said that data from the last 30-40 years are used for benchmark comparison, and noted that indicators for monitoring the state of the environment have been developed. Tunisia highlighted the involvement of grassroots communities in monitoring and assessment. Regarding social impacts, the OSS stressed the importance not only of biophysical, but also socioeconomic data for monitoring and assessment.

ACCESS BY AFFECTED PARTIES, PARTICULARLY AFFECTED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, TO APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY, KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW-HOW: This thematic topic was considered in the plenary on Friday afternoon, 6 May. Summarizing the findings of the subregional workshops, the Secretariat stressed the need for, *inter alia*, disseminating techniques for sustainable agricultural production, and promoting land protection and restoration techniques. She also highlighted the main recommendations, including to: deepen and disseminate knowledge; promote use of innovative information and communication technologies for dissemination of results of research; and increase awareness on sustainable agricultural practices.

Algeria shared its experience in technology transfer and development of monitoring tools. Noting that land observation satellite systems have been developed by the Algerian Spatial Agency, he reported that it is used for monitoring changes in land use and the state of the environment, as well as for energy and mining planning. Highlighting that satellite data is used by decision makers in formulating national strategies and policies, he underscored that the data is also used by academia, industry and local communities, and that the access to satellite data has recently become free.

Madagascar made a presentation on application of biological and mechanical techniques for land rehabilitation, and highlighted the need to exchange experiences, and seek traditional knowledge and south-south cooperation. South Africa spoke on a people-centered approach to technology access, presenting a case study on farmer eco-technologies in support of traditional knowledge. The International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) presented its research consortium on desertification, drought, poverty and agriculture, which engages rural communities in research through new information technology and radio centers.

In the discussion that followed, China, supported by Morocco, called for: preferential policies in favor of affected countries to access developed countries' technologies at a low cost; university scholarship programmes; and a mechanism for promoting cooperation on most needed technologies to be established by the Secretariat and the CST. Israel informed delegates of the availability of scholarships from his country for courses on dryland management and related technologies. Swaziland suggested the transfer of simple technologies between local communities. The EU recommended using effectively existing scientific programmes, and building up a stronger scientific base for the Convention. The G-77/China reiterated that the



international community should fulfill its commitments to technology transfer at low cost. The CST announced launching at COP-7 of a portal on relevant technologies, and reported on an ongoing discussion on scholarship programmes.

SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL REPORTS: On Monday, 9 May, the plenary considered subregional and regional reports on the implementation of the Convention, as well as outcome of subregional and regional workshops in Africa.

The Permanent Inter-state Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel outlined achievements in combating desertification in the subregion and emphasized resources mobilization for implementation of NAPs, economic instruments, and social aspects of resource management.

UMA introduced its subregional activities, including the establishment of an observatory for monitoring desertification and transboundary projects. COMIFAC highlighted constraints, including financial problems and slow administrative procedures. He said that their activities focus on: raising awareness; making developed country partners aware of the support needed in developing countries; and continuing cooperation with the GM.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), said that all the countries in East Africa had developed NAPs and established mechanisms for their implementation. He said IGAD had difficulties in resource mobilization. The Southern African Development Community, introduced its activities, including: technology transfer at the local level; developing renewable energy technologies; developing protocols for managing natural resources; promoting a strategic development plan including poverty eradication; fighting AIDS; and ensuring food security.

The OSS emphasized information dissemination, and said that they produced a cartographic inventory and computerized cartographic information. He called for resource mobilization for TPNs.

Chair El Ghaouth then called for comments on the reports of subregional workshops. Tunisia and Swaziland said regional cooperation and coordination are important in developing and implementing NAPs and TPNs. The Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands spoke about early warning systems in the Arab region. The African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing called for sharing know-how in monitoring and evaluation of desertification.

SECOND SEGMENT: GLOBAL ISSUES

REVIEW OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION REGARDING THE MOBILIZATION AND USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

In the plenary on Thursday morning, 5 May, Chair El Ghaouth introduced the agenda item on "Review of available information regarding the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions, with a view to enhancing their effectiveness and efficiency towards the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, including information on the activities of the GEF, GM and its Facilitation Committee" (ICCD/CRIC(3)/6). He informed delegates that the consideration of this agenda item would be conducted with the participation of the following panelists: Jim Carruthers, Chair of the Facilitation Committee (FC) of the GM; Moctar Touré, GEF; Christophe Crépin, the World Bank; Philip Dobie, UNDP; Anna Tengberg,

UNEP/GEF; and Christian Mersmann, GM. The panel discussion was moderated by Octavio Pérez Pardo (Argentina).

In his opening remarks, Pardo stressed the need for a mechanism to assess effectiveness of financing activities and for multilateral agencies to channel funding to developing countries through bilateral donors.

Carruthers introduced the work of the FC. He said it is now bearing fruit and is useful in sharing information and facilitating partnerships. He said that the FC is also facing many challenges and is going through an exercise of identifying lessons learned. He stressed the need to strengthen its self-evaluation and to enhance its role at the regional level on strategic issues, noting that International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), as the host institution for GM, has provided substantial resources to projects under the work plan.

Toure made a presentation on partnership building for synergetic implementation of the Convention. He highlighted the principles for partnership in SLM, including a country-based and a holistic approach into sustainable development programmes, such as PRSPs. He noted that the GEF focuses on transboundary management of water-related resources. He outlined lessons learned and challenges, including institutional, cultural, financial, policy and political barriers to partnerships. He also suggested the way forward as: building on and accelerating current trends; institutionalizing sector integration and country-level programming; legitimizing partnership approaches to financing programmes; and shifting to an implementation culture.

Crépin spoke on the World Bank's strategy, highlighting the need for: stronger strategies at the national level; decentralization and devolution at the local level; and result-oriented programmes at the international level. He called for collective efforts, and a clear action plan under a result-oriented and time-bound framework.

Dobie made a presentation on the importance of capacity building, suggesting a focus on delivering "software" (knowledge, skills and information) rather than hardware, and said capacity building provides opportunities for empowerment of local people, especially women. Highlighting that NAPs aim to strengthen capacity, he underlined that within the framework of NAPs countries feel the ownership of their programmes, and local people become active participants in implementation of programmes. Stressing that capacity building is the "glue" that holds investors together, he said that every project should have an explicitly fashioned element on capacity building and financing should move away from the old-fashioned "basket financing" principles.

Tengberg made a presentation on the support to regional-level initiatives. She outlined UNEP's strategic approach to mobilize support for Convention implementation, focusing on: capacity building; environmental assessment and research; development of tools, methodologies and best practices for SLM; and SLM in transboundary ecosystems. Regarding assessment and research initiatives, she noted projects linked to the UNCCD objectives, such as the Millenium Ecosystem Assessment and Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands. She stressed challenges in mobilizing resources at the regional level, including: donor



coordination; harmonization of policy, legal and institutional frameworks; and capacity of regional and subregional organizations to coordinate resource mobilization efforts.

Mersmann spoke on future resource mobilization strategies. Stressing that the term “resource mobilization” should not focus only on financial resources, he said instrumental, human, knowledge and information resources should also be taken into due account. Noting that land degradation and the rehabilitation of natural resources are multifaceted and cross-sectoral issues, he said that the GM welcomed the enhanced role of its FC to build a collective response to address these issues and create “win-win” synergies, noting that the GM, while continuing to sharpen its focus, intends to engage in strategic initiatives with institutions and organizations which “traditionally” have not been part of the UNCCD implementation, as well as the private sector. In this regard, he said, the GM will explore emerging initiatives such as the Donor Platform for Rural Development, the Landscape Restoration Partnership, and the initiative “Tomorrow’s Trade” for sustainable livelihoods through trade and improved market access. He emphasized the importance of the commitment of donors to improve aid effectiveness by aligning their policies, and mainstreaming the UNCCD objectives into national development agendas. He also called for an increase in the allocation for OP 15 in the next replenishment.

In the discussion that followed, Lebanon, on behalf of Asia, supported by many developing countries, underscored problems in securing external financial assistance through partnerships with the private sector. St. Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of GRULAC, called for a study by the Secretariat and GM to quantify bilateral assistance directly channelled to implement the Convention. Several delegates requested assistance for those countries still completing their NAPs. Italy, on behalf of the Northern Mediterranean countries, recommended integrating land degradation into national priorities in order to benefit from existing funding. Belarus, on behalf of CEE, noted with concern the lack of support from the GM in the region. The G-77/China stressed the need for international donors to revitalize the GM, and for the GM to: focus on financial, rather than human and instrumental resources; respond to national priorities; and inform countries regularly on resource availability. Venezuela called upon developed countries to fulfill their commitments on official development assistance (ODA) and sustainable production and consumption.

On the GEF, the G-77/China, supported by many, reiterated the need to: devote equal importance to all three Rio conventions in the fourth replenishment; devote more resources to OP 15; and prioritize projects related to UNCCD action programmes within OP15. The Asian Group requested that the principle of equitable distribution be applied across the UNCCD regional implementation annexes, and that reporting on the utilization of GEF OP 15 should be undertaken within the framework of the Convention. GRULAC called for clarifying the OP 15 terms of reference and for ensuring the central role of the COP in policy formulation on financing the convention implementation. Delegates requested to include these considerations in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under discussion

between the GEF and the UNCCD. The GEF noted the need for better informing countries on GEF procedures and on the possible content of the MOU.

Iran praised the work done by GM. Swaziland commented that most of the panel’s presentations did not adequately stress the importance of capacity building. Guinea-Bissau expressed concerns that development of NAPs in many countries has been blocked by lack of financial resources. The Gambia noted lack of financial resources on NAP implementation. NGO representatives from the Caribbean complained that projects are approved because of well-written project proposals, rather than their importance. Other NGO representatives said CSOs can play an important role in the implementation of the Convention. They urged international organizations and donors to support NGO’s participation and contribution.

CONSIDERATION OF WAYS AND MEANS OF PROMOTING KNOW-HOW AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER:

On Monday, 9 May, the plenary considered the agenda item on “Consideration of the ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of droughts, as well as a of promoting experiences sharing and information exchange among parties and interested institutions and organizations” (ICCD/CRIC(3)/7). In his presentation, CST Chair Riccardo Valentini highlighted the gap in transfer of technology and know-how at the local level, and called for further gap analysis. He also underlined the importance of new initiatives on private-public partnership and the involvement of the civil society in transfer of technology and know-how, and stressed the need for financial resources.

Thailand, on behalf of Asia, noted that transfer of technology is expensive and many developing countries in Asia do not have adequate financial resources. He said, besides the promotion of modern technologies, traditional knowledge should be promoted and disseminated. He recommended focusing on, *inter alia*: measures for prevention of land degradation and improvement of soil productivity; promoting exchange of information and knowledge; establishing early warning systems; and developing regional capacity-building programmes. He also called upon international institutions to facilitate technical cooperation through south-south cooperation.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of GRULAC, said traditional and indigenous knowledge has been compiled and used for promoting sustainable development, emphasizing that adaptation of traditional knowledge to current production conditions in drylands has contributed to an enhanced livelihoods. Noting that issues of technology transfer have been consolidated in several TPNs, he stressed the lack of infrastructure for information exchange and financial constraints for technology transfer.

Spain, on behalf of North Mediterranean countries, prioritized: promotion of scientific cooperation, training and capacity building; and documentation of information and research results. She also emphasized that access to technology and knowledge depends on the status of the implementation of the Convention and on the availability of financial resources.



Slovakia, on behalf of CEE, said land degradation due to human activities is a serious problem in the region. He said although data and the research potential are available, there is a need for: awareness raising at all levels; promotion of scientific cooperation and exchange of information; close cooperation and partnership between the Annex IV and V countries; and mobilization of financial resources for affected countries.

Guinea-Bissau emphasized involving the civil society and private sector in technology transfer. Guinea drew attention to problems faced by research institutions in his country, including lack of human and financial resources and poor information sharing at the national level. He called for support in strengthening national capacities, especially in creating inventories on traditional knowledge and developing indicators. Swaziland stressed the importance of promoting exchange of knowledge and experiences, sensitizing decision-makers, and recognizing the role of communities.

ICARDA outlined its collaboration with national research centers and local communities. The CST Chair made a plea to donors to fund research programmes helpful for UNCCD implementation, and emphasized north-south cooperation at the level of small enterprises through micro-credit schemes.

CONSIDERATION OF WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AS WELL AS QUALITY AND FORMAT OF REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COP: On Monday, 9 May, the plenary considered this agenda item (ICCD/CRIC(3)/8). In introducing this item, the Secretariat suggested, as a recommendation to COP-7, to establish an *ad hoc* working group. The US proposed considering the issue together with that on the implementation of the Convention, calling for written submissions from countries before COP-7. This proposal was accepted by the Chair.

CONSIDERATION OF NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO THE ELABORATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING REVIEW OF THE ENHANCED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE CONVENTION: On Monday, 9 May, the plenary considered this agenda item (ICCD/CRIC(3)/5). The Secretariat recommended that strategic action plans be conducted by national decision-makers, due priority be given to desertification in cooperation policies, and budgetary measures be adopted at the country level.

Guinea-Bissau noted that priority setting at the national level is done together with international partners, and lamented the lack of reporting on illegal exploitation of animal and forest resources. Swaziland advocated the adoption of indicators and, together with the Gambia, for the review of the existing help guide. Belgium reiterated the need for documentation of best practices, with the Chair noting that this will be reflected in CRIC-3 report.

In the afternoon, delegates continued consideration of this agenda item with three panel discussions.

Sustainable Use and Management of Rangelands: The panel discussion on sustainable use and management of rangelands was moderated by Abdesslem Kallala (UMA), and included: Annemarie Watt (Australia), Wilfredo Alfaro Catalán (Chile), Kubanychbek Kulov (Kyrgyzstan), and Maryan

Niamir-Fuller (UNDP). The panel also included panelists invited in their personal capacities: Ali Akbari (Iran), Mohamad Aly Ag Hamana (Mali), and Josephine Kishaypi (Tanzania).

Watt shared experiences with sustainable management of rangelands in Australia. Emphasizing that improving conservation of and managing access to water is a key area, she highlighted several measures for water conservation in rangelands. She also underlined measures for removing perverse incentives for poor land management, and assisting pastoralists to diversify their farming practices to promote economic, environmental and social sustainability in the rangelands through investment mechanisms.

Alfaro Catalán outlined legislative measures for sustainable management of pasturelands in Chile. Noting that several legislative instruments for combating desertification have been implemented, he highlighted the Supreme Decree on sustainable management of rangelands. He also noted that substantial investment has been made in rehabilitation of degraded land, and called for international support.

Kulov spoke on traditional livestock raising in his country, highlighting its contribution to the national economy and exports. He said measures for sustainable management of pasturelands should take into consideration: delivery of livestock products to markets; inter-generational transfer of traditional knowledge; and the possibility of long-term leasing of pasture lands.

Niamir-Fuller spoke on pastoralism and livestock mobility. Emphasizing that pastoralism and livestock mobility provides alternative land use and livelihood options, she said mobility of livestock presents a sophisticated adaptation to the challenges of a harsh environment. She identified four fundamental areas for the development of appropriate policies and legal instruments for sustainable management of rangelands, including: access rights to land and its resources; empowerment of pastoralists and CBOs; economics and markets; and the promotion of appropriate services to pastoralists.

Akbari spoke on use of rangelands and pastoralism in Iran, recommending involving nomads in decision-making on resource management, enforcing legal rights, and providing mobile health and education services to nomads. He stressed the need for a holistic approach and exchange of experiences and information.

Hamana reported on pastoralism in Mali, highlighting livestock raising as a major source of income in his country. He said there is a need for, *inter alia*: appropriate legislation; recognition of the pressure of agriculture on pastoralism; facilitating information exchange both at the grassroots and decision-making levels.

Kishaypi presented a case study on pastureland management in the Maasai community in Tanzania, and highlighted that pastoralism is a sophisticated adaptation to challenges and risks. She underlined that changes in land use patterns affect the pastoralism.

Kallala, the moderator, stressed the importance of the relationship between desertification and over-grazing, increasing population, water management, and new pastoral methods supplanting traditional ones. Guatemala drew attention to agroforestry, with Kallala suggesting it as a topic for a future session. France and Morocco emphasized the problems linked to different rights of access to rangelands, i.e. common ownership



versus privatization, and UNDP proposed to document best practices in the management of both privately- and commonly-owned rangelands. Uganda expressed concern about limited investment and research in rangeland management, and conflicts linked to traditional pastoral practices. Algeria highlighted the need for governments to be involved in sustainable livestock management through rural development programmes. Uganda, Morocco, Syria and Mozambique underscored the cultural dimension of pastoralism, with Syria stressing the need for considering education in pastoral areas. Tanzania suggested that strategic approaches to rangeland management take into account population growth, food security, subsistence agriculture and climate change. Tunisia encouraged complementarity between agriculture and pastoralism, and between rangelands management and afforestation. Kallala recommended developing drought preparedness plans, with Australia highlighting the possibility of using indigenous knowledge. UNDP proposed considering the right to sustainable livelihoods of pastoralists.

Launching Reforestation/Afforestation Programmes and Intensification of Soil Conservation Programmes: The panel discussion on launching reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensification of soil conservation programmes was moderated by CST Chair Valentini, and included the following panelists: José Miguel Leiva Pérez (Guatemala); Vesa Johannes Kaarakka (Finland); Michael Andrew (Saint Lucia); Hongbo Ju (China); and Richard Thomas (ICARDA).

Valentini stressed the close link between desertification and deforestation, noting that the general environmental condition is aggravating land degradation. He said that increase in forest area is crucial to the implementation of the Convention.

Leiva Pérez said that reforestation should not only be viewed as production of services, but also as an instrument in combating desertification and complying with requirements for controlling greenhouse gases under the UNFCCC. He emphasized the role of legislation.

Kaarakka discussed: the importance of afforestation in managing natural forest resources; the role of forest products and services by trees and forests in desertification; the need for a conducive policy environment in promoting reforestation; and the need for participation by all stakeholders in afforestation. He emphasized that promotion of fair trade is an important marketing tool in promoting afforestation.

Andrew said that desertification not only affects soil production but also water basins. He highlighted the following tools for SLM: reforestation programmes, afforestation programmes, agro-system programmes, organic farming, and conservation farming.

Ju outlined China's reforestation efforts, both in increasing forest coverage and in promoting forest products and services, particularly in fighting dust and sand storms, highlighting the importance of establishing ecosystems in ensuring protection of forests.

Thomas, speaking about projects in Africa on building livelihoods and saving lands, focused on: managing and restoring ecosystem functions; conducting policy and institutional analysis; sharing knowledge and information; and diversifying systems and livelihoods. He noted the shortcomings of these projects, including no link to NAPs or TPNs and lack of involvement of UNCCD focal points.

Desertification Monitoring and Assessment: The panel discussion on desertification monitoring and assessment was moderated by Ajai (India), and conducted with participation of the following panelists: María Nery Urquiza Rodríguez (Cuba); Alhassane Adama Diallo (Burkina Faso); Wadid Erian (Syria); Uriel Safriel (Israel); Claude Heimo (Switzerland); Larry L. Tieszen (US); and Hongbo Ju (China).

In her presentation, Rodriguez highlighted: multi-disciplinary databases to consider social, economic and environmental conditions in rural areas; training in the use of relevant technologies; and integration of risk assessments, environmental impact assessments and protected areas management into monitoring and assessment systems.

Safriel shared experiences of classifying drylands according to their ecological factors, as well as to different impacts of human activities. Noting the mutual exacerbation of desertification and climate change, he prioritized preventing desertification and mitigating climate change.

Erian reported on the assessment and monitoring of changes in the vegetation of the Arab region, through remote sensing and satellite image analysis, in order to identify hot spots and draw early warning systems.

Ju made a presentation on desertification and monitoring, using satellite data and computer modeling. He illustrated several regional maps of desertification in some subregions of Asia. He offered assistance in providing technical expertise to other countries.

Diallo outlined activities of the International Commission against Desertification in the Sahel in West Africa, which include, *inter alia*: compilation of biophysical and socioeconomic data on land degradation; institutional coordination; and capacity building.

Heimo made a presentation on multi-sensor, multi-scale and multi-temporal monitoring of desertification, using satellite data and computer modeling. He said although satellite technologies are available, the use of earth observation remains still limited due to lack of technical understanding and high cost of technologies.

Tieszen made a presentation on desertification monitoring using high resolution satellite imagery. He highlighted: analyses of land use and cover; analysis of carbon loss; and carbon biogeochemical simulation and modeling. He said the use of remote sensing and computer modeling allows monitoring of desertification, as well as assessment of interrelations between land degradation, climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

In the subsequent discussion, delegates exchanged views in accessing to monitoring technologies and sharing satellite data and images.

GLOBAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES: On Tuesday, 10 May, the plenary conducted two global interactive dialogues.

Land Degradation/Desertification and their Impact on Migration and Conflicts: The dialogue on land degradation/desertification and their impact on migration and conflicts was chaired by Hans Günter Brauch (Germany), and conducted with participation of the following panelists: Sisir Ratho (India), Janos Bogardi (UNU), Issa Martin Bikienga (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel); Jose L. Rubio (Spain); Ursula Oswald (Mexico), and Marc Baltes (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)).



Oswald presented results of research on environmental security. Her major points were:

- evidence is emerging for a correlation between poverty, desertification and conflicts of various kinds in arid and semi-arid areas;
- desertification is a contributor to environmental degradation, scarcity and stress;
- drought is a cause of famine, migration, hunger revolts, domestic crises and violent conflicts;
- human-induced desertification may counteract any ameliorating effect of climate change on most deserts unless appropriate management actions are taken; and
- understanding the complex causal relationship between environmental degradation, migration and conflicts remains a task for theory-oriented and empirical research that at some stage may offer lessons for preventive policy action.

Rubio said that massive migration from Latin America and the Caribbean to Europe has accelerated in recent years due to great income disparity in the two regions, noting that excess migration might cause social and economic problems. He stressed the need to develop relevant national policies, raise public awareness, and promote regional cooperation.

Bogardi suggest that migration be recognized not only as a right of people, but also a feature of human development. He said, however, that governments are less and less prepared to absorb migrants, and more efforts should be made in this area. He spoke about the link between globalization and migration, noting that migration can strengthen globalization, and called for early action to deal with land degradation, which will not only cause soil erosion but also affect crucial resources.

Ratho noted that many migrants come from rural areas, and live on agriculture. They are often forced to migrate due to pressures from such land-related issues as industrialization and low productivity of land. He shared his country's experiences in managing land degradation and migration through legislation and other policies, including housing and social security.

Bikienga said that land degradation is the greatest threat to the South Sahel and West Africa, which contributes to poverty. He suggested the following guidelines and measures to solve the problem: promoting human resource training for managing land degradation; conducting dialogues to harmonize efforts at subregional levels; and managing transboundary resources through SRAPs.

Baltes noted that environmental change, particularly land degradation, directly links to conflicts. He said that OSCE is cooperating with UNEP and UNDP on an Environment and Security Initiative, to provide coherence for environment and security, including capacity building programmes.

In the ensuing discussion, Bosnia and Herzegovina drew attention to land contamination by uranium and explosives due to recent war activities in his country. Algeria and Cuba emphasized historical and political dimensions and causes of migration, taking into account the overexploitation of natural resources in former colonial countries. Highlighting the links between climate change and desertification, Uzbekistan said both positive and negative impacts of climate change on land productivity should be considered. Regarding migration, Guinea suggested more attention be given to problems faced by populations of

host countries and the links between human and environmental security. Highlighting links between desertification/deforestation and military security, Somalia said trading of charcoal for arms is a serious problem in his country. He also said, in addition to human-induced land degradation, natural disasters, in particular consecutive droughts, exacerbate land erosion. Stressing that people often migrate to seek water, Guinea-Bissau asked whether international human rights laws can deal with transboundary water problems.

The International Central Asian Biodiversity Institute suggested that increased attention be given to problems in tackling illegal migration in migrant transit countries. The Drylands Coordination Group Sudan drew attention to the relationship between drought and war, in particular conflicts between the settled population and nomad farmers. Israel drew attention to the reduction in land productivity as a cause of migration. Syria asked whether measures, or a resolution, on migration and displacement could be adopted. Oswald recommended the use of natural processes and traditional knowledge rather than chemical fertilizers in land rehabilitation. Bikienga stressed that nomadic pastoralism is usually environmentally sound. Ratho called for the legal recognition of migrants' traditional rights on natural resources. Brauch suggested gathering more data on the causes of migration combining the perspectives of social and environmental science.

Mainstreaming NAPs and their Contribution to Poverty Reduction: The dialogue on mainstreaming NAPs and their contribution to poverty reduction was moderated by Philip Mikos (European Community), and conducted with participation of the following panelists: Delphine Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso), Steven Muwaya (Uganda), José Roberto de Lima (Brazil), Pham Minh Thoa (Viet Nam), Anneke Trux (Germany), and Leonard Berry (in his personal capacity).

Mikos reported on the EC's efforts in mainstreaming SLM in development cooperation, through environmental impact and strategic assessments, and environmental country profiles, particularly in the areas of rural development, food security and agricultural reforms.

Berry presented the document on mainstreaming NAPs and on their contribution to overall poverty eradication (ICCD/CRIC(3)/Misc.1), encouraging: a long-term, cross-sectoral approach to combine improvement of rural economies and fight against desertification; an increased involvement of focal points in national decision-making; a cost assessment of land degradation; and an analysis of the distribution of poverty and desertification at the national level.

Ouedraogo made a presentation on successful mainstreaming NAPs through the preparation of a road map, to operationalize, gather political support for, and integrate the NAP into national strategies. She highlighted that the road map was based on an evaluation of existing projects and their links with desertification concerns, and an estimate of the financial needs to combat desertification in the long term. She said that this allowed Burkina Faso to benefit from the GEF partnership pilot project and be involved in TerrAfrica, which is a results-oriented and multi-partner platform to channel financial and non-financial resources for SLM into sub-Saharan Africa with funding from the World Bank and the GEF.



Muwaya made a presentation on mainstreaming NAPs into poverty eradication programmes in Uganda. He highlighted that the NAP has been mainstreamed into the Poverty Eradication Action Plan/PRSP, which serves as a framework programme, and noted that a Multi-disciplinary Taskforce has been established. Noting that mainstreaming requires awareness raising, sensitizing decision makers, and involving civil society, he also stressed that the ownership and implementation of NAPs should be broadened, all sectors should be involved, and there should be a legal and institutional framework to support NAP implementation.

De Lima outlined mainstreaming NAPs into national poverty eradication programmes in Brazil. Underscoring that the NAP serves as guidance and a conceptual framework at the federal level, he drew attention to the integration of the NAP into various programmes such as the “1 million water tank” programme and the “Teacher training” programme.

Toha shared with delegates lessons learned from her country’s implementation of its NAP, outlining the main obstacles in this regard, including: limited government resources; lack of coordination among projects; lack of human resources; and inflexibility of operational mechanisms and procedures of donors and their governments.

Trux spoke about mutual supportiveness of the Convention’s partnership building and the mainstreaming processes for NAPs. She said that mainstreaming NAPs involves the integration of NAPs into public awareness, national development, research, budget, and policies, and that it also linked with international development assistance framework.

In the discussions that followed, the US encouraged linking mainstreaming NAPs with the MDGs. Mali underscored the need for coherence between NAPs and PRSPs. Botswana said that the private sector should also be involved in the mainstreaming process, while Uganda said that local communities and authorities should have a key role to play. Morocco said that social and economic situations should be taken into account in mainstreaming NAPs.

CRIC-3 RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

On Tuesday afternoon, 10 May, Chair El Ghaouth adjourned the plenary and asked delegates to meet in informal consultations to consider the draft report of the meeting, focusing on its recommendations and conclusions. Noting that the recommendations will be submitted to COP-7 for information and decisions thereon, he stressed that the CRIC is a technical body and is not bound to make decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW FOR AFRICA: Regarding a paragraph on boosting the participatory approach through existing mechanisms, the EU suggested adding a reference to gender specific approaches.

On the section on legislative and institutional frameworks, the EU, opposed by G-77/China, suggested deleting “initial clarification” from the paragraph on reform measures and replacing it with “ongoing reforms”. He also proposed deleting the text stressing that cooperation agencies’ intervention outside the logical framework of support to the NAP does not facilitate greater coherence, and suggested replacing it with a new one, which highlights the greater coherence through integration of a full range of interventions on SLM.

On the section on resource mobilization, Switzerland proposed adding a reference to investments for combating land degradation and reducing poverty outside the formal framework of the UNCCD. On a paragraph on integrating the UNCCD into coordination systems, the EU suggested deleting a reference to the *chef de file* arrangement, and said that the references to TerrAfrica should mention that the programme is not yet operational.

On synergies between the three Rio conventions, the EU proposed stressing that a shared approach both at the programme and project level would strengthen coherence of both national and international frameworks for natural resources management. On technology transfer, the EU proposed deletion of a reference to technical progress in genetically engineered drought resistant species. On the enhancement and dissemination of traditional knowledge, the G-77/China proposed adding text on costing of traditional knowledge. Both amendments were accepted by delegates.

Delegates then debated the text for recommendations and concrete conclusions on further steps in the implementation of the Convention in Africa.

On participatory processes, the EU proposed adding text calling for the development of country specific indicators to monitor and evaluate participation of civil society actors, and for such actors to be included in decision-making bodies and involved regularly in NAP decision-making processes and implementation. He also proposed new text on involvement of vulnerable and marginalized groups in combating desertification and on long-term capacity building of local communities.

The G-77/China proposed a new sentence stating that support should be increased to those African countries that have presented their reports to assist them in continuing to promote participatory approaches in these countries. The EU proposed a new paragraph, noting that success of implementation of the Convention will not only be dependent on project investment, but also on ownership of projects. The G-77/China proposed new text calling for financial support to African countries that have not elaborated their NAPs. In a paragraph on insertion of land degradation combating measures in specific mechanisms, delegates agreed to delete a reference to the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol.

The informal consultation on Tuesday resumed at 11:00 pm and went into early morning of Wednesday, 11 May. During the late night session, the debate focused on inclusion of evaluation of ecosystems services in monitoring and assessment of African drylands.

The informal consultation resumed on Wednesday afternoon, 11 May. Delegates agreed to replace the term “ecosystem services” with “ecosystem protection, rehabilitation and restoration in drylands” in the text.

Final Recommendations and Conclusions on Implementation of the Convention in Africa: The conclusions and recommendations are drawn from the review of African reports, and are a summary compilation of ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by various delegations during the CRIC-3. They are structured according to the thematic topics under review of implementation on Africa.



On participatory processes, CRIC-3 recommends that, *inter alia*:

- civil society activities relating to Convention implementation should be supported at all levels by appropriate resources and support;
- local ownership in SLM in Africa should be enhanced by genuine participatory approaches at all stages of the project cycle and by documenting ongoing learning processes;
- country-specific indicators for participation should be developed and used; and
- halting land degradation and promoting environmental rehabilitation should involve vulnerable and marginalized groups by creating opportunities for alternative income-generating activities.

On the legislative and institutional framework and arrangements, CRIC-3 emphasizes that further capacity building is urgently required in Africa to foster the improvement and impact of legislative frameworks. CRIC-3 recommends that mechanisms for conflict resolution should be developed at the national, regional and subregional levels to limit the impact of such conflicts on the environment and minimize the push factors of forced resettlement and migration.

On resource mobilization and coordination, CRIC-3 recommends that:

- financial support should be made available to African affected country Parties that have not yet elaborated their NAPs;
- the efforts to raise the level of domestic financial resources and attract investments for combating desertification must promote activities that are financially profitable and offer incentives for private sector participation;
- SLM should be integrated into national, district-level and donor plans and budgets and that this requires capacity building in project planning and negotiation skills; and
- to improve the management of cross-border natural resources requires human and financial resources.

CRIC-3 emphasizes that: successful implementation of the Convention is dependent not only on project investments, but also on investments in human resources through capacity building; and targeted research projects focused on land degradation and poverty eradication should be given due consideration in NAPs, SRAPs and within the framework of NEPAD.

On linkages and synergies, CRIC-3 recommends that the African GEF national focal points should be in a position to more actively encourage synergies between the Rio conventions and other environmental treaties, and to facilitate access by NAP-related projects to funding under GEF OP 15. It is also emphasized that country-driven synergy workshops should include a training component and support a common approach among the Rio conventions with respect to the thematic area in the UNCCD context.

On rehabilitation of degraded land and early warning systems, CRIC-3 recommends enhancing the continuity and coherence of activities by favoring a programmatic approach. CRIC-3 also recommends that the sustainability of programmes and projects needs to be secured through better capacity building; incentive frameworks linking conservation with productivity and income

in rural areas should be systematically developed and target local entrepreneurs.

On drought and desertification monitoring and assessment, CRIC-3 recommends that:

- options for a more integrated monitoring and assessment of African drylands should include assessment of benefits derived from ecosystems for human well-being and economic activities, exploitation and dissemination of best practices, and scenarios for reducing vulnerability and risks; and
- environmental systems must increase the coping capacity and resilience of vulnerable affected country Parties to natural disaster and promote related approaches to integrate risk reduction into the preventive strategies and programmes.

On access to technology, knowledge and know-how, CRIC-3 recommends that a compendium of existing benchmarking approaches for SLM and environment information systems should assist African countries in establishing guidelines and selecting the basis on the standardization of benchmarks. CRIC-3 emphasizes enhancing north-south cooperation and providing support to south-south cooperation.

IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL: On resource mobilization, countries agreed to add a reference to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. On a paragraph stressing the need for donors to simplify procedures on access to funding for NAPs, India proposed adding “in an equitable manner,” which was agreed upon. The EU requested deletion of the reference to the emerging partnership of the EU in the context of TerrAfrica. He also suggested text highlighting that the GEF country pilot partnership and TerrAfrica need a link to UNCCD implementation, and that these initiatives, as well as multilateral and bilateral cooperation, should be harmonized within national development strategies. With minor amendments, these suggestions were accepted. The G-77/China proposed a new paragraph suggesting consideration of: the involvement of UNCCD’s NFPs in the elaboration of projects submitted to GEF; transparency and simplification of procedures; and replenishment and capacity building for projects under OP 15.

On references to ecosystem services in the sections on resource mobilization and on technology transfer, India, supported by the G-77/China, Cuba and Argentina, and opposed by the EU, requested their deletion, stressing the lack of consensus on the meaning of the expression in the framework of the CBD. Israel recalled that the term has been taken from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, to underline the consideration of the economic and social services of ecosystems towards dryland development.

On a general point, Australia suggested text in the chapeau of the report, highlighting its non-negotiated nature, with the US proposing language from CRIC-1 report defining it “a summary compilation of ideas and suggestions during CRIC”. The G-77/China called for inclusion of all suggestions made at CRIC-3 in the report. Delegates could not agree on the above proposals and deferred discussion to a later stage.

The US suggested deletion of a paragraph on the GEF’s support for preparation of African reports and another on establishment of an *ad hoc* working group to review selected national reports before COP-8. The G-77/China objected, and



suggested that COP-7 take a decision with a view to permitting the Secretariat to facilitate undertaking a study, aiming at consolidating procedures for communication of information including a streamlined process and adjusted tools for review of implementation.

On technology transfer, the G-77/China proposed new text calling for more work from developed countries to formulate preferential policies to encourage public and private sectors to technology transfer to developing countries at a lower price.

On financing Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, Canada proposed, and delegates agreed, deleting a reference to COP-9 from a paragraph on the impact of the CRIC and the country-level partnership arrangement. On the same paragraph, the EU suggested an amendment to the reference to a lead donor approach (*chef de file*). Compromise language proposed by Brazil was agreed. Norway proposed, and delegates agreed, to delete the paragraph, suggesting that the COP may wish to mandate an in-depth evaluation of the implementation process focusing on such issues as the external and internal flow of resources embarked for the implementation of the convention.

The informal consultations on Tuesday resumed at 11:00 pm and went into the early morning of Wednesday, 11 May. During the late night session, the debate focused on review of poverty and environmental vulnerability and use of investment and economic incentives to cope with land degradation.

On adjustment to the elaboration process and implementation of action programmes, delegates also agreed on text on synergies between NAPs and national forest programmes in drylands or similar policy frameworks. On financing the Convention, participants agreed to add a reference to other countries covered by regional implementation annexes than Africa in the recommendation on financial support for completion of NAPs by 2005. A recommendation that developing countries should employ innovative means of resource mobilization was withdrawn.

The informal consultations resumed on Wednesday afternoon, 11 May. Participants also agreed to call the last section of the report "poverty and environmental vulnerability" and stressed the interdependency of the two and the need to keep them under review.

Final Recommendations and Conclusions on the Implementation of the Convention at the Global Level: On the review process and procedures for communication of information, CRIC-3 recommends that:

- GEF and its implementing agencies should be asked to consider providing full financing for the next phase of the CRIC reporting cycle for annexes other than Africa;
- a revised version of the Help Guide should focus on, *inter alia*, lessons learned, positive impacts of action taken, ways to evaluate approaches and to step up best practices;
- the COP may invite the CST to improve the reliability of quantitative data in, and establish formats for biophysical and socioeconomic indicators for country profiles;
- national country reports should, *inter alia*: update and format data to ensure comparability of results; include maps of hot spots; and focus on trends, benchmarking and lessons learned;
- further elaboration of the items of country profiles should be included in the agenda of COP-7; and

- adequate and predictable funding for national reports should be ensured.

On efficiency and effectiveness of measures in reaching the end-users of natural resources, CRIC-3 recommends that:

- mainstreaming NAPs into national development frameworks should respond to ground-level demands and include local authorities, NGOs and communities, and monitoring should be decentralized;
- methodologies are necessary to identify spatial distribution of poverty;
- NAPS should receive due attention in country cooperation frameworks;
- support to mobile pastoralism in drylands should be prioritized; and
- pastoralism and sustainable use of rangelands should be kept under review by the COP and subsidiary bodies.

On experience sharing and information exchange, CRIC-3 recommends that CRIC-5 consider through a panel review the three remaining strategic areas for action of the Bonn Declaration: sustainable land use management, development of sustainable agriculture and ranching systems, and development of new and renewable energy sources. CRIC-3 also concludes that the COP may consider developing a matrix of policy options and practical measures to monitor progress in the strategic areas of the Bonn Declaration.

On implementation and necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and implementation of action programmes, CRIC-3 recommends that: NAPs should include strategies to reduce the causes of environmental migration and resettlement and mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and settlement; the macro-level legislative framework for the convention implementation must emphasize secure legal regime for poverty reduction and promotion of sustainable land use practices; and the COP could ask for a review or evaluation of the impact of land degradation on biodiversity loss and climate change.

On promoting technology transfer, CRIC-3 recommends that:

- the thematic programme networks of regional action programmes should be provided with adequate resources;
- public-private and private-private partnership should be emphasized for the benefit of small-scale enterprises, with the support of predictable financing mechanisms;
- more work is needed by developed countries to formulate preferential policies to encourage technology transfer to developing countries;
- donor support for research should be more clearly aligned with UNCCD objectives; and
- fellowship programmes on land degradation and desertification should be supported.

On financing Convention implementation, CRIC-3 recommends that:

- donors should coordinate their country-level response, including by using a lead donor approach (*chef de file*) in consultation with recipient countries;
- the GEF country pilot partnership should be supported by co-financing arrangements in the context of national development strategies;
- the GM should identify points of entry into processes and modalities of international funding for specific countries; and



- affected developing countries and other countries covered by regional implementation annexes, other than Africa, should be financially supported to finalize their NAPs by the end of 2005.

On political commitment and awareness raising, CRIC-3 recommends that: with regards to the IYDD, action is required at all levels to promote SLM in the UNCCD context, and Parties are invited to report at COP-8; and the 2005 Millennium Review Summit should underline the global magnitude of SLM and desertification in the context of MDG 7 (environmental sustainability) and MDG 1 (eradication of extreme poverty and hunger).

On poverty and environmental vulnerability, CRIC-3 recommends that poverty and environmental vulnerability are closely interdependent, and should be kept under review; and that multidisciplinary analysis and trans-disciplinary research must set up conditions for an early warning system for humanitarian crises.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Tuesday afternoon, 10 May, Kenya, as the host government for COP-7, reported on the preparations for COP-7. He announced that a high-level segment would be organized, and urged delegations to send high-level officials to the meeting, with a view to providing opportunities to improve the implementation of the Convention.

On Wednesday afternoon, 11 May, Executive Secretary Diallo made a presentation on the declaration of 2006 as the "International Year of Deserts and Desertification," as adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 58/211. He said that the IYDD presents an enhanced opportunity to strengthen the visibility and importance of dryland issues in the international environmental agenda. He also said that in celebrating the IYDD, a strategy paper to explore viable options and identify activities will be developed in collaboration with other UN and international organizations. He underscored that the celebration will help to achieve: long-term oriented implementation of the Convention; raising awareness on desertification; networking with all the stakeholders; and dissemination of information. Executive Secretary Diallo unveiled the logo for IYDD.

Chair El Ghaouth presented the draft report with amendments agreed upon during the informal consultations to the closing plenary on Wednesday afternoon (ICCD/CRIC(3)/L.1). Noting that CRIC will meet again during COP-7, he urged delegates to adopt the report, along with its recommendations and conclusions, without any further debate. The report was adopted.

In his closing remarks, Executive Secretary Diallo thanked delegates for the quality of debates and conclusions reached at the meeting. He said that CRIC-3 was marked by the high level of exchange of information on implementation of the Convention and helped drawing lessons learned and improving the programme of actions in the future. Emphasizing the importance of human resources, adequate funding and knowledge to fight desertification, he called for action in the field for the implementation of the Convention.

Chair El Ghaouth thanked everyone for their support. He gavelled the meeting to a close at 6:45 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CRIC-3

CRIC-3 participants left Bundeshaus on Wednesday, 11 May, with mixed feelings. On the one hand, many viewed the session as a meaningful and interesting exercise, which evaluated the implementation of the Convention, focused on Africa, and identified the main issues to be addressed and actions to be taken in the future, particularly at COP-7. The review of the implementation of the Convention in Africa indicated that African countries have made progress, especially in the areas of awareness raising, establishment or strengthening of institutions, and the development of national action programmes (NAPs). On the other hand, CRIC-3 demonstrated that the UNCCD was still struggling and its implementation is still not on track after entering into force nearly nine years ago, mainly due to the lack of financial resources. Burdened with numerous long presentations, CRIC-3 did not allow much time for participants to engage in more in-depth dialogues, which could have enabled the meeting to achieve better results. If COP-6 in 2003 indeed started a transition from awareness raising to implementation, then CRIC-3 could be considered as a small step forward in this yet incomplete transition.

FROM AWARENESS RAISING TO IMPLEMENTATION

The UNCCD has often been referred to as the poor sister among the three Rio conventions. Affected developing countries have been appealing to the developed countries to increase their financial support since the first day of the negotiation of the Convention in 1993. The fact that CRIC-3 had been postponed due to funding constraints has not been lost on anyone. Financial resources at the national level are scarce both in developed and developing countries because desertification is still not seen as a priority on national agendas, and consequently, does not benefit from targeted budgets. Developed countries have overcome this problem, at least partly, by integrating desertification activities into other "hot topics" on national environmental agendas, such as climate change and biodiversity. Developing countries, however, have had difficulty in finding national funding, particularly because land degradation is not an appealing issue to private investors. Consequently, to them partnership building seems just a hypothetical option. International funding from developed country Parties was also considered meager, with the EU repeatedly calling for mainstreaming NAPs into national development strategies as the only effective guidance to bilateral and multilateral donors. The adoption of participatory approaches to implementation and mainstreaming NAPs has become another prerequisite for accessing to international funding.

The establishment of GEF Operational Programme 15 (OP 15), as a financial mechanism for Convention implementation, is welcomed by all countries, but at the same time it is also the root of controversy. During the current replenishment, developing countries noted with concern that the UNCCD is still not a GEF priority as compared to the other two Rio conventions, and that funds allocated to OP 15 are insufficient and not directly linked to the UNCCD implementation projects. Besides the obvious call at CRIC-3 for the fourth GEF replenishment to increase the allocation of funding to OP 15, contention surrounded the future conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding with the GEF on the Convention. With the draft MOU to be discussed at COP-7,



and so much confusion as to its potential in bringing UNCCD to an equal footing with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, within the context of funding from GEF, this will be definitely one of the more challenging issues in Nairobi.

Another facet of the resource mobilization debate was the effectiveness of the Global Mechanism (GM), which was established as an instrument to facilitate the rationalization of resource allocation and mobilization of additional resources. Many were surprised to hear about a new focus on “instrumental” resources in addition to “financial” ones in the work of the GM. Some countries complained that it has not been successful in fulfilling its mandate, with the G-77/China calling for increased transparency and efficiency in its operations. The EU urged the GM and the UNCCD Secretariat to better define their respective roles and responsibilities, and work more closely for the attainment of the UNCCD goals.

Still on resource mobilization, the future operations of TerrAfrica and its possible interactions with GEF and the GM were not clear to many delegates. TerrAfrica is an initiative, at an early stage of its development, of the Secretariat and the World Bank to provide a “flexible, result-oriented, multi-partner platform to promote a different business model to better channel financial and non-financial resources” to support sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa. The initiative was introduced during a very well-attended side event, and was supposed to be presented in the plenary but, due to the fact that the meeting was running one day late, it never was. The reference to TerrAfrica in the CRIC-3 report, thus, raised many questions among delegates as to when it will become operational and in what ways it will support UNCCD implementation. This could be yet another tempestuous issue at COP-7.

MEETING THE CRIC'S OBJECTIVES?

The objectives of the CRIC, as established by COP-5, were to assist the COP in reviewing the implementation of the Convention in light of experiences gained at the national, regional and international levels to facilitate exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties, to draw conclusions, and to propose to the COP concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention. Did CRIC-3 meet these objectives?

Twenty-three documents were prepared and distributed by the Secretariat at CRIC-3. African country Parties submitted 49 national reports, of which the 48 submitted before the 13 January deadline were synthesized and analyzed by the Committee of Science and Technology (CST) before CRIC-3. As a result of this review, the CST Group of Experts and many delegations noted the need for measurable and comparable indicators and for a stronger scientific base for the convention implementation. After a constructive exchange of experiences on indicators and the use of science, delegates made valuable recommendations at CRIC-3 on this issue.

The session, however, did not fully meet the expectations of many Parties. One reason was limited participation. Both Chair El Ghaouth and Executive Secretary Diallo opened CRIC-3 with a statement on the inadequate and late submission of financial resources to allow broader participation of affected countries and NGOs. It was also noted that many participants were newcomers

to the UNCCD process, thus shading some doubts as to the priority attached by governments to this technical meeting, with the result that the effectiveness of CRIC was hampered by these participants' limited familiarity with the process. On the organizational side, the meeting was overburdened with many, often long, presentations that took up much of the time reserved for interactive dialogues. Some delegates said that the session could have concentrated on analysis and policy recommendations, rather than repeating the content of the reports and other official documents on implementation status and activities. Some participants suggested that future CRIC sessions could be shorter and manage time more efficiently. From a substantial point of view, participants remarked that some important issues, such as water and biodiversity, were not adequately addressed. These weaknesses prevented the meeting from having the in-depth and full exchange of views necessary to make more operational recommendations to COP-7. If, on the side of the Parties, much still needs to be done in prioritizing desertification at the national and international levels, on the side of the Secretariat still a lot needs to be done for improving its efficiency.

In considering whether CRIC-3 met its objectives, most participants found the exchange of views on implementation in Africa useful, however, they noted the limited effectiveness of the meeting and the lack of adequate discussion on policy recommendations. These impressions of the CRIC's work will be another input to COP-7, which will review the mandate, functions and modalities of operation of CRIC for the first time since its establishment.

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

The recurrent question at CRIC-3 (and throughout the Convention's history) was how to raise the profile of UNCCD and accelerate its implementation? Besides raising awareness, mobilizing resources, strengthening the UNCCD scientific base and prioritizing desertification at the national and international levels, participants to CRIC-3 repeatedly called for the promotion of both north-south and south-south cooperation, and for transfer of modern and traditional technologies.

In addition, new opportunities for the UNCCD are on the horizon. The September 2005 Millennium Review Summit could provide a first-class stage for renewing international commitment to the Convention. Many countries agree that fighting desertification is crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), both in terms of eradicating rural poverty and preventing environmental degradation. To evaluate the outcomes of CRIC-3, one should certainly see how the MDG-related recommendations will turn into a reality.

Another opportunity is the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006, which will focus on environmental, socioeconomic, cultural and scientific elements of hyper-arid areas and drylands. For this, more time lies ahead, allowing for strategic planning, and discussions at COP-7 will certainly focus on how the UNCCD can best seize the momentum for raising the profile of desertification in the crowded environmental arena, attracting more funds, and building strong synergies and linkages with old and new UN partners.



The transition from planning and awareness raising to implementation of the UNCCD has technically been underway for nearly two years. While CRIC-3 attempted to advance this transition a few more steps, the UNCCD still faces a number of crucial challenges. Without increased financial commitments, better organization and improved efficiency, the Convention, its COP and other subsidiary bodies, like the CRIC, will not be able to fully advance the cause of combating desertification and drought so that it can successfully help improving people's lives and the environment in the world's drylands.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WORLD CONGRESS OF THE WORLD

AGRICULTURAL FORUM: This event will take place from 16-18 May 2005, in St. Louis, Missouri, US. Participants will examine issues confronting the agri-foods system and their roles in economic development and human welfare under the theme "The Key to Peace, Security and Growth: Local, Regional and Global Agri-Food Systems." For more information, contact: World Agricultural Forum; tel: +1-314-206-3208; fax: +1-314-206-3222; e-mail: wafstl@stlrca.org; internet: http://www.worldagforum.org/2005_homepage.html

FIFTH UN FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF-5): This meeting will be held from 16-27 May 2005, at UN headquarters in New York. This meeting represents the conclusion of UNFF's five-year mandate. For more information, contact: Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: barsk-rundquist@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests>

22ND SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO

THE UNFCCC: This meeting will be held from 19-27 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany. SB-22 will be preceded by a "Seminar of Government Experts," scheduled for 16-17 May, which will seek to promote an informal exchange of information on actions concerning mitigation and adaptation, and on policies and measures adopted by governments supporting implementation of existing commitments under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: <http://unfccc.int/meetings/sb22/items/3369.php> and <http://unfccc.int/meetings/seminar/items/3410.php>

GEF CONSULTATIONS AND COUNCIL

MEETING: This meeting will take place from 6-10 June 2005, in Washington DC, the US. For more information, contact: GEF Secretariat; tel: +1-202-473-0508; fax: +1-202-522-3240; e-mail: secretariat@TheGEF.org; internet: http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/council_documents.html

PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE EUROPE AND NORTH ASIA FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE MINISTERIAL MEETING:

This meeting will take place from 6-8 June 2005, in Moscow, Russian Federation. This meeting will prepare for the initiation of a Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) process for Europe and North Asia. The Ministerial Meeting is expected to take place later in 2005 in the Russian Federation. For more information, contact: Nalin Kishor; tel: +1-202-473-8672; fax: +1-202-522-1142; e-mail: nkishor@worldbank.org; internet:

<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/ardext.nsf/14ByDocName/ForestGovernanceProgram>

FIRST MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PROTECTED AREAS: This meeting, organized by the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, will be held from 13-17 June 2005, in Montecatini, Italy. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=PAWG-01>

WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is commemorated each year on 17 June. This year's event will be celebrated worldwide, under the theme "Women and Desertification." Special events will be organized in Berlin, Germany, the UNCCD host country. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2802; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

G8 GLENEAGLES 2005 SUMMIT: The Summit will take place from 6-8 July 2005, in Gleneagles, Perthshire, Scotland. Under the UK Presidency, the G8's deliberations will focus on Africa and climate change, among other topics. For more information, contact: British Prime Minister's Office; fax: +44-20-7925-0918; e-mail: <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page821.asp>; internet: <http://www.g8.gov.uk/>

19TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE (ICID): This meeting will take place from 10-18 September 2005, in Beijing, China. The theme of the Congress will be "Use of water and land for food security and environmental sustainability". For more information, contact: Chinese National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage; tel: +86-10-6210310; fax: +86-10-62180141; e-mail: info@icid2005.org; internet: <http://www.icid2005.org/>

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT: The Summit will take place from 14-16 September 2005, at UN headquarters in New York. The meeting is expected to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made towards the commitments articulated in the UN Millennium Declaration. The event will also review progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes and commitments of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. For more information on the internet, go to: http://www.un.org/ga/59/hl60_plenarymeeting.html

SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNCCD: UNCCD COP-7 will take place from 17-28 October 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya. During COP-7, CRIC-4 will also convene to continue to review implementation of the Convention and prepare draft decisions for adoption at COP-7. For more information contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2802; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; internet: <http://www.unccd.int>