

Draft Strategic Plan of the UNCCD

Options for Implementation

Prepared for IIWG 3 by Unisféra and IECN

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This options paper is designed to provide a basis for discussion by the IIWG as to the role of the various UNCCD institutions. It provides a broad spectrum of options for each of the institutions. The options are not an expression of “preferred” scenarios and should not be considered as the only ones available, nor do they represent “all or nothing” packages. Selected options will be further developed following IIWG III. Key UNCCD institutions considered are:

- (i) the Secretariat;
- (ii) the Global Mechanism;
- (iii) the Committee on Science and Technology (CST); and
- (iv) the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC),

and their subsidiary bodies as relevant.

The current mandate of each institution is described through relevant Convention text and guidance from the Conference of the Parties. Relevant results of the Strategic plan are also highlighted for each institution. It should be noted that options for one institution may involve modifications to the mandate or structure of another one. The options should therefore be read in relationship to each other.

For each institution the following four options are presented:

Option 1: Business as usual

This series of options looks at how the strategic plan could be implemented with existing mandates and institutional structures.

Option 2: Revised mandates

This series of options proposes adjustments to institutions’ mandates to improve their effectiveness in the context of the strategic plan.

Option 3: Restructured institutions

This series of options restructures each institution with a view to strengthen its performance in the context of the strategic plan.

Option 4: Reformed mandates and institutional framework

This series of option reorganizes mandates and institutions of the Convention to best deliver the various functions and results of the strategic plan.

The Secretariat

Summary of mandate in context of SP

The core function of the Secretariat under the Convention is to provide services to the Conference of Parties and its subsidiary bodies. Mainly, this consists in making arrangements for the convening of meetings, and providing information services, such as the transmission, compilation and analysis of reports, record keeping, and financial management (Article 23, decisions 11/COP1, 3/COP6).

Coordination with other Secretariats and the facilitation of assistance to developing countries in compiling reports required under the Convention are also part of the functions of the UNCCD Secretariat (Article 23). Another important function of the Secretariat is outreach and the representation of the Convention within other fora, through awareness raising or public relations activities. Finally, the Secretariat takes on other tasks, on an ad hoc basis, as decided by the Conference of Parties.

The CCD Secretariat is also entrusted with a number of tasks to facilitate regional processes through the Regional Annexes of the Convention: Article 18 of the Annex on Africa provides that the Secretariat “may provide advice on the organization of effective consultative processes” by providing information, and the other regional annexes provide that the Secretariat “may facilitate the convocation of regional meetings” by providing advice on regional coordination arrangements (Articles 8 of Asia Annex, 7 of the LAC Annex, and 8 of the ECE Annex).

Key Strategic Plan Results

Support from the Secretariat, as core provider of services to the COP, is central to the achievement of all results under the Strategic Plan. However, the Secretariat may have more of a clear role to play in the achievement of the following results, through the provision of services to subsidiary bodies, and policy and logistical advice for the use of Parties:

Outcome 1.1: The UNCCD has established itself as an authority of scientific and technological excellence pertaining to sustainable land management.

Outcome 1.2: Effective knowledge sharing systems are in place at all levels with a view to support policymakers and end users.

Outcome 4.5: A comprehensive communication strategy is developed and implemented at the Convention level to raise public awareness of the benefits of the UNCCD and of the impacts of land degradation.

Outcome 4.6: UNCCD is appropriately represented in relevant international fora, including those pertaining to agricultural trade, adaptation to climate change, biodiversity, rural development, sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

Options

It should be noted that the options retained for the CRIC, CST and GM will affect the core functions of the Secretariat and that the implications of the new institutional framework will need to be incorporated into the option retained for the Secretariat.

In all options, the Secretariat adopts RBM frameworks for the management of its operations, in line with recommendations of the JIU report.

In addition, in all four options presented, the provision of adequate and predictable resources for the delivery of required services is of paramount importance, as pointed out in the JIU report. This may entail a realignment or restructuring of the core and supplementary budgets to ensure that core functions of the Secretariat are not subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

Option 1: Business as usual

In this option, the Secretariat has a strengthened capacity to continue performing its key servicing functions and facilitation activities. In order to achieve the results of this strategic plan and to address the recommendations of the JIU report, more focus is given to the delivery of these services through the implementation of an RBM approach and the alignment of the work programme with the strategic plan. Such strengthened capacity entails ensuring that the Secretariat has the resources it needs to service meetings of the COP and subsidiary bodies, as well as the capacity to provide analytical support to the COP for reporting and other activities.

Regardless of the evolution of the CRIC and the implementation review process under this Strategic Plan, the Secretariat continues to provide compilations, syntheses and analysis of national reports, as basic services to the COP. It focuses its work on implementation on the provision of case studies, best policy practices, methodologies and guidelines applicable to all Parties. These functions are strengthened and supported by adequate in-house resources within the Secretariat, in line with recommendations of the JIU report.

In any option chosen for the CST, the secretariat continues to provide support through the provision of organizational and information sharing services. Information collection and knowledge sharing functions are enhanced to improve the availability of scientific information in all regions and its delivery to potential end users at country level.

Representational and public awareness activities of the Secretariat are also stepped up to support the advocacy objective of the strategic plan. Coordination activities with other Conventions are supported through additional core resources, aiming at the production of analytical products such as best practices, methodologies and tools for the development of synergies.

With regards to the facilitation services the Secretariat currently provides to countries in the development and implementation of National Action Plans, the Secretariat continues to deliver these services on an ad hoc basis, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. Regional coordination units (RCUs) continue to provide decentralised services in the regions to facilitate implementation of the Convention.

With regards to liaison with NGOs, the Secretariat continues to channel grants to facilitate NGO participation in COP processes, but develops a stronger methodology for selection of participants, as well as clearer communications procedures.

Option 2: Revised mandate

In this option, the Secretariat's mandate is refocused around the delivery of core servicing functions, i.e. organizational and information sharing services to the COP and subsidiary bodies. The Secretariat also continues to provide information services, such as public relations, and the compilation and analysis of national reports for implementation review. The provision of advice for reporting is also limited to the production of guidelines and methodologies for reporting, and to the channelling of grants to recipient countries. As in option 1, the Secretariat's analytical and policy capacity is strengthened at headquarters in order to deliver sound report analysis, and policy guidance at the global level.

Representational and public awareness activities continue as present, but are limited to a set of core communications objectives that directly support the SP objectives. Adequate resources for the implementation of a public awareness programme are provided under the core budget and the biennial programme of activities is approved as part of regular programmes. Liaison with NGOs is limited to the channelling of resources to facilitate their participation at COP, supported by a stronger methodology for selection of participants.

Support to the Convention's scientific body is limited to the provision of basic services. However, should the option to create a clearing house mechanism be retained, the Secretariat is expected to provide key services in the management of the CHM and related tools.

Under this option, implementation facilitation activities are limited to a strict minimum, and supported through extra-budgetary resources only. The Secretariat limits its facilitation services on the production of tools, guidelines, and methodologies applicable to all Parties rather than on the provision of country-specific advice. In this scenario, consequently, regional coordinating units and liaison offices are no longer necessary. Services provided for the organization of regional coordination meetings are provided from headquarters.

Option 3: Restructured organization

Under this option, the Secretariat's mandate is broadened to include the provision of core servicing functions (organizational and information sharing for COP and Subsidiary bodies) as well as a number of enhanced science and information sharing functions and advisory functions at regional and country levels.

This includes strengthened mandates for the provision of policy advice directly to countries on Convention implementation. The RCUs are strengthened (financially and with additional human resources) to provide policy advice, scientific liaison services, and services to the Global Mechanism. This may be done through the decentralization of facilitation units from Bonn to the regions. RCUs are also integrated into the core budget of the Convention, but may also benefit from additional voluntary support from donors.

In order to avoid duplication, decentralised services are delivered along the lines of a common platform agreed with the GM that focuses the work of each organisation along its comparative advantage. This platform defines a common methodology for NAP development/national level UNCCD implementation, mainstreaming and resource mobilization, based on the work that has already been undertaken over the past decade, and that ensures that all countries benefit from the same service regardless of the delivering organization. The roadmap is complemented by the Joint Work Programme between GM and Secretariat to ensure coordination at the country and regional level, and to avoid duplication of effort.

Support to the development of a science base for the Convention, for example through the coordination of a scientific network, production of annual land degradation reports, or support to a consortium of major science-based organizations (as in CST option 3), becomes an essential function of the Secretariat. This entails providing the Secretariat with scientific and technical capacity to deliver advice to the Science Body. In addition, the Secretariat performs enhance knowledge and information sharing functions to facilitate the circulation of information and expertise from the country/regional level to the global level as well as among regions themselves. This function is in part fulfilled by strengthened RCUs in partnership with the enhanced scientific unit at headquarters.

This information sharing function is completed with the creation and administration of a clearing house mechanism comprised of different modules: a scientific module (in support of scientific best practices), a policy module (with guidelines case studies on NAP development and mainstreaming), and a financial module administered by the GM (FIELD).

Under this option, the Secretariat performs an enhanced outreach function, where it implements a broader public awareness strategy. It also develops stronger mechanisms to support an NGO network, funded by adequate resources including the creation of an NGO website, procedures for the selection of COP and SB meeting participants, increased NGO participation in COP processes (submission of reports, case studies, and scientific analyses) and dedicated support to Official Dialogue Sessions.

Option 4: Revised mandates and structures

Under this scenario, all services to the COP and Parties are ensured by a single organization with broad mandates aligned to the strategic plan. The Secretariat would undertake all core servicing and new essential functions called for in Option 3. In addition, the Secretariat and the GM are merged and resource mobilization becomes an essential function of the Secretariat. The Secretariat provides technical and financial support to countries in the development and implementation of their national action programmes. The merger of Secretariat and GM ensures continuity and uniformity of method in the provision of services to countries.

This option also entails providing the “new Secretariat” with enhanced scientific and technical capacity and possibly enhanced decentralization through the RCUs (as in Option 3). The RCUs are folded into the core budget and supported through adequate resources. New terms of reference for the RCUs include the provision of decentralized services to countries in the areas of implementation (policy advice), technical support, scientific

monitoring and networking, and resource mobilization. Liaison with the GEF and GEF processes is enhanced, through the provision of training and project development support to countries.

If an independent science body is created (see CST option 4), the new Secretariat provides secretariat services to that organization or logistical backstopping, in addition to its core support to the modified CST. The Secretariat also undertakes the management of the Clearing House Mechanism listed in Option 3. This might entail the creation and maintenance of databases, as well as publication of reports, and compilation of information along the 3 modules of the CHM proposed in Option 3. The development of the CHM may benefit from existing experience of the GM in creating the FIELD engine.

Relations with NGOs are deployed along the lines highlighted in Option 3, and merged with the GM and UNDP-led Community Exchange and Training Programme to constitute a full UNCCD NGO programme.

The Global Mechanism

Summary of mandate in the context of the Strategic Plan

The core functions of the Global Mechanism are UNCCD linked to the Convention's provisions on financing. Article 20 of the Convention notes the central importance of financing to achieve the objectives of the Convention and entrusts the Parties with the responsibility to "make every effort to ensure that adequate financial resources are available for programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought" (article 20.1). This includes the mobilization of "substantial financial resources, including grants and concessional loans (article 20.2) and domestic resources (article 20.3).

Article 21 of the Convention creates the Global Mechanism in order to seek to maximize the availability of funding for affected developing country Parties, particularly those in Africa, to implement the Convention (Article 21.1). The mandate of the GM is "to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms, [and] to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, on a grant basis, and/or on concessional or other terms, to affected developing country Parties (Article 21.4). Among its functions, the Global Mechanism:

- (a) identifies and draws up an inventory of relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes that are available to implement the Convention;
- (b) provides advice, on request, to Parties on innovative methods of financing and sources of financial assistance and on improving the coordination of cooperation activities at the national level;
- (c) provides interested Parties and relevant intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations with information on available sources of funds and on funding patterns in order to facilitate coordination among them; (article 21.5)

The Global Mechanism functions under the authority and guidance of the Conference of the Parties and is accountable to it. Article 21.5 of the UNCCD states that "the Conference of the Parties shall identify, at its first ordinary session, an organization to house the Global Mechanism" and establish its operational modalities in cooperation with this organization.

Key Strategic Plan Results

Outcome 5.1: Developed country Parties establish a common platform to provide adequate, timely and predictable financial resources to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought;

Outcome 5.2: Affected country Parties develop integrated investment strategies for leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources with a view to increase the effectiveness and impact of interventions;

Outcome 5.3: Innovative sources of finance are explored to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, including private sector investment, market-based mechanisms, trade, philanthropic donations and synergistic financing for climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as biodiversity protection;

Outcome 5.4: Access to technology is facilitated through adequate financing and effective economic and policy incentives. An inventory of technology needs and available resources is developed.

Options

Option 1: Business as Usual

Under this option, the GM maintains its current mandate as defined in article 21 and relevant COP decisions. It maintains its current administrative arrangements with IFAD, the Secretariat and the COP and adapts its Consolidated Strategy and Enhanced Approach (CSEA) endorsed at COP.7 to the strategic plan. The GM continues to raise voluntary financial resources from bilateral and multilateral sources and foundations to support country operations.

Pursuant to the CSEA, the GM delivers advisory services to create the enabling and necessary conditions to support the mobilization of substantial resources, including the development and implementation of national financing strategies bridging national institutions and donors, and the development of partnerships at national level to improve coherence and effectiveness through harmonization and alignment among donors. In addition, it maintains strategic programmes designed to engage actors and link sectors that have not traditionally been involved in UNCCD implementation, but which have significant potential for increasing investment flows for UNCCD implementation (e.g. carbon markets, innovative private financing, compensation for ecosystem services, market access and trade, agriculture, forestry and biodiversity conservation).

The GM also works in cooperation with the Secretariat in contributing to policy processes directly linked to UNCCD implementation and mainstreaming the UNCCD at the national level. A joint work programme is developed by the Secretariat and the GM for adoption by the COP. It clearly delineates the complementary roles and responsibilities of the GM and Secretariat in the context of the strategic plan. This joint work programme is consistent with results based management and contains specific results and indicators. The two organisations report jointly to the COP on its implementation.

The GM develops a strategy to operationalize its complementary role to the GEF with a view to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GEF as an existing financial mechanism. This role may include mobilising baseline resources and facilitating donor coordination at the country level. It may also include advisory services to EAs/IAs, the GEF and Parties to better align financing with the objectives of the strategic plan.

The Facilitation Committee continues its work under current arrangements with a revised joint work programme aligned with the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. Members of the FC are invited to align their activities with the UNCCD strategic plan.

Sufficient administrative budget from COP (including inter alia, recurring costs, staff and mandatory travel to CRIC and COP) is awarded to the GM in order for it to fulfill the above-mentioned mandate. As a result, the GM does not have to raise voluntary contributions from bilateral and multilateral sources and foundations for its core operations.

The GM sets up an RBM system and reports to the COP accordingly.

Option 2: Revised mandate

Under this option, the GM revises its Consolidated Strategy and Enhanced Approach (CSEA) in order to enhance its role in mobilizing financial resources for programmatic investments in affected developing parties through contacts, advice, lobbying and partnerships with central departments of bilateral and multilateral donors (i.e. in OECD capitals). The GM reorganizes its resources accordingly and refocuses some of its actions on supply-side mobilization and advocacy. It maintains its current administrative arrangements with IFAD, the Secretariat and the COP.

Developed country parties and multilateral institutions are invited to develop consistent and complementary financing platforms for investment in UNCCD-related activities and the GM supports these processes. The GM also works on innovative sources of finance, including private sector investment, market-based mechanisms, philanthropic donations and synergistic financing.

A joint work programme is developed by the Secretariat and the GM for adoption by the COP. It clearly delineates the complementary roles and responsibilities of the GM and Secretariat in the context of the strategic plan and of the revised GM mandate focusing in a larger part on the supply-side. This joint work programme is consistent with a results-based management system and contains specific results and indicators. The two organisations then build their action plan based on the joint work plan and report jointly to the COP on the implementation of the joint work plan.

The current MOU between the GEF and UNCCD Secretariat is revised to take into account the new strategic plan and the complementary roles of the GM, GEF and UNCCD Secretariat. This MOU defines the GM's role in increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and alignment of GEF financing with the objectives of the strategic plan.

The Facilitation Committee continues its work under current arrangements with a revised work programme aligned with the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. Members of the FC are invited to develop consistent and complementary financing platforms to align their activities with the UNCCD strategic plan. The FC reports to COP on this alignment.

Option 3: Restructured institution

Under this option, the institutional status of the GM is elevated to that of a full-fledged international organization. It becomes independent from IFAD and may be relocated. The GM continues to report to the COP and manages its own budgetary allocation. It continues to work at the country level to develop financing platforms with a view to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and alignment of financial resources with the strategic plan.

On the supply side, the GM is given a new tool to mobilize financial resources. A new fund is created to provide baseline financing in the form of grants and concessional loans for

UNCCD-related programmes in affected country parties. It is administered by the GM and managed by a board of directors composed of Parties, financial institutions and other stakeholders as appropriate. The fund is replenished through voluntary contributions.

The GM and the GEF sign an MOU that delineates their complementary roles in the financing of land degradation projects. The GM also signs MOUs with other FC members to redefine their relationship to reflect a new context in which the GM has become a financial institution. The mandate of the FC is also revised to take this new context into account.

The Secretariat and the GM adopt a joint work programme and common platform on UNCCD implementation and financing. This platform sets out the concrete steps from the elaboration of national action programmes, the creation of an enabling environment and the development of financing platforms for investment. The GM and Secretariat are given specific roles in the context of that platform to ensure consistent delivery of services to Parties, improve efficiency and avoid duplication of actions. In addition, a steering committee of Parties mandated by COP is created to develop and oversee the implementation of the platform.

Option 4: Reformed mandate and institutional framework

Under this option, the GM and the Secretariat are merged into a single institution. The GM becomes a programme of the new Secretariat and continues to fulfil the functions set out in article 21 of the UNCCD. The work programme of the Secretariat is reformulated to integrate the functions of this new programme. Staff and resources, including regional units, are redeployed accordingly.

The Secretariat becomes the single window for accessing facilitation and financial services under the Convention. A platform that sets out the concrete steps from the elaboration of national action programmes, the creation of an enabling environment and the development of financing platforms for investment is developed and implemented. Affected parties are directed to the appropriate resources.

The Facilitation committee becomes a Friends of the Convention body that reports directly to the COP. Its mandate is to support implementation of the UNCCD in partnership with its Secretariat.

The CST

Summary of mandate in context of SP

The CST was established under Article 24 of the Convention as a subsidiary body of the COP, and its mandate and terms of reference were defined and adopted during the first session of the Conference of the Parties in 1997.

Article 24.1 establishes the CST as a subsidiary body of the COP to provide it with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The Committee shall meet in conjunction with the ordinary sessions of the COP and shall be multidisciplinary and open to the participation of all Parties. It shall be composed of government representatives competent in the relevant field of expertise. Article 24.2 and 24.3 provide the establishment of support structures i.e. the establishment of a Roster of Experts and Ad Hoc Panels on request.

Of particular additional relevance to the CST's mandate are Article 8 on Relationship with other Conventions, Article 16: Information collection, analysis and exchange, Article 17: Research and Development, and Article 18: Transfer, acquisition, adaptation and development of technology. Finally, Article 22 provides that implementation review shall be conducted on the basis of the evolution of scientific knowledge, hinting at a possible role for the CST during implementation review. This role was subsequently reinforced through the creation of the CRIC.

Through decision 17/COP.5 the Group of Experts (GoE), composed of 25 mandated individuals, was established to work in support of the CST. Its intention was to provide a forum where scientific debate and work of more scientific substance could take place, far from the political debates of the full CST. Its mandate and programme of work were also developed at COP.5, in an attempt to strengthen the science base of the Convention.

Finally, Article 25 on Networking of institutions, agencies and bodies tasks the CST to make recommendations to the COP on ways and means to facilitate and strengthen networking at the local, national and other levels, with a view to ensuring that the thematic needs set out in articles 16 to 19 are addressed.

Key Strategic Plan Results

Outcome 1.1: The UNCCD has established itself as an authority of scientific and technological excellence pertaining to sustainable land management.

Outcome 1.2: Effective knowledge sharing systems are in place at all levels with a view to support policymakers and end users.

Outcome 1.3: Global long term monitoring capacity is developed to observe land degradation trends, support the identification of specific problem areas ("hot spots") and help direct specific management interventions.

Outcome 1.4: A scientifically robust and consistent baseline of land degradation is developed to help identify priorities and monitor the consequences of actions.

Outcome 1.5: Knowledge of the interactions between socioeconomic factors - including poverty and migration - policy frameworks and ecosystem conditions is improved.

Outcome 2.1: NAPs are progressively reshaped into iterative, results-based strategic documents supported by adequate scientific baseline information.

Outcome 4.3: NGOs and the scientific community in the North and the South are fully engaged as partners in advocacy, awareness raising and education initiatives.

Options

Option 1: Business as Usual

In this option, the CST and its subsidiary bodies (ad hoc panels and the Group of Experts) continue operations as are, and in line with recent COP guidance. The effectiveness of the CST is enhanced through the development and implementation of a clear multi-year work programme, aligned with the strategic plan. Expected outputs are defined in such work plan and strictly followed-up on, following a RBM approach

Focus areas established in the work programme of the CST (updated last at COP 7) on (1) Synergies, (2) Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, (3) Group of Experts, (4) Traditional Knowledge, (5) Benchmarks and indicators, (6) Early warning systems, (7) Land degradation assessment in drylands, and (8) the programme of work of the CST, are aligned with the priorities as laid out in the Strategic Plan.

Certain adjustments to the operations of the CST may take place. For example, the election of the CST Chair and Bureau may take place at the end of each CST session and provide for an overlap with the outgoing members to allow for better work continuity and inter-sessional work progress. Similar procedures may be created for the nomination of experts on the Group of Experts. In addition, the terms of reference of existing ad hoc panels may be reviewed in order to strengthen their effectiveness, perhaps through the identification of specific deliverables, timetables and targets.

Consistent with COP decision 15/COP 7, Parties select a "Science and Technology Correspondent" in their countries with a view to improve linkages between the CST's work and the needs of Focal Points. Better linkages to national priorities and experiences are made and meaningful inputs to regional activities such as Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) are generated. In addition, stronger scientific contributions, at the national level, to Convention implementation - through the nomination of a UNCCD Scientific Focal Point - are improved. Overall the composition of the CST is improved to include representation from a wide range of technical disciplines and experiences.

Existing knowledge management systems are strengthened to improve the brokering of existing information relevant to the implementation of the UNCCD from existing institutions to end users at country level. Such brokering can be performed by improving networking and coordination among key organisations, and through the development of a common platform for knowledge brokering, supported by clearinghouse functions performed by the Secretariat.

Option 2: Revised Mandates

Under this option, the CST improves its focus on scientific and technical matters relevant to combating land degradation and undertakes a stronger devolution of knowledge management to the regional level, national and local level.

The CST is given a new focus on soil fertility, irrigation techniques or erosion control aiming to provide more concrete input to Parties. A mandate to conduct land degradation assessments, through the analysis and compilation of information provided by external organizations may also be added. Membership of the CST is primarily be based on professional grounds, and simultaneously satisfy the requirements on equitable representation according to UN rules. The nomination of "Science and Technology Correspondent" may form the foundation in this regard.

Instead of holding CST meetings back-to-back to COP sessions as foreseen in Article 24 of the Convention, the CST meets intersessionally and potentially at revised (more frequent) time intervals to provide the necessary and timely policy advice to the COP. Intersessional meetings imply additional support from the Secretariat, and possibly higher costs as well. However, a stronger, more technical programme of work ensures that COP meetings are informed by appropriate studies and recommendations. Linkages to the reporting function of the Committee for the Review for the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) may be drawn in line with the scenarios provided for that convention body.

In line with the results formulated as part of the SP, revised mandates place a stronger emphasis on regional Science and Technology inputs, which is achieved by integrating more closely with the work of the already established Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) under the SRAPs. The TPNs mandates are substantially revised to service the effective implementation of the SP from a scientific perspective. Regional scientific networks, comprised of CST focal points, may meet in margins of TPN or regular regional meetings.

The Secretariat is entrusted with an expanded clearing house mandate (which contains a science module) and the functions of the Regional Coordination Units (RCUs) focus more strongly on knowledge management and regional scientific networking. Such regional devolution of knowledge sharing functions provides a unique niche to the UNCCD and opens up opportunities for synergistic knowledge sharing actions to be carried out at the regional and lower levels with the UNFCCC and CBD.

Linkages with existing Science and Technology networks and institutions relevant to combating desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, drought and adaptation to climate change such as the CGIAR, FAO, and others are expanded under this scenario, and a "knowledge brokering" role is assigned to the Secretariat, through the clearing house mechanism. Partner organizations are involved in a stronger network that provides data that is analysed by the CST in developing regional land degradation assessments, from the regional level up. Data sharing procedures are determined, with the Secretariat acting as a coordinating focal point for transmission to the CST.

Option 3: Restructured Institutions

This option foresees a merging of functions and institutions of what currently are the CST and CRIC to create a Committee on Implementation and Knowledge (COMIK).

COMIK participants include practitioners from Government, academic institutions, NGOs, the civil society and broader public stakeholders relevant to combating desertification and land degradation, and work sessions would allow for innovative interaction and sharing of lessons learnt. Scientific and technical inputs are provided through a Knowledge Network and considered at regular sessions of the COMIK. Specific outputs from COMIK sessions, including on the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan, are communicated to the COP as policy guidance.

The work of the COMIK is supported by a structured network of research institutions that form a scientific support cluster, supported by a new unit in the UNCCD Secretariat. This Knowledge Network is comprised of major international organizations such as the FAO, CGIAR, GFAR and ISSU. It may be created through an MOU between the COP and the network, and supported through minimal additional resources and contributions from each organization.

Member institutions adopt a joint research platform on land degradation that builds on their respective expertise, as well as a triennial work programme with defined outputs. Each institution feeds into the network and participates in the collection and dissemination of research, data and knowledge, and the feeding into the clearing house mechanism and to the COMIK for formal consideration. Given that these organizations all have presence and capacity at the national level, the Network is tasked with implementing land degradation monitoring on a regional and periodical basis. Essentially, it constitutes a strong global network with a strong regional outreach mandate relying on existing institutions, supported by the Secretariat.

Option 4: Reformed Mandates and Institutional Framework

Under this scenario, the CST and subsidiaries bodies in their current form are restructured substantially. A new science advisory body, modelled on the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) is established.

This new body (International Panel on Land Degradation) is created by the General Assembly, and functions independently from the COP and the UNCCD, although its products are to be used by the Convention, through the CST. Its mandate is to monitor the extent and impacts of land degradation, and to advance scientific knowledge on sustainable land management. Its programme of work may be regionally focussed, and it delivers a series of specific outputs, such as periodical regional assessments, technology and best practices compendiums, or technical guidelines on soil fertility management. These outputs are considered by the Convention's science body, regardless of its configuration.

As proposed in the options above, the CST and CRIC may be merged or the CST may continue to function as it currently does. This impacts to some extent on the programme of work of the CST, and requires substantial restructuring of the institutions. In this case,

for example, the Group of experts, and possibly a number of ad hoc panels, may not be necessary.

In coordination with existing relevant Science and Technology networks and institutions, the UNCCD also pursues the devolution of “knowledge management” to the regional level, strongly interlinked with the local and national levels. Regional Facilitation Units (RCUs) develop closer linkages to TPNs. In addition, increased contributions from major scientific organizations such as the FAO, the CGIAR, and others are invited through their formal participation in the CST.

The CRIC

Summary of mandate in context of SP

Article 22 of the Convention, paragraph 2(a), of the Convention states that the Conference of the Parties shall regularly review the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels, and on the basis of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge.

Article 26 on procedures for communication of information and review of implementation, requests that Parties shall communicate to the COP at its ordinary sessions, through the permanent secretariat, reports on the measures which they have taken for the implementation of the Convention. In paragraphs 2 to 5 of the same article, the different obligations of Parties in reporting to the COP are outlined.

At COP 1, through decision 11/COP1, the specific objectives of the procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation were outlined as follows:

- (a) to ensure that the effective assessment of progress towards achieving the objectives of the Convention and to enable the COP to make appropriate recommendations to further those objectives;
- (b) to exchange information and data among Parties in order to maximize the benefits of successful measures and initiatives under the Convention;
- (c) to ensure that the Committee of Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism have access to the information and data necessary to carry out their mandates; and
- (d) to ensure that information on implementation is in the public domain and available to the international community, particularly intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and other interested entities.

At COP 3, by decision 6/COP3, an ad hoc working group (AHWG) was established with the mandate to draw up conclusions and propose concrete recommendations for further steps in the review of the implementation of the Convention. Based on the work and lessons learned of the AHWG, COP 5 created the CRIC and adopted through decision 1/COP 5 its Terms of Reference (TOR). Since its creation, the CRIC has held 5 regular meetings.

Based on its TORs (1/COP 5) the CRIC serves two main purposes, (1) as an effective reporting process to improve compliance and implementation, and (2) to facilitate exchanges on best practices and effective policies to improve implementation. Decision 1/COP 5 expresses the detailed mandate of the CRIC and specifies responsibilities; these are distinguished between sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP and those held during the COP.

Key Strategic Plan Results

Outcome 1.2: Effective knowledge sharing systems are in place at all levels with a view to support policymakers and end users.

Outcome 2.1: NAPs are progressively reshaped into iterative, results-based strategic documents supported by adequate scientific baseline information.

Outcome 2.4: Operational synergy among climate change, biodiversity and desertification national action plans and programmes is strengthened so as to improve cost effectiveness and enhance the impact of interventions.

Outcome 2.5: Strategic policy assessments are conducted at national level to identify socio-economic, trade related and political disincentives to sustainable land management and appropriate measures are recommended to mitigate their impact.

Outcome 3.1: Innovative approaches are implemented to support and develop capacities in affected communities and countries, including through community exchange and peer learning experiences. Best practices are scaled up and integrated into relevant national policy instruments and rolled-out nation-wide.

Outcome 3.2: Capacity needs are identified, using national coordinating bodies and NCSA reports where available, and integrated into NAPs, building on the potential for synergy between efforts to implement the UNCCD, the CBD and the UNFCCC.

Options

Option 1: Business as Usual

Under this option the CRIC continues to operate with existing TORs but its work programme and organisation is improved based on recent COP decisions and CRIC recommendations. Overall, the CRIC is structured around an effective performance measurement framework and to organise its agenda to maximise substantial and interactive discussions. This may involve adopting new and improved reporting guidelines, based on the work of the *Ad Hoc Working Group on improving the procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties* and increasing financial support for developing country Parties' reporting. Proposals expected from the Ad Hoc Working Group on Reporting, established at COP 7, are formulated in line with the Strategic Plan.

According to recent guidance, future work of the CRIC follow thematic sessions, which are adapted to priorities laid out in the Strategic Plan, complemented by demand driven priorities based on the analysis of implementation experiences. The conduct of sessions is less formalized to allow for more interactive discussion and exchange of experiences. This may include formats such as workshops or technical briefing sessions. In addition, outreach efforts are made in the preparatory work to include affected people in discussions through strengthened Regional Facilitation Units (RCUs) of the Secretariat.

The effectiveness of CRIC operations is enhanced through the development and implementation of a clear multi-year work programme; and expected outputs are defined in such work plan and strictly followed-up on, following a RBM approach as proposed in the JIU report.

Option 2: Revised Mandates

Under this option, the existing TOR for the CRIC (1/COP5) are expanded to more fully review the institutional arrangements and performance of the convention (Secretariat, GM, GEF in relation to the UNCCD, CST, and any other relevant convention body, including financial reports), in line with the newly established RBM framework recommended by the JIU and the priorities as laid out in the Strategic Plan.

The reviews carried out during CRIC produce performance reports on implementation and lead into clear recommendations and policy guidance for the COP. The revised mandate needs to be clearly defined vis-à-vis future options for the CST, to guarantee complementarity and effectiveness.

In line with the revised mandate, the conduct of work during CRIC is reformed in two ways (i) to organize work in less formal fashion and design more strongly as “information exchange platform” for “lessons sharing” elements, whilst (ii) conducting more formal sessions when reviewing institutional arrangements and performance of the convention. These sessions may be conducted as current as (i) intersessional meetings, and/or (ii) sessions during the COP.

The Secretariat facilitates CRIC sessions in view of the revised CRIC mandate. It continues to provide compilation, synthesis and analysis of reports, provided it benefits from stronger capacity to produce analytical work that supports constructive debate.

Option 3: Restructured Institutions

This option proposes to carry out review and reporting functions without CRIC. Based on the RBM framework and the outcomes from the Ad Hoc Working Group on Reporting (AHWGR) streamlined reporting guidelines, in line with the Strategic Plan, are in place and evaluations of reports are carried out by the COP. The Secretariat performs a stronger analytical and clearinghouse function with regards to soliciting reports from country parties and preparing relevant synthesis and thematic analysis for discussion at COP.

Regular regional coordination meetings may be the main forum for implementation review and these may forward recommendations for consideration by the COP. The COP’s work on implementation review uses as inputs the thematic recommendations from regional meetings and the analysis provided by the Secretariat, rather than national reports and presentations. Such an approach contributes to facilitating implementation review in shorter time-frames.

This option needs to be linked to various options proposed for the CST, which may evolve into a more interactive and dynamic knowledge sharing platform, reaching out to regional, national and local level practitioners. For example, should regional CST meetings be pursued, these also contribute to obtaining higher quality inputs to the COP’s own review process. The reporting cycle may however have to be modified to allow a longer time between submission of reports and their analysis and consideration by regional meetings.

Option 4: Reformed Mandates and Institutional Framework

Under this scenario, the functions and institutions of what currently are the CST and CRIC are merged into a Committee on Implementation and Knowledge (COMIK). The mandate of the COMIK is to review implementation of the Convention and to provide advice on scientific and technological matters relevant to implementation.

COMIK sessions are held intersessionally and last two weeks. They are organised around themes that consider an integrated mix of science, knowledge and policy with a view to delivering concrete tools and advice to practitioners and affected people/communities. For example, it may hold a session on the integration of traditional knowledge in agricultural policy, or the impact of trade liberalization on access to technology and land management practices.

The COMIK has a rolling triennial work programme organized around a set of thematic needs and specific outputs based on the strategic plan and the result of the previous implementation review cycle.

Sessions of the COMIK are enriched by parallel events on science, knowledge and policy organized by a consortium of partners and civil society institutions. These events form a "Global lands fair" that serves the dual function of raising awareness and attracting participation from major actors and institutions.

It considers the analysis of national reports provided by the Secretariat based on a methodology adopted by the COP. This entails that the Secretariat is provided with sufficient analytical and financial capacity to deliver this function.

Specific outputs from COMIK sessions, including on the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan, are communicated to the COP as policy guidance.