



COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS THIRD SESSION,
HELD IN BONN FROM 2 TO 11 MAY 2005**

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Official opening

1. The third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 3), convened pursuant to decision 1/COP.5, was officially opened in Bonn, Germany, on 2 May 2005, by Mr. Mohamed Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth, Chairperson of the CRIC.

B. Opening and general statements

2. At the 1st meeting, on 2 May, the Executive Secretary of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) made a statement.

3. At the 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 3 May, statements were made by the representatives of Jamaica, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Luxembourg, on behalf of the European Union, the Syrian Arab Republic, on behalf of the group of Asian States, Swaziland, on behalf of the group of African States, Armenia, on behalf of the group of Eastern European States, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean States, and Norway, on behalf of JUSSCANNZ.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Adoption of the agenda (Agenda item 2)

4. At its 1st meeting, on 2 May 2005, the CRIC adopted the agenda as contained in ICCD/CRIC(3)/1.

B. Designation of the Rapporteur of the Committee (Agenda item 1)

5. At its 1st meeting, on 2 May 2005, the Committee designated Mr. Evgeny Gorshkov of the Russian Federation as Vice-Chairperson-cum-Rapporteur.

6. The Committee took note of the nomination of Mr. Manuel Reed Segovia of Mexico as Vice-Chairperson to replace Mr. Victor del Angel González.

C. Organization of work (Agenda item 2)

7. At its 1st meeting, the Committee approved its organization of work for the session as contained in annex II to document ICCD/CRIC(3)/1, as orally amended by the Secretary of the CRIC.

8. The CRIC held fourteen meetings from 2 to 11 May 2005 and considered reports on implementation of the Convention submitted by affected African country Parties, as well as relevant subregional reports and regional information.

9. It also considered the reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of the action programmes of affected African country Parties, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention, as well as information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention.

10. Likewise, in the light of decision 1/COP.5, the Committee considered documents containing the outcome of the subregional workshops of affected African country Parties.

11. Furthermore, following the provisions of decisions 1/COP.5 and 9/COP.6, the Committee reviewed available information regarding the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions, considered necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes, including review of the enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention, ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer as well as of promoting experience sharing and information exchange among Parties and interested institutions and organizations and ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

12. Two Global Interactive Dialogues were convened: on the Mainstreaming of national action programmes and their contribution to overall poverty eradication; and on Land degradation/desertification and their impact on migration and conflicts.

13. In accordance with its terms of reference, the third session of the CRIC proposed concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention. They are contained in chapters V and VI of the present document.

D. Attendance

14. Representatives of the following 130 Parties to the UNCCD attended the third session of the CRIC:

Afghanistan	Azerbaijan	Botswana
Albania	Bahamas	Brazil
Algeria	Barbados	Bulgaria
Angola	Belarus	Burkina Faso
Antigua and Barbuda	Belgium	Burundi
Argentina	Benin	Cambodia
Armenia	Bhutan	Canada
Australia	Bolivia	Cape Verde
Austria	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Central African Republic

Chad	Japan	Saint Lucia
Chile	Jordan	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
China	Kenya	Sao Tome and Principe
Colombia	Kyrgyzstan	Saudi Arabia
Comoros	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Senegal
Congo	Latvia	Seychelles
Costa Rica	Lebanon	Slovak Republic
Cuba	Lesotho	Somalia
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	South Africa
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Lithuania	Spain
Djibouti	Luxembourg	Sri Lanka
Dominican Republic	Madagascar	Swaziland
Egypt	Malaysia	Sweden
El Salvador	Mali	Switzerland
Eritrea	Malta	Syrian Arab Republic
Ethiopia	Mauritania	Tajikistan
European Community	Mongolia	Thailand
Finland	Morocco	Timor-Leste
France	Mozambique	Togo
Gabon	Namibia	Tunisia
Gambia	Netherlands	Turkey
Germany	Nicaragua	Tuvalu
Ghana	Niger	Uganda
Grenada	Nigeria	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Guatemala	Norway	United Republic of Tanzania
Guinea	Pakistan	United States of America
Guinea-Bissau	Palau	Uzbekistan
Honduras	Panama	Venezuela
India	Peru	Viet Nam
Indonesia	Philippines	Yemen
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Poland	Zambia
Ireland	Qatar	Zimbabwe
Israel	Republic of Moldova	
Italy	Romania	
Jamaica	Russian Federation	
	Rwanda	

15. The session was also attended by an observer from the Holy See.

16. The following United Nations organizations, offices and specialized agencies were represented:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations University (UNU)
World Bank
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

17. Fifteen intergovernmental and twenty-five non-governmental organizations were also represented.

E. Documentation

18. The documents submitted for the consideration of the CRIC are listed in annex.

III. SPECIFIC THEMATIC ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS IN AFRICA

A. Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental and community-based organizations

19. The UNCCD implementation process in Africa is helping to boost the participatory approach through existing mechanisms including gender-specific approaches. While the driving influence of NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) is recognized, authorities at national, local and district level, traditional leaders and innovative entrepreneurs are playing an important role in identifying programme resources for sustainable land management and/or promoting law enforcement.

20. Enhanced community participation in environmental management, empowerment of CBOs and strong local initiatives have been encouraged by the Convention. Enabling support and awareness raising continue to be needed at field level to strengthen organizational, technical and financial capacities. Capacity building and sensitization at the grassroots level must continue to move beyond sectoral approaches and promote integrative natural resources management.

21. At the same time, the call for, and advocacy of, participatory approaches by the UNCCD may be perceived as disingenuous if they are not backed by an appropriate level of financial support.

22. With the focus on civil society, parliamentarians and other elected officials should not be ignored; they can strengthen implementation of the measures advocated through political legitimacy and/or administrative authority.

B. Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements

23. Encouraging evidence is emerging in African countries that the UNCCD implementation process in general, and national action programme (NAP)-advocated measures in particular, have been able, in some instances, to influence the enabling environment through a variety of reform measures: progress in legislative harmonization; legalization of customary practices; and ongoing reforms on land tenure regimes through recently enacted laws, policies and regulations. However, inadequate application of the laws on natural resources management and on access to secure land seems to be a widespread weakness.

24. Continuous efforts in African countries are certainly needed to integrate NAPs into national strategies and international cooperative frameworks such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). A better articulation of NAPs with environmental action programmes, land use policy, poverty reduction strategies and investment strategies is progressing on a country-by-country basis, but this mainstreaming trend is still more formal than operational. Moreover, inter-sectoral coordination has yet to be strengthened. It was reported that efforts to achieve greater coherence are not facilitated by the fact that cooperation agencies often act outside the logical framework of support to the NAP, although greater coherence could more easily be achieved by integrating sustainable land management within NAP frameworks.

25. National coordinating bodies (NCBs) are still in need of enhanced policy-making authority, budgetary and manpower support, and integration into the administrative structure at a high level of authority appropriate to delivering coordination and mainstreaming functions. In many countries they need access to development aid coordination mechanisms.

26. Widespread access to, and knowledge of, the legal regime, and appropriate enforcement have emerged as critical issues for sustainable land management, security of tenure and a much-needed investment-enhancing framework.

C. Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements

27. More widespread acknowledgement of the measures taken by developed country Parties, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) family and the Global Mechanism (GM) reflects the progress made in the first phase of the Convention's launch in Africa.

28. Considerable difficulties remain, notably in accessing external funding. The NAP implementation process has, in the best cases, complied with successive requirements of participatory formulation, coordination and mainstreaming, yet the resulting partnerships, on the whole, have not attracted adequate financing for combating land degradation. It was noted that there are insufficient activities on the ground aiming to eradicate poverty and provide alternative livelihoods. It was also noted that impacts on poverty reduction have been produced by investments that may not have been counted under the formal UNCCD process.

29. A growing number of African countries are making provisions to accommodate UNCCD-related activities in their national budgets. This trend needs strengthening because the current tendency of aid delivery through direct budget support and basket funding underlines the need for a stronger governmental commitment to the pertinent sectors.

30. Efforts to integrate the UNCCD into coordination systems should be more systematic. Linkages between the UNCCD and sustainable land management (SLM) initiatives, such as those carried out in the frameworks of NEPAD and the programming and implementation of the Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and seventy-eight African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, can only show results if carefully monitored by affected Parties and their partners.

31. Partnership building is progressing on the basis of existing coordination mechanisms, although consistency in these partnership models has yet to be achieved and assistance by cooperation agencies often does not link up with NAP initiatives. Funding has rarely been channelled to the national desertification funds which some countries have established.

32. The low budgets allocated in a number of instances to agriculture and the environment in the World-Bank-gearred Poverty Reduction Strategies illustrate the ongoing challenge of developing an effective funding strategy for the UNCCD.

D. Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies

33. Progress has been made in Africa under the UNCCD towards developing a common methodology for integrating the three Rio conventions into planning instruments at national and district levels. Limited efforts are underway in some countries to bring the perception of synergies to the ground level of natural resources users where problems relating to climate, land degradation and desertification and biodiversity are more obvious than their solutions.

34. Institutional constraints at country level do not favour transdisciplinary cooperation and the call for synergies between the Rio conventions remains largely theoretical, although many countries recognize that a shared approach, including at programme and project level, would clearly strengthen the coherence of national and international frameworks for natural resources management.

35. Multidisciplinary coordination has transaction costs. The lack of resources for the NAPs hampers the gradual convergence of programming frameworks concerning water, land and range management, forests and energy. Yet benefits from cross-sectoral linkages for the protection of vulnerable ecosystems can at the same time promote the reduction of poverty advocated in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Willingness to mainstream the NAPs into national development frameworks such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) seems widespread, unlike the knowledge of how best to achieve it.

E. Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought

36. Initiatives for the rehabilitation of degraded land in the context of reforestation, agricultural productivity, integrated farming and animal husbandry, rain water catchments, alternative renewable energies or the banning of slash and burn practices are reported to show positive results. The need to upscale successful practices is obvious.

37. Rehabilitation of degraded land in Africa is generally perceived as a long-term process. Consequently, securing the sustainability of individual projects, as well as their analysis and evaluation, are critical for the continuity and consistency of efforts. The need for enabling actions in this field, including capacity building and improved access to scientific information, is recognized. Furthermore, rural and dryland development programmes need to be implemented through integrated approaches that have due regard for societal factors such as the security of land tenure, level of decentralization of planning and governance of land resources, and potential for developing alternative livelihoods.

38. In some regions, the presence of environmental migrants or refugees from conflicts has given rise to calls for additional and specific adjustment measures including the introduction of fuel-efficient technology, reforestation, and small-scale cottage industry for alternative livelihoods.

F. Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment

39. The elaboration of African national reports is hampered by the lack of standardized systems for collecting data, and by insufficient coordination among the institutions storing the information. Progress in developing and using benchmarks and indicators, particularly ecological indicators, remains modest. The use of Geographic Information System (GIS) has proven to be effective in monitoring changes in vegetation and soil occupation, but its use has been limited owing to high technology and resource requirements.

40. Country profiles provide a promising tool for presenting data on the implementation of the Convention. Moving from sporadic and scattered information to harmonized, reliable statistics would go a long way towards strengthening the assessment capacity of the national coordinating bodies, as well as facilitating the review carried out in the UNCCD process.

41. The national reports together with country profiles can provide a quick overview of the country situation in different sectors, which can lead to a review of the significance and adequacy of data and identify information gaps, potential research areas, and areas where improvement and capacity building is needed.

42. Joint field monitoring of programme and projects among stakeholders helps in building a common approach and should be encouraged in the NAP context. Establishing indicator systems and information nodes for local level use, in close collaboration with national environmental and geographic monitoring services, could create solutions for strengthening baseline monitoring.

G. Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how

43. The conclusions reached by the CRIC and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) should generate impulses for the implementation process; however, the scientific contribution has little impact in the context of the NAPs.

44. While technical progress is reported in such areas as improving farm productivity, irrigation, soil conservation and drought-resistant species, more systematic relationships with centres of excellence in the North should strengthen capacities in affected African country Parties. Particular attention would need to be paid to meeting the knowledge needs of local communities by using a mixture of traditional knowledge and the potential of advanced information technology.

45. Capacity building for knowledge management required in the evolving context of the NAP would promote the development of proactive environmental management tools and include the following areas: data collection and dissemination; strengthening of environment information networks; participatory poverty assessment; early warning systems (EWS) for natural disasters and drought mitigation; facilitation of public access to the relevant body of legal acts, codes and provisions; and continuous, systematic and updated information on financing sources. At the same time, the collection, dissemination, costing and use of traditional knowledge should be enhanced and disseminated at all levels, especially through South-South cooperation.

IV. THEMATIC ISSUES UNDER GLOBAL REVIEW

A. General trends

46. The lessons learned under the current third reporting cycle for African country Parties indicate that best practices are beginning to have an impact. They confirm the need to follow up on the conclusions and recommendations of CRIC 1 and to implement the relevant decisions subsequently taken by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its sixth session. The exchanges which took place during CRIC 3 on the thematic issues under review provided an analytical platform for experience sharing.

47. The integration of measures to combat land degradation into specific mechanisms such as the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol should be encouraged, with the support of the secretariats of the three Rio conventions.

48. The CRIC 3 session recognizes that the global sustainable development objectives pursued by the international community in the 30 years between the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa should come within closer reach as fuller use is made of the implementation process of the UNCCD. It recognizes likewise that UNCCD programmes are important instruments for ecosystem protection, rehabilitation and restoration in the drylands, for channelling investments into rural areas and for delivering the impact of pro-poor policies for the benefit of vulnerable lower-income groups at the field level.

49. The present review cycle of the CRIC will be completed at COP 8 in 2007 when the members of the regional implementation annexes other than Africa will complete reporting. Based on this experience, the task before COP 7 and COP 8 is to map out a consensus framework and steer the implementation process through an agreed set of policy options and best approaches in order to move the UNCCD from planning and institutional development to concrete measures, substantive targets and measurable outputs.

B. Adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes

50. The NAPs are addressing issues relating to the environmental sustainability and economic potential of rural areas. The complementarity of the NAPs and national development strategies such as the Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers needs to be enhanced through the process of mainstreaming the NAPs, so as to bring win-win options to combating desertification and developing alternative livelihood strategies. The country-driven consultative process advocated by the Convention can serve as an entry point for effective linkages with related conventions and programmes, for the coordination of mainstreaming and triggering the operational phase of partnership implementation.

51. In the face of the declining investment in the drylands, long-term supportive capacity building in advocacy, research, information gathering, negotiation, monitoring and evaluation are called for to bring a higher policy profile of NAPs and their prioritization into national development frameworks including PRSPs at national level.

52. The fate of pastoralism is an issue that concerns the majority of affected countries. The increasing fragility of the range, overgrazing, lack of investment and inappropriate herding practices illustrate growing constraints. Pastoralism is steadily losing its margin of manoeuvre, as rangelands are being lost at an alarming rate.

53. Reforestation and afforestation in the context of sustainable forest and drylands management are seen as important elements in combating desertification, as appropriate synergy and complementarity between NAPs and national forest programmes in drylands, or similar policy frameworks, must be ensured when planning and implementing forest-related activities. Such programmes also provide income-generating opportunities and relate to coping strategies in relation with population pressure, water scarcity, poverty and migration.

54. Space technology and remote sensing allow for the identification and mapping of the desertification process facilitating greater diagnostic analysis and potential identification of trends. Remote sensing technology, while comparatively cheaper than field surveys, can be made more accessible, and its use is facilitated by joint programmes among remote sensing specialists, soil scientists and end-users in order to identify vulnerable areas.

C. Mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions

55. The UNCCD is an important element in an overarching framework for the international community's efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. By, in particular, combining the

responses to the sustainable livelihood needs of lower-income groups and ecosystem protection, rehabilitation and restoration in the drylands, implementation of the NAPs contributes to the achievement of the MDGs and the goals of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI).

56. A business-as-usual approach on the issue of financing will fail to deliver needed change and results. The GEF Country Pilot Partnership and the welcome emerging partnership of the World Bank in the context of the developing TerrAfrica initiative are signs of a needed return of investments to alleviate rural poverty. These schemes clearly need a link to the UNCCD implementation. These initiatives as well as bilateral and multilateral cooperation should be harmonized with national development strategies.

57. On the eve of the tenth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force, there must be a renewed commitment, reflected in increased, stable and predictable funding for UNCCD instruments such as NAPs, subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs), national reports and the work programme of the CST Group of Experts. These instruments are necessary to ensure that concrete CRIC and CST decisions lead to specific activities contributing to environmental protection, poverty eradication and food security.

58. There is an acute need for donors to simplify procedures and document transparent processes to access funding for the NAPs in an equitable manner. Mainstreaming the NAP may not reach its objective if rural development issues are in direct competition with priority social sectors.

59. The process of elaborating projects for submission to the GEF and its implementing agencies should involve the participation of national focal points to the UNCCD.

60. It was stated that projects in the context of GEF's Operational Programme 15 should have their procedures simplified for access to resources, transparency of transactions, capacity building and supported by significant replenishment.

D. Ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought

61. It was stated that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and its synthesis report "Human Well-being and Ecosystem Services: A Synthesis Report on Desertification" provide a welcome and renewed focus on the socio-economic significance of ecosystem services in the drylands. There is a need to revisit current assumptions in the research community and to enable centres of excellence to expand research in the drylands into desertification externalities such as persistent poverty, starvation, migration, conflicts and other threats to security. Others stated that the concept of ecosystem services had not yet been defined and should be subject to international consensus.

E. Ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information

62. Procedures for the communication of information have evolved and become increasingly complex since the Convention was adopted. A growing number of decisions by the COP require the Parties, the secretariat, the GM, IGOs and NGOs and other actors to provide information to

the COP and its subsidiary bodies, contributing to a situation in which compliance with some of these decisions is becoming increasingly difficult.

63. Given the shift of focus from institution building to the adoption of action programmes and their implementation, and in view of the need for reports to emphasize a results-oriented approach, it has become essential that national reports focus more closely on matters emerging from action programmes, so that the CRIC and the COP can assess effectively how far the objectives of the Convention have been attained.

64. The need was also noted for more consistent procedures of interaction between subsidiary bodies and their reporting to the COP, facilitating information management on impact assessment and taking advantage of achievements of ongoing reporting processes.

65. The forthcoming revision of the procedures for communication of information should be undertaken concurrently with the review of the implementation, in order for the review to be ultimately results-driven and action-oriented.

66. The monitoring system of the UNCCD yet to be established should ultimately result in quantified, time-bound and costed targets relating to combating land degradation and desertification in a long-term perspective.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS ON FURTHER STEPS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION IN AFRICA

67. The conclusions and recommendations listed in this report are drawn from the cycle of review of African reports covering the period that started with the completion of CRIC 1, in November 2002. They are a summary compilation of ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by various delegations during the third session of the CRIC to further the implementation of the Convention. Chapters V and VI identify potential action that could be undertaken at the national, subregional, regional and international levels after consideration and appropriate decision by the COP, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention.

A. Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental and community-based organizations

68. Civil society activities relating to implementation of the UNCCD should be supported at all levels by appropriate resources and support.

69. Local ownership in sustainable land management in Africa should be enhanced by genuine participatory approaches at all stages of the project cycle and by documenting ongoing learning processes. Effective decentralization and ownership of initiatives for natural resources management, while respecting cultural specificities, should go hand in hand with strengthening the capacities of civil-society stakeholders, NGOs and CBOs for the formulation, execution and evaluation of integrated local area development programmes under the NAP, while expanding community/private/public partnerships.

70. Country-specific indicators for participation should be developed and used to monitor and evaluate the participation of various civil society actors at different levels. Civil society actors should be included in decision-making bodies to the fullest extent possible and involved on a regular basis in NAP decision-making processes and implementation.

71. Local-level monitoring systems and the adoption of jointly agreed indicators must be supported, with the involvement of scientific and technical organizations, as the resulting standard setting can definitely enable resource users at local level to obtain and use pertinent information leading to improved communal-level decision-making.

72. Halting land degradation and promoting environmental rehabilitation should, to the extent possible, involve vulnerable and marginalized groups by creating opportunities for alternative income-generating activities. Long-term sustainability of these projects is dependent on ownership and involvement by these groups at all levels.

73. Support should be increased to those African countries which have presented reports, to enable them to continue to promote participatory approaches in these countries.

B. Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements

74. Further capacity building is urgently required in Africa to foster the improvement and impact of legislative frameworks. Advantage must be taken of modern information technologies to compile, harmonize, update and promulgate the pertinent laws and regulations, with a view to enhancing public access to, and compliance with, the legal regime, for the sustainable use of natural resources.

75. Mechanisms for the settlement of conflicts, especially those linked to competition for access to natural resources, 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. Similarly, law enforcement mechanisms and conflict resolution systems ought to be promoted in the NAP framework and made more available and accessible.

C. Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements

76. Financial support should be made available to African affected country Parties which have not yet elaborated their NAPs to enable them to do so by the end of 2005.

77. The efforts of African countries to raise the level of domestic financial resources and attract investments in sectors of relevance for desertification control must promote activities that are financially profitable in the short or medium term and offer incentives for private sector participation.

78. The complex task of integrating sustainable land management into national, sectoral, district-level and donor plans and budgets requires capacity building in project planning and negotiation skills, cross-sectoral coordination and private/public partnership development for

investments in the drylands, with a view ultimately to ensuring the financial sustainability of the implementation process.

79. Improving the management of cross-border natural resources requires support in the form of human and financial capital from competent institutions under subregional and regional programmes. The potential of the currently under-funded thematic programme networks for leveraging knowledge management in Africa must similarly be sustained.

80. Successful implementation of the Convention is dependent not only on project investments but also on investments in human resources through long-term capacity building that enables local people to own the process.

81. Targeted research and/or bankable projects focused on land degradation and poverty eradication should be given due consideration in the context of the UNCCD national, regional and subregional action programmes and within the framework of NEPAD.

D. Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies

82. The African GEF national focal points should be in a position more actively to encourage synergies between the Rio conventions, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and other environmental treaties on the basis of an integrated natural resources management platform that takes into account the sustainable livelihoods of lower-income groups, and to facilitate with interested GEF implementing and executing agencies access by NAP-related projects to funding under the GEF Operational Programmes, notably on Sustainable Land Management (OP 15).

83. Country-driven synergy workshops should include a training component and support a common approach among the Rio conventions with respect to the thematic area identified in the UNCCD context, as they are relevant to fulfilling the needs of all conventions and address national development issues.

E. Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought

84. In order to ensure that measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land have the desired long-term impact in Africa, it is necessary to enhance the continuity and coherence of activities by favouring a programmatic approach.

85. The sustainability of programmes and projects needs to be secured through better capacity building. This includes strengthening institutions, improving management tools, including tools for improved evaluation and assessment of projects, developing integrative policies, promoting public participation and implementing projects with catalytic potential.

86. Incentive frameworks linking conservation with productivity and income in rural areas should be systematically developed and target local entrepreneurs.

F. Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought

87. The options for more integrated monitoring of African drylands at both the bio-physical and socio-economic levels should include assessment of the sustainability of provision of benefits derived from ecosystems for human well being and economic activity, exploitation and dissemination of best practices, and scenarios for reducing vulnerability and risks such as floods, drought, landslides, forest fires, crop failure, disease or migratory pests.

88. Environmental systems must increase the coping capacity and resilience of vulnerable affected country Parties to natural disasters and promote related approaches to integrate risk reduction into the preventive strategies and programmes developed under the framework of the UNCCD. Capacity building for centralized geographic information systems in African countries should strengthen readiness levels, reduce the impact of natural disasters, monitor sensitive hot spots and enable informed decision-making and accountability.

G. Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how

89. A compendium of existing benchmarking approaches for sustainable land management and environment information systems should assist African countries in establishing guidelines and selecting the basis on which standardization of benchmarks could be most helpful to the implementation process. Means to enhance North-South cooperation and support South-South cooperation should be allocated.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SELECTED ISSUES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

A. Review process and procedures for communication of information, as well as of the quality and format of reports

90. The GEF and its implementing/executing agencies which enabled the successful preparation of the African reports should be asked to consider providing timely, full and committed financial support in the next phase of the CRIC reporting cycle for members of the regional implementation annexes of the Convention other than Africa, which will present their experience at CRIC 5.

91. A revised version of the existing Help Guide should provide, as appropriate, a focus on lessons learned, positive impacts of action taken, ways and means to evaluate advocated approaches and scale up best practices and win-win measures so as to enhance information transfer to support decision-makers at all levels.

92. The COP may wish to invite the CST, through its Group of Experts, to work on improving country profiles so as to enhance the reliability of quantitative data in the monitoring and assessment of land degradation and desertification, while establishing formats - standardized as far as possible - for biophysical and socio-economic indicators to be submitted for adoption by the Parties.

93. The UNCCD national country profiles for affected country Parties should *inter alia*: i) extract from the existing range of country environmental profiles the pertinent data, statistics and assessments on biophysical and socio-economic parameters; ii) update and format data to ensure comparability of results over the years in areas of specific relevance to the implementation process; iii) include maps of hot spots to be more carefully monitored; iv) focus on trends, benchmarking and highlighting lessons learned and best practices in sustainable land management and combating desertification.

94. In order to improve the reports from the developed country Parties, further elaboration of the items for the UNCCD country profiles should be included in the agenda of COP 7.

95. Data collection, standardization and analysis in the transdisciplinary fields of relevance to UNCCD implementation would meet the needs of a wide range of multi-stakeholders' constituencies at governmental, scientific and non-governmental levels. Adequate and predictable funding for national reports should thus be ensured.

B. Efficiency and effectiveness of measures in reaching the end-users of natural resources

96. Mainstreaming NAPs into national development frameworks including PRSPs meets several objectives and should provide concrete means to respond in an analytical and practical way to ground level demands and include local authorities, NGOs and communities in identifying remedial approaches to degradation and desertification. Agreed methodologies and tools are called for to replicate the present experience, and to identify the spatial distribution of poverty. Similarly, monitoring of related programmes should be decentralized to include feedback from land users and participatory poverty assessment.

97. The NAPs should thus be recognized by national governments and donor agencies as a tool to address rural poverty and receive due attention in the country cooperation frameworks of affected countries with a view to channelling investment to eradicate rural poverty and to reach the end-users of natural resources.

98. Support to mobile pastoralism in the drylands should receive a higher level of priority under the UNCCD given pastoralists' specific adaptive management practices and traditional knowledge of coping strategies in drylands conditions. Consideration of pastoralism and the sustainable use of rangelands should therefore be kept under review by the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

C. Synthesis of best practices, experiences and lessons learned and ways and means to promote experience sharing and information exchange among Parties and all other interested institutions and organizations

99. Monitoring and knowledge management under the UNCCD should reinforce the integrative frame of reference addressing natural resources management, set standards, provide principles and develop guidelines or tools to focus on participatory and synergistic programmes on the ground, while contributing to mainstream drylands issues in national development strategies such as the PRSPs.

100. Pursuant to decision 8/COP.4, the Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the Convention (the “Bonn Declaration”) should be considered at CRIC 5 by means of a panel review of the three remaining strategic areas for action, namely sustainable land use management, including water, soil and vegetation in affected areas; development of sustainable agriculture and sustainable ranching systems; and development of new and renewable energy sources.

101. In the future, the COP may wish to consider the development of a matrix of policy options and practical measures to monitor, on a regular basis, progress in the six strategic areas of the Declaration, with a view to outlining sustainability issues and identifying intermediary targets in a long-term perspective.

D. Emerging and challenging issues deriving from implementation and necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes

102. Despite their similar objectives, establishing linkages between NAPs and PRSPs constitutes a challenge. NAPs must be supported as an evolving process which should gradually contribute to the mainstreaming of sustainable land and water management into the PRSPs and/or national development strategies. This potential must be realized, *inter alia*, through support to the transaction costs of coordination, capacity building in the areas of data collection, analytical research, and programming of cross-sectoral investments sensitive to the spatial distribution of poverty.

103. Monitoring existing relevant policy and legislative frameworks, conducting gap analysis and proposing consequent catalytic initiatives in order to seek programming convergence are key steps of the NAP mainstreaming process with a view to setting green goals for the PRSPs.

104. Evolving NAPs should include, where relevant, strategies to reduce the push factors of forced migrations and resettlements linked to environmental scarcity in vulnerable ecosystems and promote mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and settlement. Mechanisms for the settlement of cross-border conflicts, especially those linked to competition for access to natural resources, should be developed at the regional and subregional levels to limit the impact of such conflicts on flows of environmental migrants.

105. The macro-level legislative framework for the implementation process of the Convention must emphasize more strongly the importance of a secure legal regime for, on one hand, the reduction of poverty through the promotion of domestic and foreign investments and, on the other hand, the promotion of sustainable land use practices through a safe and sound land tenure system.

106. To encourage the promotion of synergistic initiatives at all levels, the COP could ask for a review or an evaluation of the impact of land degradation on biodiversity loss and climate change and call for the harmonization of geographic information and evaluation systems, an inclusive approach of EWS, more integrated socio-economic research on the cost of non-action in the areas of the Rio conventions, training for the necessary manpower and adequate funding from national and, as appropriate, international sources.

E. Ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer

107. The thematic programme networks of the respective regional action programmes should be provided with adequate resources to enable them to discharge their mandate with respect to the channelling of appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how to interested Parties, the exchange of lessons learned and best practices within and between regional implementation annexes, and the needed linkages between centres of excellence.

108. Public-private and private-private partnerships should be emphasized to promote technological transfer for the benefit of small-scale enterprises, *inter alia* in the field of renewable energies and rational water utilization, with the support of predictable financing mechanisms with local-level outreach, such as revolving funds and micro-credits.

109. In facilitating technology transfer from developed countries to affected developing countries, more work is needed by developed country Parties to formulate preferential policies to encourage their private and public sectors to transfer technology to affected developing country Parties.

110. In the context of sustainable development, more work is needed to develop a technical analysis of the value of synergies in projects, through the development of indicators for evaluation.

111. Donor support for research should be more clearly aligned with the UNCCD objectives as spelled out by the CST work programme. Fellowship programmes for postgraduate and young scientists to make fuller use of the various specialized academic institutions on land degradation and desertification should also be supported.

F. Recommendations on financing Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including the Global Environment Facility

112. The impact of the CRIC will depend above all on its ability to provide a steering policy framework for turning commitment into action under the UNCCD process. The realization of country-owned and country-specific partnership arrangements advocated by decision 1/COP.6 should become the milestones of a consensus strategic pathway to full implementation. At the same time donors should coordinate their country-level response, including through national development strategies and by using a lead donor approach (*chef de file*) in consultation with recipient countries.

113. The Country Pilot Partnership of the GEF represents an important step forward in this respect and should be supported by co-financing arrangements from other sources, including national and international, in the context of national development strategies.

114. The GM and the members of its Facilitation Committee should play an important role in identifying case by case, for specific countries, points of entry into processes and modalities of international funding.

115. Affected developing country Parties and other country Parties covered by regional implementation annexes, other than those in Africa, that have not yet elaborated their NAPs should be financially supported to finalize their NAPs by the end of 2005.

G. Political commitment and awareness raising

116. With the declaration of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, action is required at all levels to promote political engagement, advocacy and awareness raising for sustainable land management in the context of the Convention. Parties are invited to report on their activities at COP 8.

117. The September 2005 Millennium Review Summit should underline the global magnitude of the issue of SLM and combating desertification in the context of Millennium Development Goal 7 (environmental sustainability) and Millennium Development Goal 1 (eradication of extreme poverty and hunger).

H. Poverty and environmental vulnerability

118. Environmental vulnerability is accelerated when ecological sustainability is not maintained, livelihood opportunities are threatened possibly leading to natural disasters, emigration or increasing the likelihood of conflicts over declining resources. Poverty and environmental vulnerability are interdependent and should be kept under review.

119. In the face of accelerating land degradation and migratory trends, multidisciplinary analysis and transdisciplinary research to identify critical linkages must set up conditions for an early warning system for humanitarian crises and facilitate proactive policies.

120. Household subsistence strategies and local mobilization in response to new vulnerability relating to land degradation under a scenario of climate change will fail to cope without due legislative and developmental measures.

VII. CONCLUSION OF THE SESSION

A. Adoption of the report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

(Agenda item 8)

121. At its 14th meeting, on 11 May 2005, the Committee adopted the draft report on its third session (ICCD/CRIC(3)/L.1), as orally amended, and authorized the Rapporteur to finalize it, with the assistance of the secretariat, as appropriate.

B. Closure of the session

122. The Chairperson closed the session at the end of its 14th meeting.

Annex

DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE CRIC AT ITS THIRD SESSION

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
ICCD/CRIC(3)/1	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work - Provisional agenda and annotations
ICCD/CRIC(3)/2	Review of reports on implementation by affected African country Parties, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes
ICCD/CRIC(3)/2/Add.1	Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by affected African country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(3)/2/Add.1/ Corr.1	Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by affected African country Parties – Corrigendum
ICCD/CRIC(3)/2/Add.2	Progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in Africa
ICCD/CRIC(3)/2/Add.3 (A) and (B)	Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by African country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(3)/2/Add.4	Outcome of subregional workshops of affected African country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(3)/3	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, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention
ICCD/CRIC(3)/3/Add.1	Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by developed country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(3)/3/Add.2	Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by developed country Parties
ICCD/CRIC(3)/3/Add.2 (B)	Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by developed country Parties – Part B

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
ICCD/CRIC(3)/4	Review of information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes of African affected country Parties under the Convention
ICCD/CRIC(3)/5	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
ICCD/CRIC(3)/6	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 Global Environment Facility, the Global Mechanism and its Facilitation Committee
ICCD/CRIC(3)/6/Corr.1	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 Global Environment Facility, the Global Mechanism and its Facilitation Committee - Corrigendum
ICCD/CRIC(3)/7	Consideration of ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, as well as of promoting experience sharing and information exchange among Parties and interested institutions and organizations
ICCD/CRIC(3)/7/Corr.1	Consideration of ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, as well as of promoting experience sharing and information exchange among Parties and interested institutions and organizations – Corrigendum
ICCD/CRIC(3)/7/Corr.2	Consideration of ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, as well as of promoting experience sharing and information exchange among Parties and interested institutions and organizations – Corrigendum

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
ICCD/CRIC(3)/8	Consideration of ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.1	Arrangements for the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention - Preliminary information for participants
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.2	List of participants to the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.3	National reporting process of affected country Parties - Explanatory Note and Help Guide
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.4	National reporting process of developed country Parties - Explanatory Note
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.5	Status of ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.6	Background information for the regional consultations of affected country Parties of the regional implementation annex for Asia
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.7	Background information for the regional consultations of affected country Parties of the regional implementation annex for Latin America and the Caribbean
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.8	Background information for the regional consultations of affected country Parties of the regional implementation annex for the Northern Mediterranean
ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.9	Background information for the regional consultations of affected country Parties of the regional implementation annex for Central and Eastern Europe
ICCD/CRIC(3)/MISC.1	Mainstreaming of national action programmes and their contribution to overall poverty eradication
ICCD/CRIC(3)/MISC.2	Overview of panel discussions and global interactive dialogues during the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
