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### DRAFT “TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNCCD (2008–2018)”

Note by the secretariat<sup>\*</sup>

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 3/COP.7, established an Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG). This Group was requested to develop a 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention.
2. The working draft of the “Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance Implementation of the UNCCD (2008–2018)” contained in this document was prepared by a team of consultants and based on the framework developed by the IIWG at its first two meetings. In response to a request from the Chair of the IIWG and in consultation with the Chair of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), the secretariat is now making this document available to Parties. It should be noted that this document is a working draft which, due to time constraints, has not been fully approved by IIWG members. As a consequence, it does not necessarily reflect the views of the IIWG or any of its individual members.
3. Comments on this draft Strategic Plan should be submitted as soon as possible to the Chair of the IIWG in the context of his progress report to the CRIC on the work of the IIWG.

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<sup>1</sup> Unofficial copy for information purposes only.

<sup>\*</sup> This document was submitted after the deadline because of the need for extensive consultations by the Chair of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group.

**DRAFT “TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNCCD (2008–2018)”**

**Prepared by the Core Consultancy Team of Unisféra and  
Integrated Environmental Consultants Namibia (IECN)**

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## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), by its decision 23/COP.6, decided that the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations would carry out a comprehensive review of the UNCCD secretariat. The consequent JIU report was submitted for the consideration of the COP at its seventh session (COP 7). At COP 7, the Parties decided that the detailed review of the JIU report would be carried out during the intersessional period before COP 8, to be held in autumn 2007. For this purpose the COP, by its decision 3/COP.7, established an Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG). This Group was further requested to develop a 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention by addressing, inter alia, the recommendations of the JIU report. In line with the decision 3/COP.7, the Bureau of the COP was assigned to prepare the terms of reference of the IIWG. These terms state that the documentary outputs of the IIWG would include:

(a) A report, based on the IIWG's review of the JIU report, including how best to address the recommendations therein;

(b) A draft 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD.

2. At its first meeting, in May 2006, the IIWG considered its programme of work. In the light of the scope of its tasks on the one hand, and the limited time available for concluding its work on the other, the Group decided to seek external assistance, subject to the availability of resources. At its second meeting, in July 2006, the IIWG further specified that it would need the assistance of a core consultancy team, consisting of at least two consultants. In addition, the Group considered that short-term assignments would be given to selected consultants for preparing issue papers on specific technical matters that are relevant to the development of the strategic plan and framework.

3. In November 2006, the core consultancy team of Unisféra (Canada) and Integrated Environmental Consultants Namibia (IECN) (Namibia) was commissioned by the IIWG Chair (financed by the Government of Denmark) to assist the IIWG in the preparation of the above-mentioned documents.

4. An inception meeting took place on 10 and 11 November 2006 in Montreal, Canada, and Unisféra-IECN submitted an inception report to the IIWG Chair on 8 December 2006. This report presented the core consultancy team's approach to addressing the JIU report recommendations based on the IIWG's initial discussions and its 5 September outline of the draft "Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the UNCCD (2008–2018)". The Chair then requested that Unisféra-IECN prepare an updated working draft of the Strategic Plan for submission to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) at its fifth session.

5. This document was designed to inform the CRIC about the work of the core consultancy team and to solicit comments and generate discussions on the outline structure and general approach of the strategic plan. In order to inform discussions, this document presents the overall approach and rationale adopted by the core team of consultants. Specific indicators and targets will be developed in further iterations. The framework for implementation, which will

specifically address the roles of Convention institutions as well as performance monitoring, will also be added at a later stage.

6. It should be noted that this draft was prepared by the core consultancy team and does not represent the views of the IIWG or of its individual members. Also, technical papers prepared by other consultants as well as other relevant sources will be further integrated in the next iterations of the draft Strategic Plan.

7. Comments on the following draft Strategic Plan should be submitted as soon as possible and no later than 31 March 2007 for due consideration in the next iteration of the Plan. A side event will take place at CRIC 5 to provide further opportunities for discussion.

## II. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

8. Developed as a result of the 1992 Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), the UNCCD brings together all aspects of environment and sustainable land management in one broad policy framework. Based on bottom-up participation and promoting a blend of environmental and social/economic policies, the UNCCD provides an evolving canvas to address the challenges of desertification, land degradation and drought. Ten years after its coming into force, the UNCCD benefits from universal membership and there is now an overall recognition that it can make a lasting contribution to the achievement of sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and more generally, poverty reduction.

9. The UNCCD is unique in many ways. First, by its geographic focus on drylands, it brings attention to some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and people in the world. Second, it is the only international instrument that focuses on sustainable land management, an issue traditionally addressed within the strict scope of national policies. And third, it is the only global treaty that focuses on developing countries, specifically in Africa, and on improving living conditions for rural dryland populations, who represent an important proportion of the world's poor and undernourished. Desertification/land degradation is now recognized as both an environmental and a developmental problem, and one of global proportions.

10. However, much remains to be done to achieve lasting impacts on the ground and there is growing evidence that land degradation will worsen with increased climate change impacts, as underscored by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The UNCCD is a unique instrument to mitigate the effects of drought. Therefore synergy between plans and programmes to combat desertification and adapt to climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are becoming increasingly relevant.

11. As with many other environmental agreements, during its first years the UNCCD focused on the development of an international governance system designed to assist countries, particularly developing ones, in crafting policies and programmes to achieve the Convention's dual objectives. Now that these systems are in place, it is important to determine their effectiveness in facilitating countries' efforts, and to place renewed emphasis on achieving progress on the ground. The financial, economic and institutional constraints faced by affected developing countries need to be considered in that regard as they create bottlenecks impeding successful implementation of policies and programmes.

12. It is also essential that the Convention demonstrate real contributions to achieving the MDGs, which enjoy broad-based high-level commitment from all countries. The Convention's focus on Africa also provides an opportunity for renewed impetus in addressing some of the world's most pressing social and environmental problems.

13. But the Convention faces increasing challenges, in particular a decreasing level of political support, due partly to the lack of demonstrable progress on the ground and partly to a perceived polarization of its debates. Beyond a short-term focus on its own institutions so as to keep them effective, the Convention must now carefully examine the role it can play within the international environmental governance system and focus on its strengths. This Strategic Plan is part of this ongoing effort. It is believed that with an agreed set of priorities at all relevant levels, measurable indicators of progress, and a renewed commitment by all Parties, the Convention can generate increased benefits for Parties and local stakeholders.

### III. THE STRATEGIC PLAN – PROPOSED OUTLINE STRUCTURE

#### A. The vision

14. The mission of the Strategic Plan is to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought in affected Parties to support the achievement of the MDGs.

#### B. The mission

15. The mission of the Strategic Plan is to become the global authority on policies and measures to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought through scientific and technological excellence, standard setting and advocacy to drive resource mobilization.

#### C. Strategic objectives and expected impacts

16. The **strategic objectives** represent intended long-term goals that will contribute to achieving the vision. The **expected impacts** are the direct and indirect, and the primary and secondary, long-term effects intended by the strategic objectives.

##### (a) Rationale for the strategic objectives

17. The three strategic objectives are:

- (a) Condition of natural resources improved: quantified reversal of land degradation trends;
- (b) Human conditions improved: positive impact on affected human populations;
- (c) Global benefits generated through effective implementation of the UNCCD.

18. Desertification and land degradation are the result of human-induced causes such as unsustainable land use patterns and practices, including deforestation, as well as natural causes such as drought. The complex interrelations between the natural and socio-economic causes and impacts of desertification are recognized in the Convention. This makes the UNCCD an instrument of choice for the sustainable development of drylands and the attainment of the MDGs in these regions. Moreover, through its impact on land and water resources, biodiversity and climate change, the UNCCD addresses global issues and generates global benefits.

19. Dryland climates are naturally characterized by low rainfall and generally high temperatures, with high temporal and spatial rainfall variability. Over time, dryland ecosystems and peoples have developed coping strategies that allowed them to adapt to climate variability. However, population growth, human development aspirations and changes in socio-economic conditions have led to the overutilization of drylands and to unsustainable land-use and management practices, increasing their vulnerability to drought and land degradation. In addition, climate change is expected to augment the frequency of extreme climatic events such as droughts, thereby contributing to the increased vulnerability of dryland ecosystems and communities. Widespread poverty and marginalization in dryland areas also means that affected populations have fewer resources at their disposal to mitigate the effects of prolonged droughts, often leading to food crises, famine, and mass population displacements.

20. Early work under the Convention was based on the links between desertification/land degradation – particularly low agricultural productivity – and the socio-economic conditions of affected communities, but recent work has shown a direct co-relation between poverty and land degradation, specifically in drylands. It is now recognized that poverty and land degradation are inextricably linked in a vicious downward spiral in which poverty leads to short-term and often unsustainable resource management strategies with the effect of maintaining or aggravating poverty conditions. It follows from this that curbing land degradation and desertification can make important contributions to reducing poverty and generating benefits at the community level as well as at the country level.

21. Moreover, most poor rural populations derive a large part of their incomes and livelihoods from ecosystem services. Protecting and, where possible, rehabilitating land and water resources can set in motion a virtuous cycle that is key to alleviating poverty from the local to the national level, and therefore to achieving the MDGs in a sustainable way. This can only be achieved through conscious and systematic implementation of strategies designed to provide primary land users with more diverse income alternatives, while building their capacity to manage natural resources sustainably.

22. A focus on policy incentives and sustained national and international investment in rehabilitation measures is necessary to ensure that local populations can continue to derive benefits from the exploitation of natural resources without affecting the continued provision of ecosystem services. Tools such as the valuation of ecosystem services in addition to socio-economic monitoring can be used to achieve both the MDGs and UNCCD objectives.

23. The complex interlinkages among land degradation, climate change and the vulnerability of dryland communities and ecosystems also need to be addressed in an integrated manner.

24. Interventions that strengthen the preparedness of dryland populations to deal with drought are not only essential to curb or avoid land degradation, they are also key strategies to adapt to climate change, protect biodiversity, avoid food crises and reduce poverty in drylands. Mitigating the effects of drought, therefore, appears to be a strategic area in which to develop synergistic strategies and generate global benefits.

(b) Expected impacts

25. The expected impacts are the direct and indirect, and the primary and secondary, long-term effects intended by the strategic objectives. The six expected impacts are:

- **Impact 1.1:** Productivity of drylands is increased in a sustainable manner contributing to improved livelihoods and improved national economic performance;
- **Impact 1.2:** Ecosystem goods and services are managed and maintained at sustainable levels while generating optimal benefits for dryland peoples and economies;
- **Impact 1.3:** People living in drylands and in areas affected by land degradation have a more diversified livelihood base and benefit from income generated from appropriate land-use options;
- **Impact 1.4:** The proportion of people living below the poverty line in drylands and areas affected by land degradation is reduced;
- **Impact 1.5:** The vulnerability of dryland ecosystems and people to climate change and drought is reduced through the improvement of normative frameworks and the application of sustainable land use and land management options;
- **Impact 1.6:** Global benefits and synergy are generated through the conservation of biodiversity and the mitigation of climate change attributed to improved land management and reduced/reversed land degradation trend.

(c) Indicators and targets (to be developed)

D. Operational objectives and expected results

26. The **operational objectives** are designed to support the attainment of the above-mentioned overarching goal and Strategic Objectives. The **expected results** are the intended short- and medium-term effects of the Operational Objectives.

1. Operational objective 1: Effective knowledge management systems are in place

(a) Rationale

27. When the Convention was negotiated, it was widely understood that the instrument could only be successful at curbing the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought if relevant scientific understanding would inform policy setting and the development of concrete management interventions. It was recognized that technical and scientific cooperation (Articles 17 to 19) would be a key element of the international instrument, bringing together scientists from around the world to address the most pressing and relevant research questions and generate relevant knowledge that would lay a reliable foundation for decision-making.

28. By assessing the science and knowledge work under the Convention in the past 10 years, some strengths and weaknesses of the UNCCD science bodies can be identified. In comparison to the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) has delivered relatively few concrete outcomes, mainly because the CST evolved into a forum where Parties “negotiate” science and technology information rather than providing independent views. Furthermore, to date, the CST has not been mandated to provide concrete scientific advice using scientific methods. Despite efforts to reform the CST, it continues to face mandate-related challenges. Its work programme should reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the Convention and focus on the scientific and technological needs of implementing Parties. To guide international, national and local policy decisions and interventions, the CST should become an international committee of excellence with regard to all aspects of combating land degradation, desertification and drought.

29. It is recognized that other existing institutions related to the CST, such as the Roster of Experts (RoE), the Group of Experts (GoE), should be critically reviewed. The regional activities such as Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs), and the subregional action programmes (SRAPs), as well as specifically designated centres of excellence, should be evaluated and integrated into an improved global science and technology network. The UNCCD’s broader science network could be retooled to produce relevant, readily available scientific advice to Parties and affected countries.

30. Although it is recognized that knowledge needs to continuously evolve, the major focus of this Strategic Plan should be to ensure that science and technology work is directly applicable to problem solving at the relevant management levels, and that knowledge and information is availed where and when it is most urgently needed. Thus, it is essential that knowledge generated should be action/management relevant; that this knowledge should be readily accessible to the end user; and that participatory science is more suited to respond to a specific situational context. Recognition and integration of local, traditional and indigenous knowledge is essential in this regard.

31. A real effort has to be made to establish a strong mechanism for knowledge and information exchange, and it is recognized that peer-to-peer exchanges might be the most successful approach. The furthering and strengthening of the TPNs and centres of excellence in affected countries, for example, can play major roles in peer interaction and outreach to the intended end users. The role of international collaboration and building of partnerships is highlighted, and a call for renewed commitment and support is voiced.

(b) Expected results

32. The expected results are as follows:

- **Result 1.1:** The UNCCD has established itself as an authority of scientific and technological excellence pertaining to sustainable land management by reforming and streamlining the operations and work programmes of its science and technology institutions (i.e., CST, RoE, GoE, ad hoc groups, TPNs, SRAPs, centres of excellence) into a lean and effective science platform;
- **Result 1.2:** Effective knowledge sharing systems are in place at the country level and facilitate the meaningful interaction with and between end users;

- **Result 1.3:** World class monitoring capacity to observe land degradation trends, support the identification of specific problem areas (“hot spots”) and help direct specific management interventions, is effectively integrated into the work of the Convention;
- **Result 1.4:** Effective and enhanced collaboration and a joint working mechanism between CST and other relevant United Nations agencies are established.

(c) Indicators and targets (to be developed)

2. Operational objective 2: Enabling policy environment is in place to combat desertification

(a) Rationale

33. The UNCCD is an instrument of international cooperation that seeks to curb land degradation/desertification and drought and mitigate the effects of drought through the implementation of a common policy framework. There are two interrelated elements to this framework: the adoption of effective strategies, programmes and measures to implement the Convention; and the creation of an enabling environment to facilitate action, which involves the integration of UNCCD objectives and approaches into the broader policy framework, sometimes referred to as “mainstreaming”.

34. The Convention’s record in fostering the development of effective strategies, programmes and measures, and of the enabling environment needed to reverse land degradation and mitigate the effects of droughts, is mixed. One of its successes has been the development of 88 national action programmes (NAPs) in 140 affected countries as well as several regional action programmes (RAPs) and SRAPs. However, their implementation has been made difficult by their unequal strategic and operational value.

35. The unequal success in implementation of NAPs also arises from their lack of integration into other policy areas, including agriculture and development planning in affected developing country Parties. Of particular importance are poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), national development plans and budgets, and national sustainable development plans. Synergy with other environmental instruments, including those addressing climate change and biodiversity, is also of major importance. Without such integration, the impact of NAPs and other strategies to combat desertification will remain marginal. This situation is mirrored in developed country Parties where desertification has not been fully integrated at the programmatic level within development agencies’ country assistance programmes. This has resulted in a financing gap that has a demobilizing effect.

36. One of the salient features of the UNCCD is its participatory approach to policy development and implementation. This strong focus on participation is based on the recognition that successful implementation can take place only through the empowerment of communities, including women, at the local level, working with local land managers and farmers and herders. This has led to the development of participatory processes to elaborate NAPs and other strategies.

37. However, the insufficient empowerment of local communities and the presence of perverse economic and policy incentives continue to act as barriers to implementing these strategies. Successful implementation of UNCCD-related strategies, programmes and measures will result from reforming the incentive structure and empowering local communities through the decentralization of land and resource management decision-making.

(b) Expected results

38. The expected results are as follows:

- **Result 2.1:** NAPs are progressively reshaped into iterative, results-based strategic documents supported by adequate scientific baseline information;
- **Result 2.2:** Affected country Parties integrate and prioritize their NAPs into regional, subregional and national development plans and other relevant sectoral plans. Developed country Parties mainstream UNCCD objectives into their development programmes/projects and offers adequate support to affected developing country Parties;
- **Result 2.3:** 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;
- **Result 2.4:** Perverse socio-economic and political incentives to sustainable land management are identified in affected developing country Parties and developed country Parties and, where appropriate, policies are implemented to remove them or neutralize their impact;
- **Result 2.5:** Effective participation of communities and stakeholders is supported by the decentralization of land and water management decision-making and through other empowerment strategies.

(c) Indicators and targets (to be developed)

3. Operational objective 3: Capacities in affected communities and countries are enhanced

(a) Rationale

39. Article 19 of the UNCCD and the various regional annexes include a special focus on capacity-building needs to ensure the successful implementation of the Convention. It is clear that mixed results have been achieved to date in curbing desertification, land degradation and the effects of drought, and that this can largely be attributed to a lack of capacity among stakeholders.

40. Over the past few years, countries have taken part in exercises such as the capacity development initiative (CDI) and the national capacity self-assessments (NCSA) for global environmental management, promoted by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as instruments to analyse national and local capacities to address and implement the Rio Conventions. Now that such assessments exist in a good number of countries and capacity strengths and weaknesses have been identified, strategies and action plans for systematically improving and supporting capacities need to be implemented and acted upon.

41. Capacity-building needs for the successful implementation of all three Rio Conventions seem to converge to a large extent and could potentially be filled in a synergistic manner. The UNCCD is particularly well equipped to support capacities at national and local levels through its strong community outreach and participatory nature.

42. Capacity development for environmental management cannot be viewed in isolation from the overall development process. In the case of the UNCCD, attention should be paid to broader, systemic issues that may hinder the achievement of sustainable land management and jeopardize the sustainability of any capacity development efforts. For example, sustainable land management (SLM) capacity is negatively affected by the spread of HIV/AIDS and its impact on rural populations. Factors that foster the more widespread adoption of best practices in sustainable rural development also need to be identified so they can be scaled up at the policy level.

43. Thus, the investments needed to systematically improve SLM capacities are, inter alia, prohibitively high, and strategies need to be long-term and linked to general education efforts. In the context of this Strategic Plan, capacity-building interventions should focus on supporting governments in improving the policy context for sustainable land management.

(b) Expected results

44. The expected results are as follows:

- **Result 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;
- **Result 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;
- **Result 3.3:** Major investments are made in support of capacity-building and development and meaningful partnerships are created in support of SLM capacity development in affected countries.

(c) Indicators and targets (to be developed)

4. Operational objective 4: Financial and technological means for effective implementation are in place

(a) Rationale

45. Financial and human resources mobilization and technology transfers are central elements of the UNCCD. The Convention calls for the mobilization of adequate, timely and predictable financial resources to support the implementation of programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought (Article 20). In its report, the JIU stressed that after 10 years of implementation, this UNCCD objective has yet to be met. This situation is a limiting factor to the effective implementation of the UNCCD. According to the JIU report, it

also affects the good functioning and efficient operations of the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM).

46. The JIU suggests three reasons for this financing gap. First, developed country Parties have not made a clear commitment to provide stable resources to UNCCD implementation. Second, developing country Parties have experienced mixed success in mainstreaming UNCCD objectives into national development plans and in mobilizing national resources. Third, development partners have failed to mainstream UNCCD programmes and activities into their programmes and projects.

47. It should be recognized that in many affected countries, financial and technological means are currently not adequate to achieve UNCCD objectives. Even if desertification and land degradation objectives are successfully mainstreamed into key development and economic policies, it will be difficult for countries to mobilize the required resources from national budgets. Thus, sufficient financial and technological means need to be made accessible to affected country Parties and support organizations, especially at local, national and regional levels.

48. The financing environment of the Convention changed over the first decade of implementation. Following the third GEF Assembly and UNCCD decision 6/COP.6, the GEF became a financial mechanism for the Convention, alongside the GM. This allows the Convention to access new financial resources under the GEF land degradation focal area. It also raises the need to ensure a strategic and programmatic convergence between the UNCCD and GEF approaches to land degradation. Finally, the complementary roles of the GEF and the GM still need clarification.

49. At the country level, synergistic action and improved programmatic convergence among donors remain challenges that affect the effectiveness and impact of actions to combat land desertification. In its report entitled *Delivering as One*, the High-level Panel on United Nations System-Wide Coherence stresses the need for improved coherence among donors and recipients at the national level. Such coherence is needed in the context of limited resources. Initiatives such as country programme partnerships have been effective in fostering such coherence.

50. Over the next decade, it is expected that innovative financial resources, including private sector investment and markets for ecological services, will play an increasingly prominent role in the financing environment. Moreover, climate change mitigation and adaptation financing might be increasingly channelled to drylands. Efforts must be made to harness these new financial resources and ensure their consistency with the Convention approach.

51. Finally, technology transfer and adaptation remains a challenge, because financial, know-how and intellectual property issues, as well as the lack of economic and policy incentives, impede the dissemination of existing and new technologies. Effective means to remove existing barriers and create new incentives to technology transfers and adaptation should be explored.

(b) Expected results

52. The expected results are as follows:

- **Result 4.1:** 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;
- **Result 4.2:** Integrated investment strategies for leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources are developed in affected country Parties to increase the effectiveness and impact of interventions;
- **Result 4.3:** In partnership with development partners and Parties, the GM and GEF implement their complementary roles effectively, with a view to providing and mobilizing adequate resources to implement UNCCD objectives and to support the UNCCD process;
- **Result 4.4:** The GM, the GEF and development partners explore innovative sources of finance, including private sector investment, market-based mechanisms, philanthropic donations and synergistic financing to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, including support for climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as biodiversity protection;
- **Result 4.5:** Access to technology is facilitated through adequate financing and effective economic and policy incentives. An inventory of technology needs and available resources is developed.

(c) Indicators and targets (to be developed)5. Operational objective 5: Effective institutional arrangements are in place(a) Rationale

53. One of the underlying principles that led to the adoption of the UNCCD is that the international community needed a collective instrument to effectively address the causes and impacts of land degradation and drought. Convention institutions and governance play a fundamental role in facilitating international cooperation and supporting Parties to implement common objectives at regional and national levels.

54. In its first decade, the UNCCD record in facilitating cooperation and effective implementation has been mixed. This situation can be attributed in part to the sub-optimal performance of its governance structure and institutions. For example, the COP has focused much of its attention on process-related issues, thereby limiting its effectiveness in addressing substantive implementation issues. The creation of structures and processes at the international level (for example, review or science committees) is an essential component of an efficient governance system, but governing bodies should ensure that procedural issues are not too resource intensive.

55. The JIU noted the lack of an effective interim decision-making mechanism between COP sessions and recommended strengthening the Bureau. The JIU also noted that UNCCD focal points are often located in weak ministries and appointed at a junior level. Moreover, many developing country Parties' focal points lack the financial and human capacities to effectively

participate in COPs and associated Convention processes. This has led to unequal participation among Parties and to a disconnect between COP decisions and compliance at the national level.

56. The CRIC performs important functions in measuring progress in implementing the UNCCD and in serving as a platform to share best practices. However, it has not met all expectations due to the absence of an effective measurement framework with clear reporting guidelines. Substantial and interactive discussions at CRIC sessions must be facilitated.

57. Reporting is a key strategy to encourage compliance with the provisions of an international instrument. Effective reporting from Parties requires robust guidelines, performance indicators, adequate capacity and financing. Reporting guidelines adopted under the Convention are not robust enough to promote implementation and improve compliance. Moreover, as noted in the JIU report, UNCCD reporting is under-funded compared to its sister conventions.

58. Civil society participation is also key to the achievement of the Convention objectives of transparency, monitoring and the sharing of best practices. The UNCCD has been innovative in including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in its substantive discussions in the context of the COP and CRIC. The JIU report pointed to the need to systematize and make more transparent the selection process for participation of NGOs. Their participation needs to be supported at all levels, from national to international.

59. Despite the dedication and professionalism of their staff and management, the performance of the main two Convention institutions, the secretariat and the GM, has been sub-optimal in many instances. Performance has been impeded by the difficulty in clearly delineating the two institutions' respective mandates, resulting in institutional tensions. Conflicting views on the roles and functions of the two organizations has also led to expanding demands by the COP without the provision of corresponding financial and human resources. In its report, the JIU stressed that the availability and predictability of adequate resources is essential to support effective management and programme planning.

60. Under the Convention, several regional, subregional and national level institutions have been established over the past decade. These include the appointment of dedicated national focal points and, in certain cases, NAP committees and implementing agencies. Furthermore, regional entities such as TPNs and centres of excellence have been designated, providing some level of devolution of anti-desertification action. These regional, subregional and national institutions could provide platforms for the synergistic implementation of all multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in the medium- and long-term.

(b) Expected results

61. The expected results are as follows:

- **Result 5.1:** The COP adopts a strategic plan and a corresponding work programme to focus on implementation issues. The Bureau is given sufficient legislative power to enhance its authority so as to meet any emergencies when the COP is not in session;
- **Result 5.2:** High-ranking officials of relevant ministries are in charge of UNCCD affairs in developed and developing country Parties. Convention focal points are

better capacitated to fully engage in responding to the requirements under the Convention, and contribute to its continued development;

- **Result 5.3:** The CRIC is organized around an effective performance measurement framework and its agenda is organized to maximize substantial and interactive discussions. 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, advises on new reporting guidelines; these are adopted and financial support is increased for developing country Parties' reporting;
- **Result 5.4:** The secretariat of the Convention and the GM develop biannual individual and joint work programmes consistent with this strategy for adoption by the COP;
- **Result 5.5:** Revised procedures are adopted for the participation of NGOs in the COP and other activities, including clear selection criteria and a mechanism to ensure a balance of participants from different regions. Predictable financial support is provided to ensure continuous NGO participation at and between sessions;
- **Result 5.6:** National coordinating bodies in affected developing countries are strengthened.

(c) Indicators and targets (to be developed)

#### **IV. FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

(to be developed)

Roles and responsibilities of actors and of Convention institutions to be developed in line with operational objectives.

#### **V. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

(to be developed)

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