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Assessment of the alignment of action programmes and their implementation in accordance with The Strategy

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Note by the secretariat

Summary

In its decision 2/COP.10 the Conference of the Parties (COP) acknowledged the need to speed up the alignment process of national, subregional and regional action programmes with The Strategy, and requested the Convention institutions to continue providing affected country Parties with support to build institutional and technical capacity for the effective alignment and implementation of action programmes within available resources.

In the same decision the COP also requested the Convention institutions to continue providing relevant technical assistance for the preparation, revision and alignment of subregional and regional action programmes, and requested the Executive Secretary, in coordination with the Global Environment Facility, to report to its eleventh session, through the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), on the implementation of the provisions of that decision.

Further, decision 2/COP.10 recalls the COP's considerations of decision 13/COP.10 on the assessment of the implementation of the Convention, and specifically the need to further analyse the alignment process and to review the issue at the eleventh session of the CRIC

The present document reports on the implementation of decision 2/COP.10 and related issues, which that decision embodies, as emanating from decision 13/COP.10, and offers conclusions and recommendation for the consideration of the CRIC.

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I. Introduction

1. Article 9 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) stipulates that in carrying out their obligations, affected country Parties shall, inter alia, prepare and implement national action programmes (NAPs), utilizing and building, where possible, on subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs), as the central element of the strategy to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

2. By its decision 3/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted a 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy). The Strategy acknowledges that there are a number of constraints that prevent the effective operationalization of the Convention, and stipulates the use of a result-based management approach in support of a more efficacious implementation process. It also urges affected country Parties to align their action programmes with The Strategy through, inter alia, addressing the outcomes under the five operational objectives and revising their implementation activities to ensure that they comply with these outcomes.

3. The COP at its tenth session, having considered the report of the ninth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC),¹ specifically its recommendations pertaining to the NAP, SRAP and RAP alignment processes, adopted decision 2/COP.10 acknowledging the need to speed up the alignment of action programmes with The Strategy.

4. In the same decision the COP requested the Convention institutions to continue providing relevant technical assistance for the preparation, revision and alignment of SRAPs and RAPs. It also requested the Executive Secretary, in coordination with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to report to its eleventh session, through the CRIC, on implementation of the provisions of that decision.

5. Further, decision 2/COP.10 recalls the COP's considerations of decision 13/COP.10 on the assessment of the implementation of the Convention, and specifically the need to further analyse the alignment process and to review the issue at the eleventh session of the CRIC as regards:

- (a) The reasons for the slow implementation rate of national action programmes;
- (b) Why only a limited number of partnership agreements have been established and to explore the possibility of increasing the number of such agreements;
- (c) Difficulties encountered by Parties in developing and implementing integrated investment frameworks;
- (d) Why the majority of country-level investments relating to the Convention are either not considered to contribute or do not contribute to the implementation of national action programmes.

6. The present document reports on the implementation of decision 2/COP.10 and related issues, which that decision embodies, as emanating from decision 13/COP.10. It details the support given to the action programmes, reports on progress made since CRIC 9 with respect to the alignment of the action programmes in accordance with The Strategy, and offers conclusions and recommendations for consideration by the CRIC.

¹ See document ICCD/CRIC(9)/16, paragraphs 29–40 and 116–126.

II. The process of alignment of action programmes with The Strategy

A. Support to institutional and technical capacity-building for the preparation, revision, alignment and implementation of action programmes

7. The final report of CRIC 9 and decision 2/COP.10 both underlined the need for further support for institutional and technical capacity-building to increase momentum of the alignment process, and called on the Convention institutions to provide such support in accordance with their respective mandates. In compliance with this mandate the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM), in collaboration with other partners and operating within the confines of resource availability, embarked on a programme of support for capacity-building. In accordance with Article 11 of the Convention and paragraph 45 of decision 3/COP.8 priority was given to NAP alignment. But the SRAP and RAP processes were also addressed, again taking into account resource availability.

8. According to the data gathered from the latest reports and information secured through the secretariat's direct enquiries from affected country Parties, progress is being made with the action programme alignment process in general. The figures shows that 11 countries have aligned NAPs, 27 have reported good progress, and a further 40 have begun or are about to begin the process.

9. The SRAP and RAP alignment process remains seriously challenging and no SRAP or RAP is as yet aligned; there are many reasons for this with the lack proper of coordination and adequate resources being chief among them. Some progress is being made, however, as detailed in sections II.A.2 and II.A.3 below.

1. Support to national action programmes

10. For the period under review (from CRIC 9 to the present), the secretariat and the GM ensured greater focus on the alignment process, giving special attention to the issue of institutional and technical capacity-building to support the alignment process through:

(a) The organization of workshops on capacity-building at regional and/or subregional level. These workshops, which were designed to inform national focal points of the conceptual, legal and scientific basis and method of alignment, were held in 2011 in Algiers (for Africa), Bali (for Asia/Pacific), Guatemala (for Central America), Mexico City (for the Andean, and the Caribbean), and Bonn (for Central and Eastern Europe). The workshops in Algiers and Bali covered all of Annexes I and II and were exercises meant to kick start the NAP alignment process in these regions. Those in Guatemala and Mexico City focused on enhancing capacity for the development and alignment of NAPs and SRAPs, whereas the workshop for Central and Eastern Europe focused on NAPs and the RAP;

(b) Working with and through some subregional entities, including the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (Comité permanent inter-État de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel (CILSS)) and The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Africa, and the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD) in Latin America and the Caribbean, to advance the NAP alignment process in individual countries of these subregions.

11. In July 2010 the Council of GEF approved the granting to all eligible country Parties to the Convention of up to USD 150,000 to support the enabling activities of national reporting and the alignment of the NAPs. It was decided that Parties could access these

funds either by direct access, through a GEF implementing agency or by joining the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Umbrella Project.

12. Working with the GM, the GEF and UNEP, the secretariat supported and contributed to the development of the UNEP Umbrella Project that foresees the provision of support to the reporting and NAP alignment processes in eligible affected country Parties (ADCPs). This project, to be implemented by UNEP, involves 52 affected country Parties.

13. Based on the framework of the Umbrella Project, the secretariat worked with UNEP and the GEF to develop a Medium Size Project to provide support for institutional and technical capacity-building for the reporting and NAP alignment to a further 20 ADCPs. All participating country Parties under both projects shall receive USD 50,000 to support their reporting and NAP alignment efforts at the national level.

14. The secretariat provided technical assistance to all those country Parties that indicated that they wanted to access the GEF funding either directly or through a GEF implementing agency, and requested help to do so. This assistance included reviewing the projects the Parties prepared, advising the Parties accordingly, and cooperating with the GEF and UNEP to ensure that Parties received the funds as quickly as possible.

15. The secretariat, in keeping with its mandate granted in decision 1/COP.10, has scheduled subregional capacity-building workshops for the 2012–2013 biennium. The implementation of this programme has been consciously delayed in order to ensure that countries would be able to use the GEF support as outlined above to continue the momentum at the national level once these exercises have been held. A minimum of seven subregional workshops are planned to be held by autumn 2013, with a further four by the spring of 2014. To help ensure that these workshops address the capacity-building needs identified by the concerned Parties, the secretariat has already requested updated information from the Parties, and has planned the contents of the workshop accordingly.

16. The secretariat and the GM supported the development of additional technical documents to provide information on the alignment process. Some of these have already been made available on the websites, and others are being fine-tuned for use during the upcoming workshops, and for later release on the websites. Finally, there are plans to develop a basic kit on action programme alignment and make it available to affected country Parties by COP 11.

2. Support to subregional action programmes

17. Taking into account the recommendations of the final report of CRIC 9, as outlined in section II.A above, the secretariat supported a series of subregional workshops in 2011 that focused on promoting alignment of action programmes with The Strategy. These workshops were organized along regional and subregional lines in part to allow them to address the question of the alignment of the SRAPs in the respective subregions. However, while the Parties were pleased, these efforts on their own could never be enough to ensure alignment of SRAPs. Because of limited time and resources these workshops could not go far beyond dealing with the conceptual and legal bases for the alignment of the SRAP while touching upon the mechanism necessary to ensure alignment. The SRAPs that benefited from these workshops are those of the West and Central African subregions (Annex I), the North-east and the South-east Asia subregions (Annex II) and the Andean, Southern Cone (within the framework of the Gran Chaco) and Caribbean subregions (Annex III).

18. This process of providing technical support is ongoing as no SRAP is yet fully aligned to The Strategy. The challenges of capacity-building in this regard are many and difficult to resolve, including questions of:

- (a) Governance;

- (b) Coordination;
- (c) Lack of technical and scientific expertise;
- (d) Lack of proper institutional setting.

19. In an effort to provide more assistance to address these issues of capacity-building to support SRAP alignment, the secretariat will organize a series of subregional exercises in 2013 and 2014. These workshops will focus on capacity-building to support both NAP and SRAP development and alignment, focusing on the practical organization of the alignment process. The aim is to ensure that the SRAP alignment process is continued and completed bearing in mind that most subregions already have a SRAP in some stage of development.²

20. The Regional Coordinating Units (RCUs) in the various regions continue to provide technical advice on alignment of the SRAPs through, inter alia, working with the regional committees where they are established, and offering technical assistance on the revision and alignment of specific SRAPs.

21. The SRAP alignment process has a natural lag based on the status of NAP development and alignment. This is in keeping with Article 11 of the Convention, and the relevant articles of the five Annexes that indicate the role of the SRAP in complementing and increasing the efficiency of the national programmes.

3. Support to regional action programmes

22. As outlined in section II.A above, for the period under review the alignment of NAPs was given priority by the country Parties and the secretariat. As a result, the progress of the NAP alignment process has a consequential effect on the momentum of the RAP process. This general picture holds for all five Annexes.

23. Unlike the NAP process, the SRAP and RAP processes have no secured financial support. Nevertheless, for the period under review, the secretariat continued its work in support of the RAP development and alignment process. In this regard the following should be noted:

(a) In Africa work is progressing with the Africa Regional Committee with the aim of reviewing and ultimately aligning the RAP. The chief preoccupation over this period has been how to address the weakness of the six thematic programme networks. The lack of resources and poor coordination are major challenges to be addressed, together with issues of cohesive political will, governance and ownership, if efforts to provide support are to achieve serious results;

(b) In Asia the secretariat assisted with the review and update of the RAP. It is hoped that the concerned Parties will consider this latest version of the RAP (2013–2018) at the Asian Regional Meeting to be held before COP 11. The provision of institutional and/or technical support for the RAP process is made more challenging by the fact that Asia has no regional committee or any recognized regional body set up by the country Parties to deal with the issues of the RAP. The secretariat has therefore tried to assist the region in this regard, because having a mechanism of and for regional coordination and cooperation is central to the very existence of the RAP. Additionally, the secretariat is exploring with several Parties of the region the possibility for the those Parties to provide some material support to this process;

(c) In Latin America and the Caribbean much work is being done on developing an integrated financial strategy that would support the financing of the implementation of

² ICCD/CRIC(10)/10.

the RAP. Work is ongoing through the RCU with the Regional Executive Committee to ensure the realization of this in the not too distant future;

(d) A workshop on the alignment of action programmes, including the RAP, in Central and Eastern Europe was held immediately before COP 10. Since then a technical officer has been appointed, based at the secretariat in Bonn, to work directly with these Parties, and the task of supporting the region's efforts to design and develop an aligned NAP is now better supported. A workshop focusing on the practical organization of action programme alignment for the region is scheduled for later in 2013. At a meeting in December 2012, the representatives of the region in the Bureau of the COP and the Bureaux of its subsidiary bodies discussed and agreed on the main elements of the roadmap of their RAP development. According to the proposed plan, a task force on RAP development will be established during the regional meeting to be held before CRIC 11 in April 2013. It is envisaged that the preliminary elements of RAP will be presented and discussed at COP 11.

B. Reasons for the slow implementation of the national action programme alignment process

24. In making this assessment the secretariat consulted the latest and previous national reports submitted to the CRIC, and previous secretariat reports to the CRIC and COP, and conducted direct enquires with concerned country Parties during the regional and subregional workshops held on action programme alignment and through a comprehensive survey on the process. From these sources and the reports and observations of the officers working in the respective RCUs, the following are identified as the major reasons for the slow implementation of the NAP alignment process (see paragraph 8), although there is variation across individual countries:

(a) A general lack of a vision and an articulated and cohesive multi-sectoral perspective and strategy pertaining to alignment;

(b) A complete lack of a scientific base and the absence of necessary socioeconomic information and technology in some affected country Parties, making them reluctant to undertake the alignment process, fearing that they could never properly complete it;

(c) Shortage and weakness of institutional and human capacity in many countries. This is a serious challenge and constant plague to the process;

(d) A general deficit in political leadership and an inability to persuade Governments of the value of controlling desertification/land degradation;

(e) An understanding of the NAP as a resource mobilization instrument rather than a strategic framework to help address structural policy, and institutional and capacity deficiencies in addressing the issues of sustainable land management and sustainable development;

(f) Where governance and institutional framework to support and promote the process are in place, these are often, for various reasons, dysfunctional, ineffective and insufficient to drive the process forward;

(g) Many Parties remain sceptical and uncertain about the benefit of alignment to the implementation of their NAP. With limited resources dedicated internally or from external partners, the view is that an aligned NAP provides little guarantee of future funding for implementation of the Convention. There is also the view that too much emphasis is placed on alignment rather than on practical implementation;

- (h) There is a lack of clarity among many countries on the nature, purpose and benefit of NAP alignment;
- (i) This lack of clarity aggravates low levels of awareness and priority setting by political decision makers. NAPs are therefore generally overlooked in these circumstances and are not deemed important to the national development agenda in some countries;
- (j) In some countries the lack of clarity also has a tremendous negative effect on the mainstreaming of NAPs into sector plans and policies that is essential for effective alignment;
- (k) Some Parties perceive the issues to be covered in NAP alignment to be unrealistically broad and deep, given levels of capacity and financing available;
- (l) There is insufficient evidence of the impact of NAPs on core development concerns, such as poverty alleviation and food and water security, to galvanize the support of serious political will and policymakers in general;
- (m) The role and importance of synergy in the NAP alignment are not fully understood by many countries. Consequently, little serious effort is made by many Parties to address synergy with the other Rio Conventions at national level;
- (n) Issues relating to the Convention concern a wide range of national policies and actors. In many cases there is little interrelation between these policies, and poor internal coordination among these actors. This could only negatively affect the implementation of the alignment process;
- (o) The overriding majority of ADCPs identified insufficient financing as a major factor. In addition to the Convention receiving relatively little GEF financing, it has not been successful in generating sizable and continuous flows of funds specifically dedicated to implementation at national level. This can be compared to the considerably greater funds countries may have access to under the other Rio Conventions;
- (p) Most ADCPs did not embark on NAP alignment for quite some time after the adoption of The Strategy, citing lack of necessary financial and other resources as the main reasons. Even when some funding was available it often proved insufficient and unpredictable in time. These Parties are concerned that there would be no sustained financing for the implementation, and as a consequence they view alignment as meaningless to implementation;
- (q) In some countries the only institution concerned with the NAP alignment process is the national focal point, but this has no real connection to the other relevant public institutions, collaboration with which is necessary if effective alignment is to be achieved;
- (r) In some ADCPs the national focal point is one person responsible for many other issues and is too overworked to be concerned with this “secondary matter”;
- (s) In many countries the alignment process has been viewed as something new and separate from all other developmental processes. This had lead to the view that this process is competing with all other processes for seriously scarce resources already earmarked for other purposes;
- (t) In many countries there is a serious dearth of awareness at all levels, which denies the process the informed support needed to drive it forward;
- (u) Some donor countries have shown little or no interest in supporting the implementation of the NAP alignment process and this in itself greatly influences the attitude of some ADCPs that claim inability to engage in this process without such support.

C. Assessment of progress and experience with Global Environment Facility financing for the national action programme alignment

25. In July 2010 the decision of the GEF Council (see paragraph 11) allowed all eligible country Parties access to a sum of USD 150,000 for land degradation enabling activities in support of their national reporting and NAP formulation and/or alignment. This is the first time that the GEF has allocated funding directly supporting the NAP alignment globally.

26. Eligible country Parties were invited to use one of the following three options when accessing these funds:

- (a) The direct access modality;
- (b) The GEF agency modality;
- (c) The Umbrella project modality.

27. At the time of preparation of the present report, the GEF informed the secretariat that 93 of the 144 eligible Parties had applied to access these funds – 10 by direct access, 11 through the GEF agency modality; and 72 through the Umbrella project modality.

28. Of the 72 Parties applying through the Umbrella project modality being implemented by UNEP, 52 shall be covered by the original Umbrella Project and the other 20 shall be covered through a Medium Size Project.

29. The secretariat conducted a “Survey on challenges and constraints faced during the 2012–2013 reporting and review process by country Parties that could not submit their national report to the UNCCD by 30 October 2012” which included country Parties eligible for the GEF funding; and, also did an analysis of the process of access to these funds thus far. Based on these exercises the following conclusions were drawn on the effect of this funding support to the NAP alignment process:

- (a) All recipient country Parties welcomed the GEF Council’s decision to provide some support to the NAP alignment process;
- (b) Parties also welcomed the organization by the GEF of the series of extended constituency workshops that provided a better understanding of the process of accessing GEF funds;
- (c) Most responses indicated that this financing will indeed add impetus to the NAP alignment process as national focal points (NFPs) and policymakers can now rely on some financial assistance;
- (d) Some Parties noted the huge discrepancy between the funds offered by the GEF for enabling activities for the land degradation focal areas and those offered for the same purpose under the other two Rio Conventions;
- (e) Most countries opted for accessing funds through the Umbrella Project or the Medium Size Project even though these options offered less funding, simply because using either of the other two options was too tedious and cumbersome and was very lengthy. Some Parties did not consider the opting of direct access because they lacked capacity to prepare the project portfolio required;
- (f) Some recipients complained that even when using the Umbrella Project or Medium Size Project option, delivery of the funds took an inordinate length of time;
- (g) Even with three options available, and encouragement by both the secretariat and the GEF, some country Parties were reluctant to apply for these funds. This shows a serious measure of apathy towards approaching the GEF;

(h) Many countries expressed the view that the sums were insufficient to complete two national reporting processes and the NAP alignment process;

(i) Others Parties stated that there are too many formalities and procedural problems in accessing the funds, thus making the process too demanding and laborious and the sum to be had not worth such effort and time;

(j) Some Parties indicated that there is little flexibility in the access options, stating that they were forced to use the three on offer or simply get no funding;

(k) On access through a GEF agency and the Umbrella Project or Medium Size Project, some Parties expressed that view that the GEF implementing agencies need to be more much more accommodating to recipient Parties;

(l) With regard specifically to the Umbrella Project and Medium Size Project, some Parties indicated that they cannot expect much concrete support from the implementing agencies for NAP alignment. Indeed they argue that the key question of UNEP supporting capacity-building is not seriously addressed within the framework of these projects;

(m) Some Parties have problems with the transfer of funds from the GEF because internal problems of banking and bureaucracy lead to difficulties in establishing the country unique account required.

30. The overall conclusion to be drawn from the above points is that although all responding Parties indicated their satisfaction that the GEF is supporting the NAP alignment process, there are many issues that require serious attention, including:

(a) The amount of financial support offered;

(b) The efficaciousness of the procedure being used;

(c) The perceived limited impact that the UNEP projects will have on NAP alignment;

(d) The serious lack of capacity in some countries to access the GEF;

(e) The feeling by many country Parties that cutting through the different levels of bureaucracy at the GEF is virtually impossible on their own.

31. There are also problems with some countries applying very late for the funding, and others not having up to date information on the process. Still others lack the internal coordination between the Convention national focal points and the national GEF political and operation focal points.

32. All of the above are serious challenges that will have to be addressed urgently if the GEF support to the NAP alignment process is to fully achieve the desired results. These challenges can and will be met through much greater coordination, collaboration and cooperation between the GEF and the concerned countries, and by eligible Parties improving their internal capacities.

III. Support to the implementation of the Convention, action programmes and partnership agreements

A. Analysis of the causes of the limited number of partnership agreements established in support of the action programme implementation process

33. In preparing this analysis the method and approach used was that as described in paragraph 24 which indicates that most Parties do not have a strategy for partnership development at national level in support of the action programme implementation process. Where proactive efforts are being made, they remain ad hoc.

34. NAPs receive limited political support and the fight against desertification, land degradation and drought is rarely articulated or prioritized explicitly in national development plans that attract external donor funding. Development partners state that issues explicitly prioritized as part of wider national development plans are more likely to attract interested partners and financing.

35. National focal points generally do not have the access required to make radical changes to national development planning processes or to enhance current low levels of engagement with finance and national planning ministries/commissions. The resulting limited awareness among potential partners and Government officials about the benefits of combating land degradation in the medium and long term leads to a lack of cooperation between ministries, national underinvestment and understaffing, making the process of partnership formation even more complex.

36. The process of establishing partnerships is overly bureaucratic, complicated and non-inclusive at national level. Some Parties are concerned that working in partnership will add to the workload of the focal points.

37. There is no common understanding of how to identify and form partnerships. There is limited capacity among focal points for identifying possible partners or for agreeing with them about the mutual benefit of developing and making a long-term commitment to a partnership to combat land degradation.

38. Limited effort has been made to generate, from the full spectrum of stakeholders, the wider support necessary to establish an enabling environment for greater partnership arrangement. Although there has been steady growth in the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) and science and technology institutions in the Convention processes during the implementation period of The Strategy,³ the potential role of the private sector and CSOs in effective partnerships has been under-appreciated. CSOs and other grassroots stakeholders could be better engaged in advocacy to promote sustainable land management and to drive behavioural change among land users.

39. The involvement of the private sector is highlighted and agreed to be critical but a lack of incentives for the private sector and caution/wariness on the public side have hampered partnership formation.

³ ICCD/CRIC(11)/3.

B. Analysis of the difficulties encountered by affected country Parties in developing and implementing integrated investment frameworks

40. The ultimate goal of the Integrated Financing Strategy and the integrated investment framework (IFS/IIF) is to ensure adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for sustainable land management. The immediate objectives are to use existing sources and instruments more efficiently, and to mobilize new and additional resources, through the creation of an enabling environment.⁴

41. There is a lack of clarity among some Parties about what to expect from the IFS/IIF process and how and why it complements work on NAP alignment and implementation.

42. There is uncertainty about the order in which to develop NAPs, IFSs and IIFs. There is a perceived inefficiency and duplication between the NAP alignment process and IFS/IIF development.

43. Parties are concerned about the length of time it takes to develop IFS/IIFs as implementation comes to a halt while Parties try to identify capacities and resources. At the same time, existing investment frameworks are not fully compatible with the aligned NAPs. As a result there is concern that even a well-developed IFS/IIF could hinder the implementation of the NAP, and vice versa.

44. Parties were concerned about inadequate levels of financial resources received as a result of GM support and the IFS/IIF.

45. Parties noted that the modus operandi of the GM has evolved. Several national focal points felt that the GM should revert to its former role as a fund mobilizer rather than as a “facilitator”.

46. Parties are unclear about the role of IFS and IIF for SRAPs and RAPs.

C. Analysis of the reasons why the majority of country-level investments relating to the Convention are either not considered to contribute or do not contribute to the implementation of national action programmes

47. To successfully implement the Convention and the NAP, sustainable land management needs to be mainstreamed into a range of policies and sectors. There are significant activities at affected country Party level to combat desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) but they are diffused among policies and actors, and so are not readily attributed to the NAP process.

48. Most NAPs have been able to capture the broad technical aspects of desertification/land degradation and certain strategic elements, but programmatic approaches in other areas, such as agriculture, water and forest management, with more direct tangible, short-term benefit, have attracted greater political support at the country-level. It appears that it is this contribution of the Convention to other sectors (agriculture, climate change, rural development) or to broad national development objectives that attracts the greatest share of investment.

49. Most investments relating to the Convention are instigated through national development planning processes or as a result of bilateral discussions between development partners on a sector basis, without explicit reference to the Convention or the NAP.

⁴ Global Mechanism of the UNCCD (2008) ‘Integrated financing Strategy for Sustainable Land Management’, available at < http://www.global-mechanism.org/dynamic/documents/document_file/ifs_eweb.pdf>.

50. There is little evidence of widespread commitment to support post-alignment NAP implementation per se.

51. For most Parties, DLDD and sustainable land management are not in themselves national priorities, so political backing/awareness of the NAP is limited;

52. The lack of awareness about the global benefits of the Convention and the NAP process hinders bilateral funding. The level of awareness of the NAP and the NAP alignment process, among development partners present in affected country Parties, is also low. Many development partners have their own sector priorities in addition to the priorities outlined by affected country Parties.

53. Neither the Convention NAPs nor IFS/IIF documents are considered to be an adequate vehicle for coordination of investments into addressing such a multi-sectoral problem. As a result, investments relating to the Convention are counted not as contributing to the implementation of NAPs, but rather to the achievement of other goals and targets.

54. A lack of progress on practical synergy between the Rio Conventions in terms of country level implementation continues to hinder the identification of partnerships and leads to confusion, overlap and both double- and or under-accounting issues during reporting on investments. Investments that contribute to Convention goals are in fact counted towards the higher profile and politically more sensitive climate change or biodiversity goals. Some Parties emphasize that some investments made do support the Convention implementation even though these investments were not conceived with this as the declared objective. These include investments in such areas as forest management, and food security.

55. UNCCD receives the least funding of the three Rio Conventions from the GEF. As a result, the magnitude of investments in NAPs is low. Some countries report that there are major difficulties with effectively implementing and achieving synergy at country level, due in part to this big disparity in GEF funding for the UNCCD vis a vis the other Rio Conventions notwithstanding that GEF-5 includes several important reforms, such as individual country allocation under the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR).

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

56. **Significant progress has been made with the alignment process but it is still far too slow bearing in mind the 80 per cent alignment stipulated as an indicator in Annex III of decision 13/COP.9.**

57. **Potential partners have multiple options for investment and most of them do not seem to fully recognize the potential of the NAP or the added value of alignment.**

58. **Despite the expressed enthusiasm for NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs at affected developing country Party level, there is confusion about the purpose and utility of alignment especially in view of a lack of clarity about investment opportunities and sustained financial support for post-alignment implementation.**

59. **Most NAPs have been able to capture the technical aspects of desertification and land degradation and some strategic elements. The IFS is able to identify potential sources of finance. However, as they currently stand, neither the NAPs nor IFS/IIFs independently provide the streamlined and practical/financial support to countries that was envisioned.**

60. In addition to the Convention receiving relatively little GEF financing, sizable and continuous flows of funds specifically dedicated to implementation at national level are limited. While confirming the important role played by IFIs and bilateral cooperation agencies in UNCCD financing, GM analysis of financial flows and operational objective 5 contained in documents ICCD/CRIC(11)/11 and ICCD/CRIC(11)/12, showed that domestic finance is often found to match or even exceed external finance. To accelerate alignment, the likelihood of sustained post-alignment finance for implementation is crucial.

61. NAPs need to be better mainstreamed in development agendas and vital sector policy areas such as agriculture, water and forest management that have high political and policy support at the country level and are gaining momentum.

62. The majority of countries have limited capacity to identify and form relevant partnerships.

63. Incentives to engage with relevant civil society organizations and corporate sector partners are rare.

B. Recommendations

64. The CRIC may wish to consider recommending the following for consideration by the COP at its eleventh session:

(a) The COP to review the action programme alignment process in the context of the Mid-Term evaluation of The Strategy, and making sure that the alignment process is adjusted accordingly;

(b) The CRIC to agree on a clear unequivocal definition of NAPs and IFS/IIFs processes and their relationship, ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of the same;

(c) Affected country Parties to adopt a participatory approach to operational planning, identification of resource mobilization opportunities, outlining of challenges such as gaps in technical and human capacity, and a systematic approach to the realisation of synergy between the Rio Conventions at global and country Party levels;

(d) Partner organizations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), to continue their work on a coherent United Nations system-wide contribution to the implementation of the UNCCD and land challenges to ensure maximum impact from limited resources and to mainstream land degradation neutrality through requesting the UNEP Environmental Management Group and other relevant United Nations system partners;

(e) Development partners, financial institutions particularly the GEF, to provide specific support for project development within the framework of the SRAPs and RAPs thereby fostering their implementation;

(f) Development partners, financial institutions particularly the GEF, to provide capacity-building for national focal points on advocacy for the NAPs to be fully integrated into the national development planning process, and on the creation of partnership to facilitate implementation;

- (g) Development partners to place greater focus on the importance and the absolute necessity to support NAP alignment and effective implementation;
 - (h) Parties to engage in harnessing the power of civil society, including the business sector in support of the effective implementation of the Convention;
 - (i) Parties to provide greater incentives for investment. The private sector may require financial and market-based incentives, and the business sector to join inter-agency coordinating committees where they exist and support implementation of the NAPs;
 - (j) The CRIC to agree on a long-term vision for the NAP alignment process vis a vis the overall sustainable land management goals is crucial. For the said goal to be achieved there should be a global plan to mobilize the resources and capacities required for its realisation at the national level;
 - (k) The GM to provide more support to help countries to access GEF funds.
 - (l) The UNCCD secretariat to increase advocacy and collaborate with the GEF secretariat in the run-up to the GEF-6 replenishment to ensure that GEF parties are more conversant with the financial needs for the implementation of the NAPs and therefore support the provision of more funding via the GEF for the same.
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