



Convention to Combat Desertification

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COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
First session
18-29 November 2002
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22, PARAGRAPH 2(a) AND (b), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION

REVIEW OF REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION BY AFFECTED ASIAN COUNTRY PARTIES, INCLUDING ON THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AND ON EXPERIENCE GAINED AND RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES

Addendum

INPUTS FROM THE REGIONAL MEETING OF AFFECTED ASIAN COUNTRY PARTIES

Note by the secretariat

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## I. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

### A. Opening of the meeting

1. The fifth regional meeting of Asian focal points, held to enable the Asian country Parties and their partners to formulate conclusions and recommendations as a regional input to the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), was opened in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, on 8 July 2002.

2. Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), delivered an opening statement highlighting the achievements made under the UNCCD, initiatives and issues relating to the UNCCD in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the review process through national reporting to facilitate the implementation of the Convention, and key issues requiring the attention of the meeting. Mr. Taoufik Ben Amara, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in the Syrian Arab Republic, in his opening remarks, referred to a variety of activities undertaken to assist Syrian stakeholders in carrying out activities to combat desertification, rehabilitate degraded land and mitigate the effects of drought. H.E. Mr. Adnan Khozam, Minister of the Environment of the Syrian Arab Republic, delivered a keynote statement underlining the political importance of UNCCD implementation as a key policy measure for promoting sustainable development in his country.

3. H.E. Mr. Kishichiro Amae (Japan), Ms. Annette Chammas (Germany) and Mr. Jos Lubbers (Netherlands) delivered statements on behalf of their governments, which had provided support for the organization of the meeting. They referred to the continuous international assistance programmes of their governments to the UNCCD implementation process.

### B. Election of the chairperson and other officers

4. The participants elected Mr. Khaled Al-Shara'a (Syrian Arab Republic) chairperson of the meeting. Mr. Rajkumar Chandramohan (India) and Mr. Sapon Chomchan (Thailand) were elected vice-chairpersons. Mr. Inoke Ratukalou (Fiji) was elected rapporteur of the meeting.

### C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

5. The participants adopted the provisional agenda as proposed by the secretariat.

6. The meeting, held from 8 to 12 July, drew up a number of conclusions and recommendations to be submitted to the first session of the CRIC. They are contained in chapter III.

7. The meeting heard presentations of national reports from the following affected Asian country Parties:

Australia	Kyrgyzstan	Syrian Arab Republic
Bangladesh	Lao PDR	Tajikistan
Cambodia	Lebanon	Thailand
China	Mongolia	Turkmenistan
Fiji	Myanmar	United Arab Emirates
India	Nepal	Uzbekistan
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Pakistan	Viet Nam
Jordan	Palau	Yemen
Kazakhstan	Saudi Arabia	
Kuwait	Sri Lanka	

8. It also heard presentations of the following subregional reports:

Subregional action programme for the Aral Sea basin (presented by Uzbekistan)  
Subregional action programme for Western Asia (presented by the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA))

9. It further heard presentations of the reports of the following developed Parties:

Belgium	Japan
Czech Republic	Netherlands
European Community	Republic of Korea
Germany	

10. It furthermore heard the presentations of the following United Nations organizations and international and multilateral agencies:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)  
International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)  
Arab Center for Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)

#### D. Attendance

11. The list of participants is given in annex III to this document.

#### E. Documentation

12. The following documents were made available for consideration by the meeting:

ICCD/CRIC(1)/3	Review of reports on implementation of affected Asian country Parties, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes
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- ICCD/CRIC(1)/3/Add.1      Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by affected Asian country Parties, and progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in Asia
- ICCD/CRIC(1)/6            Review of reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected country Parties of all regions, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention
- ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.1      Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by developed country Parties
- ICCD/CRIC(1)/7            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 under the Convention

## **II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS**

13. The representatives of 28 Asian country Parties presented their national reports according to subregional clusters. No more than five presentations were included in each cluster to encourage and facilitate discussion on the issues. Many of the countries made their presentations in accordance with the thematic topics for review selected by the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 5). There were also presentations on the development of the subregional action programme (SRAP) in Central Asia, and on the implementation of the SRAP in West Asia. Special presentations were made on the sandstorm phenomenon in North-East Asia, and on the national action programme (NAP) of the Syrian Arab Republic. There were seven presentations by developed country Parties on their partnerships with the affected country Parties.

14. The main issues covered in the presentations were the major problems and priorities in each country; approaches to implementing the Convention including institutional coordination and strengthening; the status of NAP preparation and implementation and the constraints, such as the need for financing, inadequate capacities, technical know-how and monitoring capability. The discussion included reference to development and adoption of the participatory approach, ownership at grass-roots level and capacity needs, laws on land reform, sustainable livelihood and poverty alleviation, compilation of success stories, development of desertification indicators, and protection of traditional knowledge and its utilization with modern technology. The meeting expressed the need to develop synergies between the UNCCD and national development plans, poverty alleviation programmes and other environmental conventions. The countries that finalized the

preparation of their NAPs, including all five Central Asian countries, asked for donor consultation meetings to be organized to develop partnerships for NAP implementation. Participants drew attention to the absence of consistent and coherent approaches to NAP implementation due to a lack of funding, although some countries were implementing projects relating to biodiversity. In some countries, the NAP was acting as an integrating framework for action in relevant sectors; Parties noted that it was a challenge to mainstream the UNCCD in terms of its added contribution to the existing programmes. National reports needed to give more prominence to scientific and technological aspects and their implications. The issue of water resource management was discussed intensively, particularly with regard to the needs of Central Asia and West Asia. This led to a recommendation concerning the use of treated wastewater and sewage for agriculture and the stabilization of sand dunes. The discussion on legislation and institutions revealed the need to educate people to take appropriate action towards combating desertification. There was also a discussion on the development of field-level demonstration projects to promote implementation of the UNCCD.

15. The discussion on the Regional Implementation Annex for Asia focused on the thematic programme networks (TPNs) adopted at the Asia Regional Ministerial Conference held in 1997 in Beijing, China. The Task Managers of the Asia TPNs presented brief updates on the activities of their respective TPNs (TPN1: desertification monitoring and assessment; TPN2: agroforestry and soil conservation; TPN3: rangeland management and sand dune fixation; TPN4: water resource management for dryland agriculture; and TPN5: strengthening capacities for combating desertification and mitigating drought impact). Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Fiji provided a summary about recent developments in emerging subregional cooperation on combating desertification, rehabilitating degraded land and mitigating the effects of drought in the subregions of South-East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific. The TPNs and SRAPs were considered essential to complement the NAPs and should be developed accordingly. Participants also considered TPN-related training as very important. The sharing of information is a basic activity under the TPNs and SRAPs. However, concern was expressed about countries' capacity to make appropriate use of the information. Replicating success stories and setting up pilot projects were considered key to the success of regional and subregional cooperation.

16. In their presentations, developed country Parties and the European Community outlined their own priorities in terms of policies; the priorities and goals adopted internationally such as reducing global poverty; and the channels through which they provided their official development assistance (ODA), such as bilateral and multilateral channels, special instruments and NGO programmes.

17. At the end of the meeting, the participants underlined the importance of the UNCCD as a useful tool for sustainable development and poverty alleviation, and, in accordance with decision 1/COP.5 on the procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation of the Convention, agreed to adopt the attached conclusions and recommendations to be submitted for consideration and appropriate action at the first session of the CRIC to be held from 18 to 29 November 2002.

18. It was also agreed that the secretariat would consolidate the opening statements/remarks and other presentations made during the meeting as well as prepare proceedings of the conference.

19. Finally, the participants expressed their heartfelt appreciation to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for hosting the meeting and to other governments for supporting its organization.

### **III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **A. Conclusions**

##### *1. National report preparation and review process*

20. The selective review of the implementation of the Convention based on the seven topics designated in decision 1/COP.5 has enabled governments and other stakeholders to undertake an in-depth analysis of UNCCD implementation. National reports should concentrate even more on the progress achieved in the implementation. At the same time, national country profiles are needed to provide more up-to-date, substantive and comprehensive biophysical and socioeconomic data.

##### *2. General policy issues*

21. In a context of growing population pressure and ongoing climate change, the national action programmes (NAPs) for UNCCD implementation, which are aimed at promoting activities to combat desertification, rehabilitate degraded land, conserve biodiversity and/or mitigate the effects of drought, must be seen to be useful policy coordination and programming instruments for integrating national efforts to promote the sustainable management of natural resources and sustainable livelihoods at all levels.

##### *3. Participatory process*

22. The reports submitted have shown that a variety of mechanisms for involving a wide range of stakeholders in UNCCD implementation have been effectively set up. They include awareness-raising seminars, NAP formulation workshops, synergy workshops and information networks. The awareness campaigns have been effective in increasing public involvement in the UNCCD processes at the initial stage. The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in catalyzing public support has been increasingly recognized at the national level, yet further efforts to involve civil society are deemed necessary. Some NGOs have been instrumental in linking international policy dialogue forums on UNCCD implementation with national stakeholders' networks. The Internet-based information network on the UNCCD has facilitated information sharing among a wide range of stakeholders. It may be helpful to set criteria and indicators to assess the level of stakeholders' participation in the UNCCD process.

23. Awareness-raising campaigns, seminars and training programmes have been effective in mobilizing public involvement in activities to carry out land

degradation control and drought mitigation activities as part of the national policy for promoting sustainable development and environmental protection. However there is a clear need to develop further awareness campaigns at all levels, paying due attention to the role of women. That role must be further enhanced.

24. It is recognized that data and information are required to enhance stakeholders' participation and to raise awareness on the issues of land degradation and desertification.

#### *4. Legislative and institutional frameworks and coordination*

25. The UNCCD national focal points (NFPs) and national coordinating bodies (NCBs) have been spearheading the UNCCD implementation and are striving to integrate it in the overall framework of national policies for promoting sustainable development. However, limited resources continue to hamper the capacity to support the effective implementation of the UNCCD at the national level. Support must be directed specifically to the implementation of the UNCCD.

26. The NCBs have been functioning as useful bodies for promoting the coordination of the work required to advance UNCCD implementation. Interministerial coordination, however, remains a significant challenge that must be addressed. The interdisciplinary nature of the UNCCD objectives contributes to making national-level coordination an arduous task. The inclusion of civil society representatives in the NCBs has enhanced the effectiveness of the NCBs' coordination work.

27. The formulation and implementation of relevant domestic laws for the effective implementation of the UNCCD have been noted. Such legislation requires landowners to take the necessary measures to prevent desertification/land degradation and to notify the authorities when desertification becomes prevalent. Increased private land ownership, especially for women, supported by appropriate domestic legislation, has proven to be a powerful incentive for landowners to undertake appropriate land care measures, when coupled with economic instruments. In some countries, regulations on grazing on public land have proven to be effective in maintaining the vegetative cover on common properties.

#### *5. Resource mobilization and partnership building*

28. The rationale behind a country-driven mechanism in affected countries to develop or finalize partnership arrangements has been confirmed. The involvement of bilateral and multilateral donors in such mechanisms becomes a more pressing necessity as the implementation process unfolds from planning towards the operational stage. The role of the Global Mechanism (GM) to facilitate this process must be recognized and strengthened.

29. At the same time a sound basis for a predictable source of finance for UNCCD activities would go a long way towards enhancing the delivery of expected results. Recent developments in the context of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) concerning a new focal area for land degradation, primarily desertification and reforestation, as a means of enhancing GEF support for the successful implementation of the UNCCD, must be actively pursued, as agreed by the GEF Council.

30. While the first Asian forum on partnership building for UNCCD implementation, organized in June 2001 in Beijing, China, has not met expectations in terms of resource mobilization, it has enabled countries to improve their national coordination mechanisms and to strengthen their dialogue with international partners.

31. Despite increased efforts to mobilize financial resources for the UNCCD implementation, the resources provided out of national government budgets were often still insufficient to undertake the work required. While domestic allocations from national budgets to the UNCCD should be increased, international financial support to affected developing countries still falls far short of requirements. In this context, the efforts of those countries which provide ODA at levels equivalent to 0.7 per cent or more of their GNP are commended. The participants urged developed country Parties that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts to attain the 0.7 per cent target.

32. Although national funds to combat desertification have yet to demonstrate their effectiveness in mobilizing financial resources, affected country Parties that have not yet established funds are encouraged to do so.

33. Income generation in the drylands would be strengthened by a more open access of drylands products to international markets. Eco-tourism has been promoted in some countries and has created much needed income in the affected regions. Guidelines to this effect would be useful to Parties.

34. International funding agencies also have to mobilize more fully their potential in responding to the pressing needs of the UNCCD implementation process.

#### 6. *Synergies*

35. It would be highly beneficial to promote the UNCCD as a core element of the set of policy instruments designed to achieve sustainable development, including climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and wetland conservation. The promotion of synergistic policy and programme implementation should be facilitated to tackle in a more integrated manner other environmental issues such as climate change and biodiversity.

36. The national workshop on combating desertification and promoting synergistic implementation of multilateral environmental conventions, held in June 2001 in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, demonstrated that such a workshop is effective in improving the coordination of national stakeholders.



### *7. Rehabilitation of degraded land and early warning systems*

37. A wide range of measures to rehabilitate degraded land, prevent desertification/land degradation, mitigate the effects of drought and promote revegetation and reforestation in dry and degraded land areas have been successful. This was done through large-scale projects and small-scale community-driven activities. Community involvement and appropriate benefit-sharing are prerequisites for ensuring the sustainability of the projects. Agroforestry activities are a useful tool to encourage community participation in land and ecosystem management, while contributing to soil conservation and providing immediate economic benefits. Substantive results have been achieved through measures to arrest sand dune movements using various techniques, and by water conservation measures through large-scale irrigation systems and micro water reservoirs and harvesting facilities and the use of treated wastewater. In the planning and implementation of national policies relating to issues such as agroforestry, sand dune fixation and water use, the role of governments remains very important.

38. Land use maps coupled with data on climatic conditions have been useful in developing early warning systems to control desertification and land degradation, and to mitigate the effects of drought and the impact of the El Niño phenomenon. The scale and resolution utilized in developing such maps and data, however, varies from country to country.

39. Increased support to, and closer interaction between the thematic programme networks of the Asia regional action programme (RAP) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) are warranted.

### *8. Monitoring and assessment*

40. Activities to monitor and assess land use are increasingly important to reinforce the effectiveness of measures to promote revegetation and reforestation in dry and degraded land. The use of different benchmarks and indicators and their diverging level of application hamper the useful spatial and sequential comparative analysis at the national, subregional and regional levels. Limited human institutional and financial capacities in these areas represent constraints in undertaking effective monitoring and assessment.

### *9. Technology and knowledge*

41. A wide range of techniques, technologies and traditional knowledge have been utilized to rehabilitate degraded land, prevent desertification and land degradation, mitigate the effects of drought and promote revegetation and reforestation. The Asia TPNs have enabled all stakeholders to exchange successful experience of implementing appropriate technologies and techniques. A further outreach to, and participation of civil society is important. It is necessary to disseminate and apply traditional knowledge and best practices in combination with modern technologies, where appropriate adapted to local conditions. Increased financial, technical and other support to this effect is required, notably for technology transfer. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating this process are needed. The role

of the CST to facilitate the process of South-South and North-South cooperation in this area is important.

B. Recommendations

1. *National level*

42. The UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism are invited to facilitate the establishment of a country-driven consultative mechanism between the national stakeholders, developed country Parties, international donor countries and agencies, regional and subregional organizations and NGOs, with a view to building further partnerships, supporting programme integration and increasing the effectiveness of collaborative activities. Financial resources should be mobilized to implement concrete measures so as to bolster the implementation of the UNCCD in the countries concerned.

43. The NAP preparation process must be accelerated and the formulation and implementation processes must be further mainstreamed into national planning with the support of the consultative mechanism mentioned in paragraph 42 above.

44. This process of consultation will further facilitate the integration of the UNCCD into the implementation of socioeconomic policy instruments, such as the poverty reduction strategies (PRS), as appropriate. While UNCCD implementation has been promoted in parallel with the implementation of policy instruments for natural resource management, there is a need to extend the linkage of UNCCD implementation with other relevant policy measures. The convergence of UNCCD and PRS implementation would strengthen the process for empowering lower-income populations and communities in dry and/or degraded land areas.

45. Financial resources from national budgets, reflecting national ownership of, and commitment to the UNCCD, must be more systematically earmarked. Country ownership of the process can also express itself through various inputs and commitment from all stakeholders of civil society.

46. The country Parties, interested agencies and the UNCCD secretariat should examine the feasibility and potential benefits to the implementation of the UNCCD of facilitating the access to the market for drylands agricultural products.

47. Existing legislative frameworks must be upgraded in line with the Convention, whenever necessary, to promote land conservation and ownership through the provision of incentives for landowners. The increased land ownership by a group of stakeholders or a community may promote the management of ecosystems at the communal level. Further incentives must be provided through appropriate legislation or administrative measures to support such initiatives.

48. The expression of political will, where necessary, from higher governmental authorities is called for to enhance the effectiveness of horizontal coordination among relevant ministries and line departments. NCBS

should be established in such a way as to include both civil society and the scientific community along with official institutions and line ministries. This will ensure the coordination needed to facilitate the UNCCD implementation.

49. The inclusion and involvement of civil society representatives in the implementation and decision-making process must be resolutely pursued and supported by relevant policies and regulatory frameworks in order, *inter alia*, to increase the effectiveness of the NCBs' coordination work.

50. The UNCCD secretariat, with the advice of the CST, is urged to facilitate the assessment of the participatory process under the UNCCD through the identification of appropriate criteria and indicators and to review possible mechanisms to support the participatory process.

51. Many of the problems of combating desertification and rehabilitating degraded lands require further research. Support needs to be increased through internal and external sources to enable research institutes to develop new approaches and technologies. The results need to reach national institutions as well as various levels, including the grass roots.

52. Awareness-raising campaigns and outreach programmes targeting sector-specific groups, such as government officials, farmers, herders, women, youth, teachers and academia, should be promoted.

53. The Parties, with the support of the UNCCD secretariat and concerned agencies, are invited to facilitate capacity-building measures for stakeholders to carry out specific synergistic programmes to rehabilitate degraded land, mitigate the effects of drought, maintain natural vegetative cover, protect biodiversity and restore wetlands and coastal areas at the local level.

54. The institutional capacity of the national focal points should be further strengthened in accordance with their national and international responsibilities. The progress must be reviewed in due course.

55. The further integration of monitoring and assessment activities must be encouraged on a regular basis so as to enhance the effectiveness of response measures for land degradation and drought in the present context of accelerating climate change.

56. Early warning systems should also be further developed. The recommendations of the CST on benchmarks and indicators, early warning systems and traditional knowledge should be applied, where possible, to the field level.

## 2. Subregional level

57. The TPNs should forge further institutional links with existing subregional action programmes, organizations and networks, including NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) working in the areas of sustainable

development, in order to enhance subregional collaboration in the context of UNCCD implementation.

58. The UNCCD secretariat and other partners are invited to support the formulation of a SRAP for South-East Asia in cooperation with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretariat, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the GM and other interested agencies. The UNCCD secretariat and other relevant partners are invited to support the development and implementation of the SRAP of Western Asia, to assist in finalizing and implementing the SRAP for Central Asia and support the Pacific region in developing subregional collaboration. The potential for cooperation in South Asia might be explored through a subregional meeting, to be convened with the support of the UNCCD secretariat and the GM, as appropriate.

59. Issues relating to dust storms and sand movement have received increased attention from Asian Parties. The UNCCD secretariat and related organizations should strengthen their support to the initiatives that are being envisaged in Asia to tackle this serious problem. The UNCCD secretariat together with other relevant partners is urged to facilitate South-South cooperation.

60. Issues relating to the sustainable management of natural resources, including watershed and water resource management, are common concerns of the Asian Parties. The UNCCD, related organizations and donor Parties should further strengthen their financial and technical support to the initiatives that are being envisaged to overcome the present deficiencies in these areas.

### *3. Regional level*

61. The TPNs, with the continued support of the secretariat, the GM, UNEP, ESCAP and other interested agencies, should promote best practices for land management and implement more systematically the priorities and recommendations of the CST.

62. The TPN host countries and task managers are commended on their role in advancing the implementation of the Asia TPNs as useful regional instruments for supporting capacity-building activities; they are encouraged to seek further support from different sources including developed countries and international organizations.

63. Academic and scientific institutions in developed and developing countries are invited to join in contributing to the implementation of pilot activities in response to the recommendations of the CST and its Ad Hoc Panel on Early Warning Systems (EWS). The development of links between EWS, TPN1 and TPN5 may be useful.

64. The Asian TPNs' activities should be strengthened to facilitate the harmonization of benchmarks and indicators applied to the monitoring and assessment of desertification and to use TPNs to facilitate capacity building. The outcome of the TPNs' activities should be submitted to the CST

for promoting the exchange and dissemination of information and experience among CST and Parties.

65. In accordance with the outcome of the Asia-Africa Forums on Combating Desertification, as well as the Asia Ministerial Meeting held in Beijing, China, in 1997, concerning the setting up of the Asia-Africa Research, Development and Training Centre for Combating Desertification (RDTC) in Beijing, China, necessary support should be mobilized at all levels, including from international organizations and developed countries, on a voluntary basis, to facilitate the establishment of the RDTC as soon as possible.

66. Resource mobilization and partnership building must be further promoted at the regional level. In this context, the Asian country Parties and their partners appeal to the Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank to increase their support to UNCCD implementation at the national, subregional and regional levels in Asia and to participate in the reporting process.

67. The Asia region recognizes the support and assistance provided by the Asia Regional Coordinating Unit of the UNCCD secretariat in implementing the Convention. Voluntary contributions from Parties and organizations within the region should continue to be encouraged.

68. The participants of the 5<sup>th</sup> Asian Focal Points Meeting express their concern about the accelerated degradation and the destruction of natural resources caused by conflicts in the Asian region.

69. Support must be mobilized to organize the Asian regional ministerial meeting in 2003. In this context, the offer of the United Arab Emirates to host the Second Ministerial Meeting in 2003 back to back with the Sixth Regional Focal Points Meeting in 2003 is appreciated.

#### *4. International level*

70. The proposal to designate the GEF as a funding mechanism for the UNCCD must be supported at the forthcoming WSSD to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August/September 2002, as well as the GEF Second Assembly to be held in Beijing, China, in October 2002, with a view to ensuring optimal and timely GEF support to UNCCD implementation, while recognizing the complementary role the GM plays in mobilizing resources.

71. The promotion of sustainable agricultural development in dry and/or degraded land must be recognized in appropriate international forums as one of the main pillars in the process of implementing the commitments entered into at the World Food Summits in Rome, Italy, in 1996 and 2002.

72. The UNCCD secretariat is invited to intensify its work towards developing synergies between the UNCCD and other multilateral environmental conventions, mainly on scientific and technical issues, and to concentrate on poverty eradication, rural and alternative livelihood development, and community empowerment with the UNCCD programmes.

73. The trading of drylands agricultural products on national and international markets should be promoted to provide rural communities with resources to promote drylands ecosystem management and to improve sustainable livelihoods.

74. The CRIC should recommend measures leading to the improvement of the implementation of the Convention.

75. The UNCCD secretariat should revise the Help Guide for the next report and review process, and initiate the preparation of country profiles.

76. The UNCCD secretariat should keep information material updated. The exchange of information should be strengthened with the support of the UNCCD secretariat, TPNs and other relevant bodies and networks. The establishment of database networks is encouraged where possible.

77. The CRIC and the COP are invited to identify urgent measures to bring forward the implementation process of the Convention.

78. The Asian country Parties appeal to the developed country Parties and partner organizations to complement their national programmes with additional support at all levels.

Annex I**PREPARATION OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE CRIC****A. Nomination of the vice-chairperson of the CRIC**

1. In conformity with article 4 of the terms of reference of the CRIC, as annexed to decision 1/COP.5, on the composition of the Bureau of the CRIC, the Asian country Parties nominated Mr. Khaled Al-Shara'a (Syrian Arab Republic) as the vice-chairperson of the CRIC.

**B. List of countries presenting case studies at the first session of the CRIC**

2. Decision 1/COP.5 concerning the nature of the review and methodology used by the CRIC states that the review, which is conceived as an experience-sharing and lessons-learning exercise, shall be conducted thematically, with due regard to geographic regions and subregions. In accordance with the provisional agenda of the first session of the CRIC (ICCD/CRIC(1)/1), Asian country Parties nominated the following countries to present case studies at the session:

<u>Thematic topic</u>	<u>Country</u>
1: Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations	Mongolia
2: Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements	China
3: Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements	India, Viet Nam, China
4: Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies	Myanmar
5: Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land	Turkmenistan
6: Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought	Islamic Republic of Iran
7: Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how	Yemen

Annex II

**REGIONAL MATTERS OTHER THAN THE CRIC**

1. Most of the issues essential to the UNCCD implementation in Asia are well reflected in the conclusions and recommendations. As many countries in Asia strive to make substantive progress in developing and implementing the NAPs, it was suggested that the parallel implementation of NAPs, SRAPs and TPNs (RAP), as mutually supporting, supplementary frameworks, would enhance the overall impact of UNCCD implementation in Asia. West and Central Asian countries reaffirmed their commitment to facilitating the development and implementation of the SRAPs. The countries of East, South-East and South Asia and the Pacific demonstrated their interest in promoting subregional collaboration, together with subregional organizations where appropriate.

2. The Asian Parties requested that the Help Guide be updated. For this purpose, the Parties will be submitting their comments on the present Help Guide to the secretariat.

3. Many countries considered it opportune to review the UNCCD implementation in Asia at a high political level in 2003, as the last Asia Regional Ministerial Conference was held in May 1997. The meeting welcomed the offer of the United Arab Emirates to host the Conference. The UNCCD secretariat will facilitate the necessary arrangements in consultation with the host country, and donor countries and agencies.



Annex III

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**PARTIES**

**AUSTRALIA**

Dr. Annemarie Watt  
Department of Environment and  
Heritage  
Environment Australia

Prof. Hongbo Ju  
TPN 1 Task Manager/ Director General  
TPN 1 Host Institution  
Institute of Forest Resource  
Information Technologies  
Chinese Academy of Forestry

**BANGLADESH**

Mr. Mahiuddin Ahmed  
Joint Director  
Department of Environment  
Ministry of Environment and Forests

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

Ms. Dagmar Kubinova  
Deputy Director  
Department of Global Relations,  
Ministry of Environment

**BELGIUM**

Prof. Willem Van Cotthem  
Ministry for Development Cooperation

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITY**

Mr. Marco Morettini  
Directorate General for Development  
Unit DEV B4 "Environment and Rural  
Development"  
European Commission

**CAMBODIA**

Mr. Tuot Saravuth  
Deputy Director  
Planning, Statistic and  
International Cooperation Department  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry  
and Fisheries

**FIJI**

Mr. Inoke Ratukalou  
UNCCD National Focal Point/  
Principal Research Officer  
Department of Land Resources,  
Planning and Development  
Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and  
Land Resettlement

**CHINA**

Mr. Tuo Liu  
NFP/Director General  
China National Committee for  
Implementation of UNCCD

**GERMANY**

Ms. Annette Chammas  
Desk Officer  
Ministry of Economic Cooperation and  
Development

Mr. Zhongze Wu  
Programme Officer  
China National Committee for  
Implementation of UNCCD

Mr. Berthold Hansmann  
Technical Advisor/Combating  
Desertification in Lebanon (CoDel)  
German Development Cooperation

Dr. Dongmei Wang  
Associate Professor/TPN4 Task  
Manager  
China National Committee for  
Implementation of UNCCD

**INDIA**

Mr. Rajkumar Chandramohan  
Joint Secretary/National Focal Point  
Ministry of Environment and Forests

Dr. Pratap Narain  
Director/TPN 2 Task Manager  
Central Arid Zone Research Institute  
(CAZRI)

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

Mr. Hossein Badripour  
Senior Expert/TPN 3 Task Manager  
Forest and Range Organization

Mr. Naser Moghaddasi  
Coordinator  
Specialised Secretariat for UNCCD  
Related Activities  
Forest and Range Organization

**ITALY**

Mr. Giorgio Trabattoni  
Counsellor  
Department of Cooperation, Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Giulia Bertelletti  
Intern  
Italian Embassy

**JAPAN**

H.E. Mr. Kishichiro Amae  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Japan in Syrian Arab  
Republic

Mr. Hidemi Taguchi  
Advice Director  
Global Environment Issues  
Development, Ministry of Environment

Mr. Wataru Otsuka  
Officer  
Multilateral Cooperation Department,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**JORDAN**

Mr. Khalaf Aloklah  
UNCCD National Focal Point/ Director  
of Internal Auditing  
Nature, Lands and Conservation  
Department  
The General Corporation for  
Environment Protection (GCEP)

Mr. Abdel-Majid Khabour  
CST Vice-President for the Asian  
Region/Environmental Researcher  
Water and Environment, Ministry of  
Planning

**KAZAKHSTAN**

Mr. Kairat Aitekenov  
UNCCD National Focal Point/Director  
Environmental Policy  
Environmental Policy Department  
Ministry of Natural Resources and  
Environmental Protection

**KUWAIT**

Mrs. Ebtisam Ali Al-Obaid  
Director  
Soil and Arid Lands Department  
Environment Public Authority

**KYRGYZSTAN**

Mr. Kubanychbek Kulov  
Director  
Irrigation Institute  
Ministry of Agriculture and Water  
Resources

**LAO PDR**

Mr. Soukata Vichit  
Director-General  
Department of Environment  
Science Technology and Environment  
Agency

**LEBANON**

Mr. Fady Asmar  
National Focal Point  
Ministry of Agriculture

Ms. Abir Abul-Khoudoud  
Agricultural Engineer - Management  
Team of Desertification Project  
Ministry of Agriculture

**MONGOLIA**

Ms. Namsrai Sarantuya  
UNCCD National Focal Point  
Strategic Planning Department,  
Ministry of Nature and Environment

**MYANMAR**

Mr. U Thiri Tin  
Deputy Director  
Dry Zone Greening Department  
Ministry of Forestry

**NEPAL**

Mr. Batu Krishna Uprety  
Ecologist  
Ministry of Population and  
Environment

**NETHERLANDS**

Mr. Jos Lubbers  
Senior Policy Advisor,  
Desertification  
Environment and Development  
Department  
Forests and Biodiversity Division

**PAKISTAN**

Mr. Kalimullah Shirazi  
Deputy Secretary (Land and Water)  
Ministry of Environment, Local  
Government and Rural Development  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**PALAU**

Mr. Ethan Daniels  
National Science Coordinator  
Office of the President, Office of  
Environmental Response and  
Coordination  
(OERC)

**QATAR**

Mr. Ali Hashim Al-Yuosef  
Head of Soil Section  
Department of Agricultural and Water  
Research, Ministry of Municipal  
Affairs and Agriculture

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Dr. Ho Joong Youn  
Research Forester  
Forest Environment  
Korea Forest Research Institute

**SAUDI ARABIA**

Dr. Ali Saad Altokhais  
Deputy Minister for Water Affairs  
Ministry of Agriculture and Water

Mr. Helal Alharty  
Environmental Geologist  
Water Department, Ministry of  
Agriculture and Water

Mr. Abdulaziz AlHowaish  
Director of Environment Section  
Range and Forest Department,  
Ministry of Agriculture and Water

**SRI LANKA**

Mr. Kusumadasa Mahanama Indiketiya  
Hewage  
Director  
Natural Resources Management  
Ministry of Environment and Natural  
Resources

**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

Mr. Khaled Al-Shara'a  
UNCCD Focal Point  
General Commission for Environmental  
Affairs (GCEA)  
Ministry for State Environmental  
Affairs

Mr. Jamal Jamaledin  
TPN 4 Task Manager  
Network for Water Resources  
Management in Agriculture in Asian  
Countries  
Ministry of Irrigation

Mr. Naim M. Kaddah  
Chairman of the Environmental  
Protection and Sand Development

Ms. Rama Aziz  
Agricultural Engineering Associate  
Horticulture Department, Ministry of  
High Education

Mr. Mahmoud Al-Hodi  
Damascus Farmers Union

Mr. Koussay Aldahhak  
International Organizations and  
Conferences Department, Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs

Dr. Maamoun Malakani  
Technical Affairs Department,  
Ministry of Irrigation

Mr. Akram Khalil  
Agriculture Engineer  
Syndicator of Syrian Agriculture  
Engineers

Mr. Atef Abdulal  
Ministry of Agriculture

**TAJIKISTAN**

H.E. Mr. Davlatsho Gulmakhmadov  
Minister  
State Committee for Land Resources  
and Land Management

**THAILAND**

Mr. Sopon Chomchan  
Land Use Planning Specialist/UNCCD  
National Focal Point  
Land Development Department,  
Ministry of Agriculture and  
Cooperative

Mr. Worapong Waramit  
Soil Surveyor  
Land Development Department,  
Ministry of Agriculture and  
Cooperative

**TURKMENISTAN**

Mr. Muhamet Durikov  
National Coordinator of the UNCCD  
National Institute of Deserts, Flora  
and Fauna  
Ministry of Nature Protection of  
Turkmenistan

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Dr. Salem Al-Dhaheri  
Director-General  
Federal Environment Agency

Mr. Hamad Saif Al Mazroui  
Director  
Agricultural Services  
Federal Environment Agency

Mr. Mahboub Hassan Saleh  
Environmental Researcher  
Federal Environment Agency

**UZBEKISTAN**

Mr. Anatoly Ovchinnikov  
Chief/National Focal Point UNCCD  
International Department of  
Glavgidromet  
Main Administration of  
Hydrometeorology

**VIET NAM**

Ms. Pham Minh Thoa  
Forestry Official  
International Cooperation  
Planning Division  
Department for Forestry Development

**YEMEN**

Mr. Ahmed Hussein Abobakr Al-Attas  
Director General  
Directorate of Forestry and  
Desertification Control  
Ministry of Agriculture and  
Irrigation

**ORGANIZATION HAVING RECEIVED A STANDING INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AS OBSERVER  
IN THE SESSION AND THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND MAINTAINING PERMANENT  
OBSERVER MISSION AT HEADQUARTERS**

**PALESTINE**

Mr. Asem Khalifa  
Sanitary Engineer  
Palestine Liberation Organization  
Representation in Syrian Arab Republic

**UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT OFFICES,  
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION**

Prof. Hassan Abdel Nour  
Senior Forestry Officer  
Regional Office for Near East

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

Mr. Abdu Al Assiri  
Programme Officer and Coordinator  
for SRAP in West Asia  
Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA)

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

Mr. Taoufik Ben Amara  
Resident Representative in Syrian  
Arab Republic

Ms. Gemma Shepherd  
Associate Programme Officer  
Division of Environmental Policy  
Development and Law

Mr. Elie Kodsi  
Regional Programme Manager  
Drylands Development Centre - Arab  
States, Lebanon

**WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME**

Mr. Mohamed El-Kouhene  
Country Director, Syrian Arab  
Republic

Mr. Bashar Akkad  
Programme Assistant, Syrian Arab  
Republic

Ms. Nadia Yafai  
Staff Assistant, Syrian Arab  
Republic

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**ARAB CENTER FOR THE STUDIES OF ARID  
ZONES AND DRY LANDS**

Mr. Hassan Habib  
Director of Monitoring and Combating  
Desertification Project

Prof. Gilani Abdelgawad  
Director of Soil and Water Use  
Division

**ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR AGRICULTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. El Mustafa Darfaoui  
Head  
Range, Forest and Environment  
Section

**INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE DRY  
AREAS**

Dr. Theib Oweis  
Water Management/Supplemental  
Irrigation Specialist

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**China**

China National Sand Control and  
Desert Industry Society, State  
Forestry Administration

Dr. Guosheng Wang

**Indonesia**

Indonesian Institute of Sciences  
(LIPI), Research Center for Biology,  
Treb Laboratory

Mr. Beth Paul Naiola

**Islamic Republic of Iran**

Centre for Sustainable Development  
(CENESTA)

Ms. Khadija-Catherine Razavi

**Pakistan**

Society for Conservation and  
Protection of Environment (SCOPE)

Mr. Tanveer Arif

Sungi Development Foundation

Mr. Shahid Zia

**Uzbekistan**

International Central Asian  
Biodiversity Institute (BIOSTAN)

Mr. Oleg Tsaruk

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