



Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.: General
28 July 2011

Original: English

Conference of the Parties Committee on Science and Technology

Tenth session

Changwon, Republic of Korea, 11–13 October 2011

Items 5 (a) and 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

Reshaping the operation of the Committee on Science and Technology in line with the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)

Preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”

Organization of sessions of the Committee on Science and Technology in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format

Progress report on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference and report on the organization of sessions of the Committee on Science and Technology in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format

Note by the secretariat

Summary

By its decision 13/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties decided that each future ordinary session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) should be organized in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format. This document contains a progress report on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, which will be held on the theme “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”, and a report on the organization of CST sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format in general.

The information provided in this document includes progress made up to mid-June 2011. A verbal update will be provided during the tenth session of the CST.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction.....	1–4	3
II. Preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference: “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”.....	5–11	3
III. Organization of sessions of the Committee on Science and Technology in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format.....	12–14	4
IV. Conclusions and recommendations.....	15–16	5
Annexes		
I. Terms of reference of the steering committee for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference.....		6
II. Terms of reference of the scientific advisory committee for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference.....		9

I. Introduction

1. By its decision 13/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP), at its eighth session, decided that each future ordinary session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) should be organized in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format.
2. By its decision 16/COP.9, the COP decided that the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference should take place in 2012 at a special session of the CST and that the thematic topic to be considered by the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference would be “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”.
3. In chapter II below, this document reports on progress made in the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference since the second special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-2) as of mid-June 2011. Chapter III addresses the organization of CST sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format in general, including the assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference and an invitation to Parties to consider the theme for the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference.
4. The document should be viewed in the light of the progress report on the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference presented at CST S-2, which is contained in document ICCD/CST(S-2)/3, and the assessment of the organization and the review of the outcomes of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, which is presented in document ICCD/CST(S-2)/2. The final report of the independent evaluators who conducted the assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference is contained in document ICCD/COP(10)/CST/INF.3.

II. Preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference: “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub- humid areas”

5. Document ICCD/CST(S-2)/3 reports on progress made in the preparation process for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference up to 22 November 2010. A verbal update was given at CST S-2. This document reports on progress made since the preparation of document ICCD/CST(S-2)/3.
6. As presented in the above-mentioned document, the secretariat, with the agreement of the CST Bureau, issued a call for proposals by institutions and consortia interested in organizing the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference. By the deadline on 16 October 2010, one application had been received.
7. After thorough discussion of the proposal, the Bureau of the CST reached consensus during its meeting on 21 February 2011 and decided to select the Global Risk Forum (GRF) Davos as the lead institution to organize the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference under the guidance of the CST Bureau. The report of the meeting can be found on the UNCCD website.¹ As at mid-June 2011, a memorandum of understanding between the secretariat and GRF Davos is being formulated.

¹ <<http://www.unccd.int>>.

8. Following the recommendation made at CST S-2 and the agreement of the CST Bureau that the secretariat should put in place a steering committee, composed of members of the CST Bureau, the UNCCD secretariat and the GRF Davos, to coordinate the organization of the conference, the secretariat organized the first meeting of the committee on 18 May 2011. The terms of reference of the steering committee, as discussed, amended and agreed upon by the meeting, are contained in annex I to the present document.

9. The first meeting of the steering committee discussed the draft terms of reference for a scientific advisory committee for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference. The terms of reference of the scientific advisory committee, as discussed, amended and agreed upon by the first meeting of the steering committee, are contained in annex II.

10. It is planned that the steering committee will review a comprehensive communications strategy for the conference. A second meeting of the steering committee is planned through a teleconference in July 2011.

11. A verbal update on progress made in the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference will be provided during CST 10 to complete the progress report.

III. Organization of sessions of the Committee on Science and Technology in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format

12. Peer reviewed published journal papers on the theme of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, biophysical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation to support decision-making in land and water management, have been published in the *Journal of Land Degradation and Development* (special issue: volume 22, issue 2). The special issue of the journal has been made available with open access from the website.²

13. By its decision 13/COP.8, the COP decided that each future ordinary session of the CST should be organized in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format by the CST Bureau in consultation with a lead institution/consortium, qualified in and having expertise in the relevant thematic topic selected by the COP. In line with decision 13/COP.8, the next UNCCD scientific conference would take place during CST 11 in 2013, unless the COP decided otherwise. In line with decision 13/COP.8, the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference would take place during CST 11 in 2013, unless the COP at its tenth session decides otherwise.

14. Decision 16/COP.9 requests the CST Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to select the lead institution/consortium at least two years prior to each future UNCCD scientific conference. In the same decision, the COP decided that, after the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, the CST Bureau, in consultation with regional groups, would conduct an assessment of whether to hold the CST scientific conference during intersessional or ordinary sessions of the CST and report to the next session of the Committee, which would be CST 11 in 2013.

² <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.v22.2/issuetoc>>.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

15. The CST at its tenth session may wish to take note of the progress made towards the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference and provide guidance and further recommendations on the process of organizing the conference.

16. The CST may also wish to consider whether to hold the next CST sessions following the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format or to wait for the outcome of the assessment on whether to hold the CST scientific conferences during intersessional or ordinary sessions of the CST. The CST may further wish to consider potential themes for the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference and make recommendations for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

Annex I

Terms of reference of the steering committee for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference

I. Background

1. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) that was adopted by the COP at its eighth session, in September 2007, calls for the reshaping of the CST, strengthening its capacity to process scientific, technical and socio-economic information. The framework for CST meetings to be held in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format and to focus on one priority area was established by decision 13/COP.8.
2. The UNCCD scientific conferences are expected to produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations based on the analysis and compilation of peer reviewed and published literature that informs policy formulation and dialogue. These recommendations shall be submitted to the COP for its consideration. The recommendations should also provide a clear picture of available options and possible scenarios for decision makers on the economic assessment of desertification, land degradation and sustainable land management in affected areas, as addressed and proposed by The Strategy.
3. Decision 16/COP.9 determined that the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference should take place in 2012 at a special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). The venue will be decided by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its tenth session (COP 10), in October 2011. By the same decision 16/COP.9, the Parties decided that the specific thematic topic to be considered by the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference will be “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”.
4. By its afore-mentioned decision, the COP requested the CST Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to select the lead institution/consortium to organize the conference at least two years prior to each future UNCCD scientific conference. The terms of reference as agreed by the Bureau were posted on the UNCCD website and circulated to Parties, observers, and scientific institutions, as well as to other interested and relevant stakeholders. The deadline for applications was 16 October 2010.
5. During its meeting on 21 February 2011, the CST Bureau reached consensus and decided to select the Global Risk Forum (GRF) Davos as the lead institution to organize the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference under the guidance of the CST Bureau. The Bureau noted that particular attention should be given to six requirements as indicated in its report of the meeting.

II. Guiding principles of the steering committee

6. By its decision 16/COP.9, the COP also requested the CST Bureau to take into consideration the outcomes of the assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference in the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference.
7. The independent assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference recommended that “the secretariat should have in place a conference steering

committee to coordinate the organization of the conference and to work closely with the host country, the institution/consortium chosen to organize the conference, and other stakeholders, as appropriate". The assessment further recommended that "communication channels between the secretariat and the institution/consortium in charge of organizing the conference should be clear and communication responsibilities well defined to facilitate the decision-making process. The conference steering committee should facilitate this communication".

8. In response to these recommendations, at the second special session of the CST, held in Bonn, Germany in February 2011, it was recommended that the secretariat should put in place a conference steering committee, consisting of the CST Bureau, the secretariat and the selected lead institution, to coordinate the organization of the conference.

9. The role of the steering committee was discussed at its first meeting. It is defined by the following set of guiding principles:

- The steering committee will provide an effective channel for information between the secretariat, GRF Davos, and the CST Bureau, enabling effective coordination of efforts in the organization of the conference, and ensuring effective working relationships.
- The steering committee will not seek to micro-manage the conference organization, but will ensure alignment of the actions of each of the members in fulfilling their roles in the preparation of the conference with the advice from the scientific advisory committee.
- The steering committee will also provide a systematic process and opportunity for the resolution of any unforeseen problems that may arise.

III. Modus operandi of the steering committee

Officers

10. The Chair of the steering committee will be the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology. In the case of his or her unavailability for a meeting, the Chair is entitled to nominate an acting Chair for the meeting as his or her representative.

Place and date of meetings

11. The first meeting of the steering committee shall be organized by the UNCCD secretariat at its headquarter in Bonn. Any future ordinary meetings of the steering committee, either in person or by teleconference, will be organized by the UNCCD secretariat in consultation with GRF Davos on an as-needed basis.

Agenda and documentation

12. Agendas and relevant documentation to support the meetings of the steering committee will be prepared and circulated by the secretariat in consultation with GRF Davos.

Membership and participation

13. The members of the steering committee shall be representatives of the CST Bureau, the GRF Davos and the UNCCD secretariat. A host country representative may join the steering committee as a member.

14. Depending on the agenda of the meeting of the steering committee, other persons or representatives of institutions, organizations or committees involved in the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference may be invited on an ad hoc basis.

Decision making

15. Decisions shall be made by consensus. If no consensus is reached in the steering committee, the matter will be referred to the CST Bureau to take a decision in a timely manner.

Reports of the meetings

16. Reports of meetings of the steering committee will be prepared by the UNCCD secretariat and distributed to committee members and other participating invitees at the discretion of the committee.

Annex II

Terms of reference of the scientific advisory committee for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference

I. Introduction

1. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy) that was adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its eighth session, in September 2007, spells out an operational objective on science, technology and knowledge. Recognizing the need to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, The Strategy calls for the reshaping of the CST, strengthening its capacity to process scientific, technical and socio-economic information. In the light of this need, by decision 16/COP.9, the Parties decided that the specific thematic topic to be considered by the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference will be “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”.

2. The UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference is expected to produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations based on the analysis and compilation of peer reviewed and published literature that informs policy formulation and dialogue. These recommendations shall be submitted to the COP for its consideration. The recommendations should also provide a clear picture of available options and possible scenarios for decision makers on the economic assessment of desertification, land degradation and sustainable land management in the affected areas, as addressed and proposed by The Strategy.

3. The framework for CST meetings to be held in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format and to focus on one priority area was established through decision 13/COP.8. In accordance with this decision, decision 16/COP.9 further determined that the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference shall take place in 2012 at a special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). The venue will be decided by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session (COP 10) in October 2011. The conference will be organized by GRF Davos under the guidance of a steering committee.

4. The creation of a scientific advisory committee to guide the substantive preparation of the Conference was recommended following an independent assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. This recommendation was discussed and confirmed by Parties at the second special session of the CST in February 2011 and agreed during the meeting of the CST Bureau on 21 February 2011.

5. In order to facilitate the efficient implementation of the scientific and technical conference-style format of the CST meeting, and to address the selected priority theme, decision 16/COP.9 requested the CST Bureau, in collaboration with the selected lead institution and with the support of the secretariat, to involve relevant networks, institutions, agencies, bodies and scientific organizations at the regional and subregional levels, non-governmental organizations and other civil society stakeholders in addressing the priority theme. To this end, wide-ranging expertise from key stakeholders needs to be brought on board, and knowledge at various levels mobilized and analysed, in order for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference to succeed.

II. Scope of activities and requirements from the scientific advisory committee

6. The Chair of the scientific advisory committee may be invited on an ad hoc basis to take part in steering committee meetings. Through these interactions, it is hoped that a lasting coalition or consortium of individuals and institutions committed to promote open, transparent, and geographically balanced international scientific exchange address the topic “Economic assessment of land degradation, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”.

7. The scope and objectives of the scientific advisory committee are to ensure that the substantive focus and discussions to take place in preparation for, and during, the conference, will:

- (a) Contribute to progress in reshaping the operations of the CST;
- (b) Strengthen CST capacity to process scientific, technical and socio-economic information;
- (c) Present state-of-the-art research findings and best practices in the field of economic assessment;
- (d) Produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations based on the analysis and compilation of peer reviewed and published literature that informs policy formulation and dialogue;
- (e) Ensure the flow of new ideas to the conference, enhancing the knowledge-sharing process.

8. The scientific advisory committee is required to provide advice on the following substantive matters:

- (a) Identification and refinement of subject topics or sub-themes;
- (b) Identification of keynote speakers and contributions to the conference sessions;
- (c) Review of short abstracts to be selected for oral or poster presentations;
- (d) Design of working groups to address key issues and subtopics of the theme of the conference;
- (e) Guidance and oversight to ensure complementarity amongst the working groups;
- (f) Identification of the expected outcomes from the conference (such as scientific papers in peer reviewed journals, documents for policy);
- (g) Planning of publications for the conference;
- (h) Messages to be shared with the press on the conference topic and progress made.

III. Composition of the scientific advisory committee

9. The scientific advisory committee shall be composed of a maximum of 12 experts with experience in economic assessment of land degradation, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. A balanced composition will be sought in the membership of the scientific advisory committee in relation to the following:

- Expertise in relation to sub-themes associated with the overall conference topic
- Geographical region
- Gender

10. Two scientists from each region as well as two experts with global expertise on the theme of the conference will be selected.

11. International institutions that are currently engaged in pursuing scientific activities on the theme of the conference will be invited to send a representative to take part in the first meeting of the scientific advisory committee on their own resources. Representatives of international institutions may be invited for consultations to the scientific advisory committee or the conference working groups or to provide support to preparatory meetings and activities, in the light of the conference outreach and partnership building process.

IV. Qualification of experts

12. Experts to be considered for selection as a member of the scientific advisory committee should meet all of the following criteria:

Scientific expertise: The expert has published peer-reviewed scientific publications of international status and credibility on economic assessment of land degradation, sustainable land management and/or resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas;

Experience in applied work on the conference theme: The expert has provided scientific advice to policy makers, civil society organizations, land users or other UNCCD stakeholders, and is able to conceptualize appropriate opportunities to connect scientific discussions to less technically oriented agendas, engaging a wider audience;

Vision and experience of international scientific processes beyond and complementary to UNCCD: The expert is anticipated to introduce new insights to the UNCCD scientific discussions;

Availability: the expert expresses willingness to carry out the activities of the scientific advisory committee, including attending periodic meetings of the committee.

V. Process for selection of experts

13. The selection will be made by the steering committee following the criteria mentioned under sections III and IV.

14. The steering committee will establish a list of additional experts from which replacements may be selected in the event that one of the experts originally selected is not available. The alternative can be appointed by the Global Risk Forum (GRF) Davos if needed, taking into account the criteria and keeping the steering committee informed of steps taken.

VI. Meetings of the scientific advisory committee

15. The organization of meetings of the scientific advisory committee shall be handled by GRF Davos, in consultation with the steering committee. Other institutional partners to be engaged through the conference outreach and partnership building process, including

those taking part in the meetings of the scientific advisory committee, may offer support to the organization of the meetings, if they wish to do so.

16. The Chair of the scientific advisory committee will be selected by its members. In case of the unavailability of the Chair, an acting Chair shall be elected among the members present to chair the meeting. Following each meeting, a written report on the discussions and conclusions will be provided to the scientific advisory committee and steering committee members by GRF Davos.

17. The first meeting of the scientific advisory committee will be scheduled for a date to be decided by the steering committee. All invited selected members will be funded. The first meeting of the scientific advisory committee will include amongst others the following items on its agenda:

- Discussion of the working modalities of the scientific advisory committee
- Refinement of the focus of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference
- Design of scope and composition of working groups for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference
- Identification of institutions to be invited to participate in the meetings of the scientific advisory committee and the working groups in light of their scientific or institutional capacities
- Review of conference topic and strategic positioning in relation to other related initiatives, e.g. the E-DLDD (economics of desertification, land degradation and drought initiative)
- Scope for other inputs to the conference preparations by the international scientific community
- Recommendations for conference publication strategy

18. Subsequent meetings of the scientific advisory committee will be scheduled by the steering committee. The steering committee agreed that it would be preferable to hold meetings of the scientific advisory committee back-to-back with CST Bureau meetings or other relevant international meetings addressing relevant topics. A maximum of four meetings should be held by the scientific advisory committee. The possibility of holding virtual meetings may also be explored by the conference organizer, if needed.
