



Convention to Combat Desertification

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Review and assessment of scientific information from Parties and other reporting entities, in particular on impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)

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Submitted by the Chair of the Open-ended Contact Group on the review by the Committee on Science and Technology of scientific information relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy

1. By decision 12/COP.9, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to contribute to the work of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) by reviewing and assessing scientific information from Parties and other reporting entities, in particular on impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy).
2. This document is a summary compilation of ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by various delegations for reporting on impact indicators during the third special session of the CST (CST S-3). The document identifies potential actions that could be undertaken by Parties and other stakeholders, including the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention to improve the global coverage and compatibility of datasets, after they are considered and decided upon by the COP, and in conformity with the provisions of the Convention.
3. The CST took note of the synthesis and preliminary analysis of information submitted by affected country Parties on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy as contained in document ICCD/CRIC(11)/8-ICCD/CST(S-3)/6 and Corrigendum 1.

4. The 2012–2013 reporting and review process was the first reporting cycle under the Convention since the adoption of The Strategy where affected country Parties were requested to report on impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3. The purpose of this reporting cycle was therefore to establish a baseline against which future assessments of the implementation of the Convention should be made with respect to the achievement of the strategic objectives and the expected impacts.

5. A total of 71 countries or about 42 per cent of all affected country Parties, provided information on impact indicators. However, not all Parties delivered the required information, resulting in a global data coverage varying from 7 to 36 per cent, depending on the specific question. The CST noted that the secretariat could only derive an incomplete initial set of baseline data due to relatively low data availability, technical constraints of the PRAIS portal, the lack of standardization and consequently the limited global data coverage. Some Parties therefore recommended that the PRAIS portal be made more user-friendly and that affected country Parties be encouraged to submit their report and/or amend their responses on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 even after the official deadline has passed with a view to broadening the baseline datasets and enabling future trend analysis. Affected country Parties should also be invited to make broader use of data from the United Nations and other international sources in case information from national sources is not available.

6. The first reporting process against impact indicators was conducted within a limited time frame. No technical assistance was provided by specialized institutions at subregional/regional level, and the disbursement of funding to support national reporting was delayed or it did not occur. Some Parties therefore recommended that development partners and financial mechanisms of the Convention, particularly the Global Environment Facility, consider extending further technical and financial assistance for developing the capacities of affected country Parties in reporting against impact indicators in order to, inter alia, harmonize definitions and methodologies to be used at national level.

7. Considering the inconsistencies in reported data and their limited comparability, some Parties noted that while the data collected through the reporting process are crucial for assessing the implementation of the Convention with regard to its strategic objectives, integrating this information at global level is challenging. Some Parties recommended that global and regional organizations, institutions and relevant partners with expertise on monitoring and assessing desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) be invited to support the Parties and regions in bridging the knowledge gap for reporting, thus facilitating integration of reported data for assessing land degradation globally. This would help fulfilling one of the provisions contained in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), *The Future We Want* (paragraph 206). To this end, further work in developing an institutional partnership, data sharing and data integration could also be promoted through inter-agency collaboration. Some Parties further suggested that the CST consider reviewing relevant literature and ongoing efforts such as the *New World Atlas of Desertification*.

8. In preparation for future reporting processes, some Parties recommended that the secretariat improve the reporting template and further develop the reporting manual by providing more detailed and indicator-specific guidance on methodologies for data collection and available data sources.

9. The CST noted that the lack of a common definition and common criteria for identifying and delineating areas affected by DLDD resulted in limited data comparability. Some Parties recommended that affected country Parties be encouraged to use a consistent and common approach in delineating affected areas, taking into consideration the findings to be provided by the ad hoc Advisory Group of Technical Experts (AGTE). This would ensure that estimates of the extent of DLDD achieve uniform quality standards across the

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Regional Implementation Annexes and are comparable between countries.

10. The CST noted that a very limited number of countries provided quality-proven and complete data on the poverty rate. For example, seven per cent of all affected country Parties provided data on the poverty rate in affected areas. This may be a consequence of data gaps in identifying affected areas at national level but it is also due to the limited availability of data specific to affected areas. Some Parties highlighted difficulties in obtaining appropriate data at local level. However, considering the importance of this indicator in relation to strategic objective 1, some Parties recommended that affected country Parties consider making further efforts towards increasing the coverage of spatially referenced data on affected areas, in particular those related to socioeconomic variables, in order to facilitate the future interpretation of the impact indicators as they relate to progress assessment in implementing the Convention.

11. The CST noted that although most reporting countries have used widely accepted and available land cover classification methods (such as the Land Cover Classification System (LCCS) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and/or the Coordination of Information on the Environment (CORINE) Land Cover database, among others), some affected country Parties have reported data covering a wide variety of land cover types that could not be compared directly. Some Parties therefore recommended the adoption of broad land cover types (based on already established and internationally recognized land cover classification systems) to be used by affected country Parties for reporting on land cover status.

12. The CST noted that 12 affected country Parties (about 17 per cent of reporting countries) provided data on land productivity. The low response rate and the different national approaches used for measuring and assessing land productivity revealed the need to take action to improve both the response rate and data comparability. Some Parties therefore recommended that reporting countries should consider using a common methodology for reporting on land productivity based on readily available and internationally recognized datasets.

13. The CST noted that baseline information to measure progress made by Parties in achieving strategic objective 3 was not collected as there are no mandatory indicators for this strategic objective. Some Parties therefore recommended that the CST identify appropriate mandatory indicator(s) relating to strategic objective 3 for the next reporting cycle.

14. The CST noted that 10 countries (6 per cent of all affected country Parties) reported on additional voluntary indicators relating to the three strategic objectives. In order to ensure that Parties' reporting reflects not only global but also national and local realities, some Parties expressed that the minimum set of globally harmonized indicators should be systematically complemented by regionally, nationally and/or locally relevant information and indicators.