

Meeting of the Bureau of the COP Seoul, Republic of Korea

Report on the First Intersessional COP Bureau Meeting

1. At the invitation of the President of the COP 10 Bureau, the First Intersessional COP Bureau Meeting was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 22 to 24 February 2012.

2. The president welcomed the COP Bureau members and other participants and recalled the important role that the Bureau plays during the intersession on behalf of the COP.

3. The Executive Secretary thanked the President and his collaborators for arrangements made to facilitate the running of the COP Bureau meeting. He proposed a minute of silence in remembrance of Dr. Im Eun- ho who passed away in January 2012.

I. Adoption of the Agenda

4. The Provisional Agenda was adopted as proposed.

II. Presentation of the final report and of the outcome of the COP 10

5. The secretariat informed about actions taken soon after COP 10 to finalize the report on the tenth session of the COP, which took place from 10 to 21 October 2011 in Changwon, Republic of Korea. The session was attended by representatives of 156 Parties to the UNCCD, two States not Parties to the Convention, 16 United Nations organs, funds and programmes, offices and specialized agencies, 21 intergovernmental and 51 civil society organizations.

6. The COP has taken decisions to entrust a number of common tasks and responsibilities to the Bureaus of its Subsidiary Bodies. For instance, the Bureau of the CST was entrusted with the responsibilities to follow up on matters relating to the preparation of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference.

7. With the support of the secretariat, the CST Bureau will also supervise the process leading to the selection of members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of Technical Experts that will be working on impact indicators refinement and the monitoring and assessment of impacts. Terms of Reference for this Advisory Group are to be prepared by the CST Bureau. Likewise the COP requested the CST to run both long and short terms measures to enable the UNCCD becoming a global authority on Scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to Desertification, Land Degradation and the effects of drought (DLDD).

8. With regard to the CRIC, the COP decided that future performance reviews to be conducted by the CRIC starting with its 12th session should be based on the report on the implementation of the two-year costed work programmes of the Convention Institutions and Subsidiary Bodies. The COP also decided that future sessions of the CRIC should review the accessibility of information on the best practices.

9. Various decisions taken by COP10 are also directed to the secretariat including on secretariat's subprogrammes such as: Awareness Raising and Communication (decisions 4/COP10, 5/COP10, and 31/COP10). On matters relating to Policy Framework, decision 9/COP 10 requested the Executive Secretary to continue formulating additional policy framework on thematic issues of drought (including water scarcity). On matters relating to the review and assessment of progress in implementing the strategy, decisions 3/COP10, 13/COP10 and 14/COP10 have all provided specific guidance to the Executive Secretary. On Science Technology and Knowledge, decisions 18/COP10, 19/COP10 and 22/COP10 have also provided specific guidance as regard support expected from the secretariat. On Management Support for Strategy Implementation, decisions 1/COP10, 6/COP10, 7/COP10, 10/COP10, 17/COP10, 26/COP10, and 39/COP10 have further requested the Executive Secretary to take specific measures as they relate to such a subprogramme. On Conference Services to the COP and meetings of its Subsidiary Bodies, decisions 16/COP10, 26/COP10, 27/COP10, 38 and 39/COP10 have requested the secretariat to take measures so as to enable Parties considering at CRIC 11, CST 11 and COP 11 the various reports expected from the secretariat.

III. Adjustments to the work plan of the Secretariat, the Global Mechanism and the subsidiary bodies of the Convention

10. The secretariat informed about actions taken at various levels soon after COP10 for the finalization of the work plans of the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM), as well as their joint work programme, taking into account guidance provided by Parties. It was reminded that decision 6/COP.10 on the governance and institutional arrangements of the GM contains provisions that may require further adjustments to the work plans and programmes of the secretariat and the GM. This decision directs the transfer of the accountability and the legal representation of the GM from IFAD to the secretariat, and requires the development and implementation of a joint secretariat – GM corporate identity with joint information and communication strategies. By this decision, the Executive Secretary was requested also to coordinate and facilitate the joint implementation of workplans and programmes. The secretariat also reported on the establishment by the Executive Secretary of a Senior Management Task Force (SMTF) involving senior staff from the secretariat and the GM to assist him in the implementation of decision 6/COP.10. The SMTF has recently started its work. Among the next steps will be the concurrent consideration of the work plans of the secretariat and the GM, as well as their joint work programme, with the view to identifying potential areas for further streamlining actions and increasing efficiency. The Bureau of the COP will be kept regularly informed on progress made in this field.

11. The secretariat reminded that the decision on the Convention budget adopted at COP 10 does not provide the financial resource requirements for the full operationalization of the work plans of the Convention institutions and the Subsidiary Bodies. Therefore the bulk of the funding needs for these work plans have to be mobilized through voluntary contributions. The secretariat informed that already in early January, a notification letter was sent to all potential contributors. At the time of the Bureau meeting only few donor countries have indicated their willingness to support the implementation of the work plans. COP Bureau members have been invited to help raising this matter vis a vis their constituencies at regional or interest group levels.

12. The secretariat mentioned that at the next COP Bureau meeting, an update will be provided to the members of the Bureau with indication of priorities that would necessitate support through extra budgetary resources.

13. Some Bureau members have expressed concern about the lack of significant responses as regard the financing of the activities under the work plans. The President underlined the need by the Bureau to help the secretariat in current efforts to raise fund for the activities as envisaged under the four year work plans.

IV. Status of activities of the Committee on Science and Technology including the preparation of the Second Scientific Conference

14. The CST Chair reported on the outcome of the CST Bureau and the Steering Committee Meeting preparatory to the 2nd Scientific Conference held in Bonn from 16 to 18 February 2012. He reminded that the CST-S3 is at the moment the main priority under the supervision of the CST Bureau taking into account decision 26/COP 10, which states that the following items are included in the agenda of the CST-S3:

- a. The UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference;
- b. Progress made in refining the impact indicators for strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy); Preparation of the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference on “Combating DLDD for poverty reduction and sustainable development: the contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices”; and the
- c. CST contribution to the CRIC 11 reporting process.

15. The CST chair also reported on activities leading to the Second Scientific Conference. In this regard, he reminded that the memorandum of understanding between the lead institution Global Risk Forum (GRF) Davos and the UNCCD secretariat was signed in October 2011 on the occasion of the COP10.

16. GRF Davos is now fully embarked in the substantive preparation of the Scientific Conference, including the organisation of working groups, which objectives under the leadership of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) – is to ensure that the discussions to take place in preparation for and during the conference will present state-of-the-art research findings and best practices in the field of economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub humid areas..

17. The Working Groups are assigned to draft White Papers on specific themes in close consultation with the GRF Davos. The White Papers will serve as scientific input papers and they will also build the foundation of the report to come out of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference. The first Working Group meetings are scheduled in March 2012. The second meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee will be held in April 2012.

18. GRF Davos is also currently developing a website for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, containing basic information as agreed in the memorandum of understanding. The website will be hosted at the UNCCD Secretariat. The web domain has been provisionally defined as 2sc.unccd.int.

19. Fundraising for the 2nd Scientific Conference is on-going. The secretariat in consultation with the Bureau of the CST is requested to continue to secure adequate funding for the Conference, including facilitation of the participation of scientists from eligible countries and for the substantive preparation of the conference.

20. CST Chair further reminded that, in accordance with decision 18/COP.10, the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference shall take place in 2014 at a special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). Topic of the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference was agreed upon within the same decision. It reads as follows: “Combating DLDD for poverty reduction and sustainable development: the contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices”.

21. CST Chair reported on follow up actions as they relate to decision 19/COP10 “Advice on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2, and 3 of The Strategy “.

22. He informed that in accordance with decision 19 /COP 10, the CST Bureau held in Bonn in February 2012 finalised the terms of reference for the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts, as well as guiding principles for the selection process of the members.

23. Other matters relating to the report by the CST Chair included steps taken to explore the establishment of a multi-stakeholder partnership model for the fellowship programme. A consultation document has been developed and shared with partners who did express an interest in joining the fellowship programme. A first meeting of the steering committee of the Fellowship Programme will be held in April 2012 to outline required actions and the practical implications of operationalizing the partnership arrangements.

24. With regard to the financial resources needed to support the activities of the CST, the representatives of the Republic of Korea informed that the Korea Forest Service will make a contribution to the 2nd Scientific Conference and to the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the refinement of indicators. An amount of Euro 100,000 has been announced.

25. The Bureau members thanked the Korea Forest Service for such a significant contribution, which will help advancing on urgent tasks.

V. Status of activities of the Committee for the review of the Implementation of the Convention:

26. The chairperson of the CRIC reported on the outcome of the CRIC Bureau meeting held in Bonn on 16 and 17 February 2012. She informed on activities under way to facilitate the reporting process towards CRIC 11. She referred in particular to the roadmap indicating various steps to be taken from March 2012 to January 2013. These include the finalisation of the template; the availability of such a template by March; the reporting process preparatory activities between March and August; the submission of the reports by end of August; the analysis of the report between August and January including the review of data quality and the submission of the main reference documents to the UN Conference Service for further processing (translation, editing).

27. The CRIC Chairperson underlined that countries are encouraged to start as soon as possible the preparation of their report so as to keep with the deadline as set in the roadmap. One Bureau member said that to his understanding the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) will have to report directly to the CRIC through the secretariat. The CRIC chairperson responded that such an option was discussed at the CRIC Bureau meeting.¹

28. The Executive Secretary responded to other comments made by some Bureau members regarding the deadline for the submission of the reports, which they find too tight. It was mentioned that there is very little room to extend such a deadline and therefore Parties are invited to take required actions ahead in time.

29. He also reminded that letters have been sent to all countries concerned including at Ministerial level informing them on opportunities to receive the necessary financial resources through the GEF secretariat so that they can engage in the reporting process on time.

¹ The CRIC Bureau meeting advised that CSOs will be invited to provide their Focal Points with information on matters relating to Strategic Objectives (impact indicators), Operational Objectives (performance indicators, where relevant), and Financial flows through a template to be filled and submitted to their Focal Points as part of the country reporting. CSOs reports on best practices will be done, for the time being, directly to the PRAIS portal, pending a decision by the COP11 on primary recommended databases for the topics identified in decision 13/COP.9.

30. The Executive Secretary expressed concern that despite efforts made so far, at the time the COP Bureau was meeting only 42 countries have submitted their request to the GEF. The Executive Secretary stated that the secretariat will continue to work with countries including through the regional coordination Units of the UNCCD so as to facilitate their access on GEF funding, however initial actions have to be taken by the countries themselves.

31. He referred to the UNEP Umbrella project, which is also being monitored by the secretariat so as to ensure that countries that have submitted their requests through UNEP will benefit from the GEF support.

32. The President concluded by inviting Bureau members concerned to encourage countries in their regions to take the necessary actions so as to benefit from the GEF financial resources made available to them for the reporting process.

VI. Update on the “Changwon Initiative”

33. A representative of the Korea Forest Service (KFS) made a presentation under this agenda item and referred the COP Bureau members on the 3 components under the “Changwon Initiative”, namely enhancing the scientific process of the UNCCD; mobilising additional resources and facilitating partnerships arrangements, and supporting a global framework for the promotion of best practices: the Land for Life Award.

34. The KFS representative informed on the decision taken by the Republic of Korea to support the implementation of the Changwon Initiative with a 2012 contribution in the amount of USD 1,300 000. He invited other country Parties in a position to do so to also contribute to the Changwon Initiative with additional financial resources.

35. The Bureau members have expressed gratitude to KFS and the Republic of Korea for the announced contribution.

36. One Bureau member has referred to the pledge made by Germany in the amount of Eur.50,000 and requested that with regard to the Land for Life Award, the ceremony for the Award could take place at the Rio Summit.

37. The Executive Secretary responded that there is a clear roadmap that has been discussed and made available to those that have contributed to the Land for Life Award; He advised about the importance to keep with the agreed timeframe. The initial plan is to announce the winner on 17 June this year on the occasion of the World Day to Combat Desertification while the awardee will receive the price at the closest UNCCD core event.

38. Another Bureau member reminded that not all issues have to be brought at the level of the COP Bureau therefore matters relating to the Land for Life Award should be left to the consideration of the Jury already in place.

VII. Financial requirements for facilitating participation at CST S-3 and the CRIC 11 sessions

39. The Secretariat reminded that despite the critical nature of the participation to the UNCCD core events of all eligible representatives in core UNCCD events, adequate funding needs to be mobilized through voluntary contributions.

40. In total 160 country Parties to the UNCCD are eligible for funding to participate at the Committee for Science and Technology Special Session 3, the 2nd Scientific Conference and the

Eleventh Session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 11).

41. In accordance with the adopted procedures for the participation of CSOs in UNCCD events, it is also anticipated that a minimum of 30 eligible CSOs representatives will be supported at both CST S3 and CRIC 11. A CSO panel, will make recommendation about the participation of the funded CSOs, taking into account the available financial resources.

42. The secretariat also reported on actions that have been taken to mobilise resources towards organising regional meetings preparatory to these events. All potential donors have been approached by early January 2012. The secretariat reminded however that the regional meetings can only be held if adequate financial resources are made available through voluntary contributions.

43. A grand total in the amount of Euro 2.021.900 is estimated necessary to facilitate participation in the upcoming UNCCD core events. Bureau members were invited to help encouraging countries in their regions/groups to make contribution in the UNCCD Special Fund for participation.

44. The representative of GRULAC informed that Peru would like to host the LAC regional meeting preparatory to CRIC.

VIII. Convention Budget: Status of assessed contributions

45. The secretariat reported on the status of contributions received as at 31 January 2012. Members of the Bureau were informed about the notifications sent to all Parties and follow up actions undertaken in particular with those Parties with arrears on their contributions to the core budget.

46. The Secretariat also informed that in the Biennium 2010-2011, a total of 97.1% of the core contributions were received. This is an improvement when compared to the Biennium 2008-2009 where the total received contributions was in the percentage of 92.7. The Secretariat continues to post information on the status of the contributions to the core budget on the website of the UNCCD.

47. Members of the Bureau were invited to remind Parties with outstanding contributions in their respective regions to make payments without further delay, bearing in mind that in accordance with the UNCCD financial rules, contributions are due on the 1 January of each year.

48. The Managing Director of the GM added that as at 30 December 2011, the GM has no debt with IFAD.

IX. Follow up on decision 6/COP.10 on the Governance and Institutional arrangements of the Global Mechanism

49. The secretariat reported on the various actions undertaken soon after COP 10 in line with the decision requesting the Executive Secretary to make follow up actions on matters relating to the GM institutional arrangements and governance.

50. It is with this understanding that the Executive Secretary held consultations with the President of IFAD and the Managing Director of the GM. He also reported on administrative and financial measures taken in direct liaison with the UN Office in Geneva and the Office of the Human Resources Management (OHRM) in New York.

51. With regard to the communication with the President of the COP 10 and in accordance with the provision of decision 6/COP 10 that requested the COP President to notify IFAD of the decision taken in Changwon, a letter has been sent on 1 November 2011 by the COP President to the President of IFAD. Such a letter also transmitted officially to IFAD a copy of decision 6/COP 10.
52. With regard to the consultations with the President of IFAD, the Executive Secretary has taken timely actions to implement the governance arrangements set in decision 6/COP 10.
53. Various consultations with the President of IFAD took place soon after the completion of COP 10. He informed about a videoconference meeting between him and the President of IFAD together with senior officers from both institutions that took place on 16 November 2011.
54. That meeting has helped to create the conditions for an initial managerial exchange on priority matters that derive from the provisions of decision 6/COP10. The President of IFAD informed on the occasion of that videoconference that the contract of the Managing Director of the GM was due to expiration by the end of November 2011.
55. As this constituted the first information received by the UNCCD secretariat on the contractual status of the Managing Director, the Executive Secretary underlined the need to agree on urgent procedures required to ensure continuity and service delivery by the GM. It was concluded that this matter will be addressed as the priority at a second, face-to-face meeting with a view to agree on appropriate procedure to follow.
56. The second meeting was convened at the IFAD's headquarters in Rome on 29 November 2011 and a UNOG representative was invited to join the UNCCD delegation. The meeting reviewed issues that needed immediate joint actions and ensuing procedures foreseen for their respective implementation.
57. Further bilateral and thematic meetings were arranged to address specific issues requiring technical and working level interactions. A list of focal points was also established in both institutions.
58. - Human Resources Management: IFAD confirmed the information provided during the teleconference held on 16 November, whereby the contract of the Managing Director was expiring on November 30. Under such conditions, the Executive Secretary underscored that until the present administrative regime is updated, through a revision of the current MoU and further advice from the UN competent structures, there was a need to ensure continuity in service delivery to parties.
59. IFAD informed that the contract of the Managing Director would be extended for a final period of 6 months.
60. Building upon this development the Executive Secretary undertook the required administrative steps foreseen for the vacancy of the post, as per the provisions of operative paragraph 6. In that respect, a revised job description taking into account the provisions of decision 6/COP.10 was forwarded to UNOG for assessment and a communication was sent to the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) in New York requesting assistance in the recruitment process envisaged.
61. - Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): The revision of the current MoU is considered a core element in the implementation process of decision 6/COP.10. As such, it was addressed since the initial video conference and further discussed during the meeting at IFAD headquarters. A first

draft revised MoU was sent by the UNCCD secretariat to IFAD on 5 December 2011, based on the relevant elements identified in decision 6/COP10 with a view of ensuring that IFAD's role would be limited to an administrative and logistical support. As such, it was proposed to delete in full the current preamble to the MoU and substitute it by a new text building upon the wording of decision 6/COP.10. The draft further proposed to delete articles that had become irrelevant under the legislative mandate of decision 6/COP.10. Further amendments were proposed for the remaining articles in order to bring them in line with the relevant provisions of decision 6/COP.10. IFAD requested on its part that the revised MoU also made a reference to the costs of services delivered by IFAD that would need to be reimbursed.

62. Several exchanges took place with IFAD on the proposed draft and significant progress was achieved to this date on the draft text. It is worth noting however that a divergence of interpretation still prevails between the UNCCD secretariat and IFAD on two important matters.

63. First, IFAD is of the view that once the MoU is revised and the contract of GM staff issued as UNCCD contracts, a deadline of September 2012 is to be set for the relocation of GM staff to a newly designed venue. The UNCCD secretariat has explained on the other hand that the Executive Secretary has no mandate to address the relocation matter during the COP intersessional period. The secretariat had further drawn the attention of IFAD to the provision of operative paragraphs 10, 11 and 14 that clearly underline the following:

- An eventual relocation of the GM staff can only be decided by the COP at its 11th session
- Such a decision by the COP is to be made on the basis of a recommendation by the Executive Secretary on the new housing arrangement for the GM, including potential co-location with the UNCCD secretariat.
- The recommendation of the Executive Secretary has in turn to be based on a process undertaken in consultation with the Bureau. Such process would aim at identifying a new housing arrangement for the Global Mechanism, including potential co-location with the UNCCD secretariat, with consideration to information on costs, operational modalities and synergies, and governance efficiencies.
- The relocation can only be operationalized once the new housing arrangement has been concluded and the MoU terminated.

64. Second, IFAD informed the UNCCD of its decision to open an escrow account using the funds in the GM accounts to cover any compensation that may be ordered by the Court. The UNCCD secretariat emphasized the fact that the amendment to the MoU should not include any provisions relating to IFAD withholding funds of the GM for the purpose of settling outstanding claims in relation to Judgment No. 2867 of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labor Organization (ILO) related to judicial procedures involving a staff member of the Global Mechanism. The UNCCD secretariat underlined that in its view this did not constitute a matter for inclusion in the revised MoU, but an issue that could be taken separately by the President of IFAD with the Executive Secretary, with a view to finding a way forward on this legal and financial matter, under the guidance of the Bureau of COP 10.

65. - Consultations with the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism: The secretariat reported on consultation between the Executive Secretary and the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism in relevant aspects of the implementation of decision 6/COP10. These include measures envisaged by the Executive Secretary to implement the governance arrangements set in the decision 6/COP.10.

66. A meeting was organized between the Executive Secretary and the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism on 28 November, at the Office of the GM. The same was followed by a briefing of the Executive Secretary to the GM staff.

67. A draft note on rules and procedures for the establishment of the SMTF was forwarded to the GM on 06 December 2011. The SMTF is conceived as an internal advisory tool, which purpose is to assist the Executive Secretary in assuming overall managerial responsibility. As such it formulates targeted advise to the Executive Secretary so as to ensure, primarily, a timely implementation of decision 6/COP10. The SMTF rules and procedures note was finalised on 24 January 2012. The first meeting of the SMTF has taken place on 1st February through video link.

68. In accordance with the decision 6/COP.10, the Executive Secretary has granted an operational delegation of authority to the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism.

69. One Bureau member wanted to know the difficulties encountered when implementing decision 6/COP10. The Executive Secretary referred to the situation relating to the intention by IFAD to arrange for the relocation of the GM no later than September 2012. The Executive Secretary reminded the recent communications received from IFAD and his response stating the fact that he has no mandate from the COP regarding a possible relocation of the GM at this stage.

70. The second difficulty that the Executive Secretary referred to is about the intention by IFAD as a result of the decision taken by ILO to compensate the decision taken by the Administrative Tribunal and the advisory opinion by the ICG to pay an amount of USD 438.055,000 to the former GM member against the GM account. Here as well, the Executive Secretary has indicated not being in a position to authorise such a payment given that he would need further advice from the COP Bureau and the Conference of the Parties.

71. Another Bureau member, building on the report of the secretariat and referring to the escrow account that IFAD would like to open, advised that a legal advice could be obtain from the UN Office for Legal Affairs.

72. On the question relating to the contractual status of the GM staff, the Executive Secretary confirmed that the matter is being addressed in liaison with the UN Office in New York. He has decided to request IFAD to extend the contracts of GM staff members for 6 months pending final arrangements with the UN relevant Office.

73. With regard to the recruitment of the Managing Director of the GM, the Executive Secretary recalled the information relating to the expiration of the contract of the Managing Director came to his attention only during the first meeting with the President of IFAD (16 November 2011) and taking into account the need to ensure continuity in the service delivery of the GM at all levels, extension of the contract of the GM Managing Director for six months were made possible by IFAD.

74. Meanwhile the Job Description of the GM has been sent to the UN OHRM, which will advise on action to be taken to initiate the recruitment for the GM Managing Director.

75. The Managing Director made a statement, in which he "...agrees with the Secretariat and IFAD to achieve the effective and smooth transition to the administration under the United Nations rules and regulation safeguarding GM's ability to continue implementing GM's programme of work as planned." He also elaborated on his contract renewal process and informed of his intention to challenge a recruitment process for the position of the Managing Director. He further referred to the advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) confirming the judgement by the Administrative Tribunal of ILO that IFAD is the employer of all GM staff at this point in time, which includes the Managing Director.

76. Many Bureau members provided views on the various actions taken and it was concluded that the Executive Secretary will continue to take all the necessary measures vis a vis IFAD and the UN Office so as to ensure a smooth transfer of the GM Staff to the UN; finalise the contracts for the GM staff members and the recruitment process for the position of the GM Managing Director.

77. The Bureau also advised that all legal and administrative steps should be fully considered throughout the implementation of decision 6/COP10. The President of the COP advised in the end that a letter on behalf of the COP Bureau will be sent to the IFAD President reaffirming the fact that without a decision by the Conference of Parties, there is no legal mandate from the UNCCD side to relocate the GM staff by September 2012. The letter will remind that a decision on the new housing arrangement for the Global Mechanism will be taken at COP 11. The Bureau therefore invites IFAD and its Executive Board to wait for such expected decision by the COP in 2013. In the meantime and in accordance with decision 6/COP10 on the governance and institutional arrangements of the Global Mechanism, all administrative, procedural and legal aspects of this decision will continue to be implemented in close consultation with the IFAD.

78. With regard to the draft MoU being finalised between the Secretariat and IFAD, Bureau members made specific comments and provided guidance to the Secretariat. A revised version of the MoU will be shared with IFAD for further consideration.

X. Follow up on decision 12/COP.10 on the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Ten-Year Strategy

79. The secretariat introduced this item and referred the Bureau to the draft Terms of Reference to the Intersessional Working Group (IWG) to prepare recommendations on the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy.

80. The Secretariat also reminded that according to a previous decision taken by Parties (decision 3/COP8) it is agreed that the evaluation would review progress made in implementing The Strategy and make appropriate recommendations on improving performance and furthering implementation. By decision 12/COP.10, Parties adopted detailed terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation.

81. The Secretariat underlined further that in line with decision 12/COP.10, the mid-term evaluation will comprise an evaluation of The Strategy as well as an evaluation of its building blocks (evaluation of progress made in implementing The Strategy; evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the two subsidiary bodies of the COP that have a key role in monitoring, assessing and reviewing the implementation; and review of the regional coordination mechanism arrangements).

82. The Secretariat also informed on actions taken to prepare the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of the IWG taking into account written comments received from Bureau members.

83. The Bureau was also informed that a first meeting of the IWG is scheduled towards the end of March 2012. At this meeting, the IWG would define its organisation of work and timetable, taking into account the indicative deadlines presented in decision 12/COP.10, the evolving UNCCD meeting schedule and the availability of resources.

84. According to decision 12/COP.10, the IWG may decide to draw on the expertise of consultants and/or institution, as and when it deems necessary and depending on the availability of funding.

85. The KFS representative informed the Bureau that the Korean Government decided to contribute up to Euro 50.000 to the IWG activities, and called for more contributions from Parties so as to enable the IWG to fulfil its role within the given timeframe.

86. After consideration of the draft Terms of Reference guidance were provided to the secretariat and the document with comments and observations from Bureau members was finalised and adopted by the COP Bureau.

XI. Preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20):

87. The Secretariat reminded that in its decision 8/COP.10 entitled "follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development relevant to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development", the COP requested the Executive Secretary to actively prepare for and participate in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and to contribute to the compilation document within the context of the conference themes, with a view to ensuring that due regard is paid to desertification, land degradation and drought issues.

88. Information was also provided on actions so far taken by the Secretariat to participate in relevant regional and international events. The Secretariat has also submitted a contribution to the CSD for insertion in the compilation document which was due by 1 November 2011. The contribution of the secretariat has been widely circulated and posted on the website of the Convention.

89. It was reminded that the compilation document was intended to serve as the basis for the preparation of a zero-draft of the outcome document for the Rio +20 Summit.

90. The Secretariat reported that its submission highlights the importance of land/soil in the context of the green economy and sustainable development, poverty eradication and food security. It stresses the importance of productive land/fertile soil for sustainable development.

91. The inputs point out that despite the fact that land is our most significant non-renewable geo resource, each year an estimated 24 billion tons of fertile soil are lost, adding that this issue remains a blind spot for the international community. The inputs call for a global policy response that prioritizes the DLDD crisis. The submission also warns that for green economy to be meaningful to the vast majority of developing countries, there is a need to mainstream DLDD issues.

92. It was underlined the importance for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to give DLDD issues the place they deserve since addressing them constitutes an effective way for sustainable development of affected populations and their ecosystems. The Secretariat further highlighted the fact that the world could not go carbon neutral without land degradation neutrality.

93. The Secretariat reported that on 11th January 2012 the zero draft of the Rio outcome document was made available. As a result of the submissions by Parties to the UNCCD and the secretariat to the compilation document, a section on desertification and land degradation has been incorporated in the zero draft in section V under the title "Priority key thematic cross-sectorial issues and areas". 18. This section constitutes a placeholder in future negotiations during which it will be further elaborated.

94. As far as the collaboration among the three Rio Conventions is concerned, it is planned to secure a space for the “Rio Conventions Pavilion” as has been the case since the tenth session of the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Nagoya; UNCCD COP 10 held in Changwon and at the UNFCCC COP 17 held in Durban. The three secretariats are making arrangements with that of the Rio Plus 20 Conference for further modalities to pursue this successful experience on synergies especially as they celebrate the Conventions’ 20th anniversary. The secretariat also is currently consulting with several partners to co-host some side events.

95. The President of the COP Bureau requested the Secretariat to continue its active involvement in the preparation of the Rio +20 Summit. He also invited the Bureau members to support and assist the Secretariat as necessary on the road to Rio. Members of the Bureau are also invited to encourage Parties they represent to be pro-active in ensuring that the DLDD momentum is maintained and reflected in the Rio Plus 20 outcome.

96. The secretariat also reminded that the global observance of the World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD) on 17 June will take place soon before the launching of the Rio Summit and therefore measures are being taken to organise a major event at the Rio Conference venue on 17 June with the presence of many high ranking officials. The theme for the 2012 WDCD is “Healthy soil sustains your life: let’s go land degradation neutral”.

XII. Other business

97. The Managing Director of the GM made a statement before the Bureau to underline the fact that he has been working with the UNCCD over the last 7 years that he continues to enjoy his work, particularly at the level of the countries and the regions.

98. The Executive Secretary has expressed his gratitude to the President of the COP for the successful organisation of the COP Bureau meeting in Seoul.

99. The President thanked all Bureau members for their support in the conduct of the meeting.

XIII. Next Meeting

100. The Executive Secretary informed that the next meeting is planned in November 2012 in Bonn.

101. The meeting was closed on 23 February at 6.40 PM. The Bureau members were invited to visit on the 24 February the Korea National Arboretum and other cultural sites located in the vicinity of Seoul.

**Meeting of the Bureau of the COP
Seoul, Republic of Korea**

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