

**Bureau of the Conference of the Parties
to the United Nations Convention to
Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**

Bonn, 9 June 2004

Report of the Bureau Meeting

1. A meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties was convened by the President of the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP6) to the UNCCD. The meeting was held in Bonn, Germany on 09 June 2004.

**I. Opening of the meeting and
adoption of the Agenda**

2. The meeting was opened at 11.00 a.m. by Dr. Daniel Codorniú Pujals, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba. Dr. Pujals welcomed the Bureau members and informed that two members (The Chair of CST and the Bureau member from the United Arab Emirates) have indicated their inability to attend the meeting. However, they have notified in writing their position on specific issues.
3. He recalled that the main purpose of the Bureau Meeting was to finalize consideration of important issues that could not be solved at the previous meeting held on 2 April 2004. These issues include the next term of office for the Executive Secretary and the financial situation of the Secretariat. He referred to the provisional agenda, which comprises of two additional items, namely the overview of the preparation of CRIC 3 and the consultation on the terms of reference for the comprehensive review of the activities of the Secretariat.
4. The Bureau adopted the agenda without modifications.

**II. Next Term of office of the
Executive Secretary**

5. The President reported on recommendations made by the regional groups through their representatives in the Bureau. On the basis of the submissions received the overwhelming majority of the 12 Bureau members supported the extension of the mandate of the Executive Secretary for the next 3 years term of office, while two members objected on policy grounds and one abstained. As a result, the President informed that he will send a recommendation to the Secretary General to appoint Mr. Hama Arba Diallo as the Executive Secretary for the next term of office running from 01 January 2005 to 31 December 2007.

III. Financial situation of the Secretariat

5. The Executive Secretary made a presentation on what has been happening over the last two months. He underlined the fact that the continuing decline of the value of the US dollar versus the euro has major negative impacts on the core budget of the Secretariat. He reported on measures taken to reduce costs and confirmed the following:
 - The posts that became vacant are not filled and their functions are redeployed to other staff members;
 - Consultancy services have been reduced;
 - Staff travel costs to attend important UNCCD related events have also been reduced to nominal amounts;
 - All other operational and common premises costs have been reduced.

6. He emphasized that all these measures have adverse effects on the activities of the Secretariat and that further cost reductions will heavily impact upon the Secretariat's ability to fulfil its mandates and to perform the duties entrusted to it by the COP. He also informed the Bureau that despite several reminders sent to Parties, many of them have not yet paid their contributions to the core budget.

As a result of the continuing decline of the US dollar and the high level of outstanding payments, the Secretariat's 2004 budget is insufficient to cover staff salaries and other mandatory costs.

7. Several Bureau members considered that the financial situation of the Secretariat demand immediate measures that will allow the Secretariat to continue functioning on an effective manner.
 - Some members of the Bureau reminded that action to be taken should not change the decision on the budget adopted at COP 6;
 - One Bureau Member wondered whether the Bureau could legally consider taking a decision on the core budget;
 - It was mentioned that similar decisions have been taken in the past in the meeting of the Bureau of another Rio Convention (e.g. CBD).
 - The bureau agrees in general that the purpose is to elaborate
 - options that will enable the Secretariat to function under an exceptional situation not to override the decision on budget adopted at COP 6.

8. One Bureau member from the group of 77 and China recalled that his group has submitted a draft decision on the financial situation of the Secretariat since the last meeting of the Bureau (2 April 2004). He suggested that the Bureau could consider taking a final decision, which could include the following: appeal to Parties that have not paid their contributions as yet to do so without further delay; authorise the Executive Secretary to increase the amount of the working capital reserve as a caution for the activities authorised under the core budget till COP 7; authorise also the Executive Secretary on an exceptional basis to increase up to 750,000 US \$ the core budget so as to cover the shortfall due to the depreciation of the US dollar and to meet the basic costs necessary to pay staff salaries and operational costs; authorise the Executive Secretary to draw on available cash resources from the core budget, including unspent balances, contributions from previous financial periods and

miscellaneous income to incur obligations; call upon all Parties to make voluntary contributions to cover the budgetary shortfall of the Secretariat.

9. The President proposed that the Bureau member from Norway could facilitate the consultation among Bureau members and coordinate the preparation of a revised version of the draft Bureau decision taking into account suggestions and comments made by all Bureau members.
10. When the Bureau resumed work in the afternoon, the Bureau member from Norway reported as follows:
 - There is an agreement on the paragraph regarding the call on Parties to make voluntary contributions;
 - It is also agreed to keep the paragraph, which requests Parties that have not paid their contributions to the core budget to do so without further delay;
 - The invitation to the host country to make additional voluntary contribution is also positively considered;
 - With regard to the use of the capital reserve, the Bureau could recommend all Parties to consider increasing the amount of the working capital reserve at COP 7;
 - As for the paragraph which reads “authorizes the Executive Secretary to maintain the equivalent value of the approved budget levels by the amount necessary to maintain current staff salaries and minimum level of operating costs”, it was reported that initially there has been an assumption that there is a flexibility within the budget as adopted at COP 6 to meet the loss due to exchange rate. As this is not the case, further consultations within the regional groups are deemed necessary. The objective remains to explore possibilities that will allow the Executive Secretary to use funds up to the real value of the approved budget. A copy of the draft decision is attached.
11. A general discussion followed the report on the draft Bureau decision. Some Bureau members proposed to adopt ad referendum key paragraphs of the text; the Bureau member from Belgium while recognizing the difficult situation informed that he does not have the mandate of the European Union to decide on the budget. He proposed therefore to be given time to consult with his group on the entire text. The Bureau member from Hungary supported him. One Bureau member suggested to agree on the principle of maintaining the value of approved budget up to the level of depreciation due to exchange rate;
12. The Bureau member from Cuba made a statement, which reads as follows: “Cuba considers that the position of the European Union in relation to the financial topic of the Secretariat is contrary to the principles of cooperation and the commitments with the UNCCD, and unacceptable when blocking a decision on the basis of the financial contributions that it makes to the Convention. Cuba considers that the European Union is trying to impose its minority will over the decision of most of the members of the Bureau, which is unacceptable and preempts any further discussion on this topic. Cuba will support and observe the President’s decision on the proposal to improve the financial situation of the Secretariat. Cuba requests that this position is reflected in the report of the meeting.”

13. The President of the Bureau suggested to adopt section A of the draft decision, which seems to be acceptable to all Bureau members, while specifying that one Bureau member would like to seek the views of his group.
The President also invited all Bureau members to consult with their Regional groups and to submit their views on the remaining part of the text by 30 June 2004 so as to enable the Bureau to take a final decision.

IV. Consultation on the comprehensive review of the Activities of the Secretariat

14. The president recalled the status of the preparation of the terms of reference for the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). He informed on submissions received from Bureau members, compilation made by the Secretariat and the chair's synthesis, which was circulated to all Bureau members. He welcomed the two representatives of the JIU and expressed the hope that their exchange with Bureau members would help to establish a good collaboration between the JIU and the UNCCD.
15. The Bureau member from Belgium expressed his thanks to the President for the synthesis prepared from various proposals submitted by Bureau members. He informed that his group considered positively the text. He proposed few comments to be added in the final version of the Terms of Reference.
16. The chair of the CRIC also expressed thanks to the representatives of the JIU for their participation in the Bureau meeting. He referred to the institutional linkages between the Secretariat of the UNCCD and the Secretariat of the United Nations. He mentioned that the Conference of the Parties has established subsidiary bodies, which report to it. He wondered whether the JIU accepts terms of reference from a UN body and if so what would be the modalities for submission of written contributions on the subject of evaluation. He finally wanted to know when the report of the JIU would be available given that COP 7 is scheduled in the autumn 2005.
17. A representative of the JIU expressed thanks for the invitation extended to them by the President of the COP. He underlined that their presence will also allow them to better understand the work of the Bureau. He made a brief presentation of the Joint Inspection Unit, which is an independent body focusing mainly on budget and administration management. He insisted on the absolute independence of the JIU in accordance with article 7 of the status. He informed that JIU should finalize the terms of reference. He confirmed that the review of activities of the Secretariat is included in the 2004 work programme of the JIU and they plan to finalize the report by 1 July 2005.
18. The representative of the JIU also confirmed that a symbolic amount between USD 15,000 and 20,000 will be charged to the UNCCD given that the Convention does not contribute to the budget of the JIU. He responded to specific questions regarding the reporting process to COP7 and translation to be made in the other UN working languages.
19. The President thanked the JIU representatives for their explanation and assured that the Bureau will closely collaborate with them.

20. The President invited all bureau members to consult with their regional groups on the synthesis of proposals and send their comments not later than 25 June 2004. He informed that he will send the final proposals to the JIU latest on 15 July 2004.

V. Overview of the preparation of the third session of the committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC 3)

21. The President recalled previous exchange among Bureau members on the format of CRIC 3 and invited the chair of the CRIC to report on his consultation with the Secretariat.
22. The chair of the CRIC referred to his proposal on the format and duration of CRIC 3, which was sent to all Bureau members and Chairpersons of all regional groups. He expressed concern on the lack of funds for the preparation of the national reports by African countries. In this regard, he said that it was regrettable that the Vice President of the COP 6 from Belgium in his capacity as a member of the council of the GEF at its May session, has chosen to question the prerogative of the CEO of GEF to approve the Medium Sized Project (MSP), which aim at providing support to the preparation of the national report by African countries. He deplored the fact that this intervention has slowed down the whole national reporting preparatory processes in the sense that it affected the schedule decided by the COP and its bureau and are likely to result in additional costs and delays.
23. As far as the duration of CRIC 3 is concerned, he informed that it was very difficult to reach a common position on the four proposals of 15 days; 7 days, 6 days and 5 days. The notification sent to all Bureau members proposed a *modus vivendi* of 8 days including one day to be allocated to regional consultations. The Secretariat and the CRIC Chair have not received any reaction to this proposal, which he considered positive.
24. With regard to the venue of CRIC3, he proposed to the Bureau to extend the deadline by two months (until end of September 2004) to allow any countries that would like to host CRIC 3 to be able to submit an offer in accordance with the procedure established by the COP.
25. He finally reiterated his readiness to continue working with the Bureau and the Secretariat on issues such as the date and venue of the CRIC 3.
26. The Executive Secretary informed that the MSP for supporting the preparation of the national reports was signed by the CEO of the GEF on 8 June. He indicated that the Secretariat now looks forward to see how the process will evolve in consultation with implementing and executing agencies of the GEF.
27. The chair invited Bureau members to comment on the format prepared by the chair of the CRIC.

28. The Bureau member from Belgium explained that his request to the CEO to postpone the signature of the MSP on the review process was due to the fact that the document was submitted late and there was no sufficient time to review its content. He reiterated his commitment and support to the UNCCD process. With regard to the format of CRIC 3, he suggested on behalf of the EU group that five working days would be sufficient to consider issues on the agenda of CRIC 3. The Bureau member from Hungary supported Belgium.
29. All other Bureau members representing Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean region and Eastern and Central European countries expressed support to the proposal made by the chair of CRIC.
30. The Bureau member from Norway suggested that the agenda of the CRIC 3 should focus on Africa and informed that her group could go up to seven (7) days.
31. The Chair of CRIC responded to some points raised by Bureau members and referred to paragraphs 3 to 7 of the provisional agenda (ICCD/CRIC (3)/2). He reminded that CRIC 3 should be seen as an event, which would involve not only African countries but also the international community as a whole. He said that the Bureau should therefore allocate adequate time for consideration of the issues on the agenda including the interactive dialogue and the panel sessions on thematic areas, which stem from the Bonn Declaration (Decision 8/COP 4). He made an appeal for a consensus on his proposal.
32. The president of the Bureau observed that it would have been preferable to find a consensus on the proposal of CRIC chair. He noted however that 6 out of 10 Bureau members supported the proposal for a duration of 8 days; 3 proposed a shorter duration; 1 member informed he would agree with any decision taken by the President. It is with this understanding that the President proposed to adopt for CRIC 3 a duration of 8 days. The Bureau member from Belgium requested that the record should reflect his objection.
33. The President reminded Bureau members that the mandate and functions of the CRIC process will be subject to review at COP 7. Parties will therefore draw lessons from previous CRIC sessions and decide on the duration of future CRIC sessions.

VI. Other matters

34. The Executive Secretary presented a brochure called "Preserving our common ground". The document has been prepared by the Secretariat on the occasion of the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention.
35. The Bureau member from Belgium also announced that a colloquium will be organized on 15 June, in Brussels to celebrate the World Day to Combat Desertification.

VII. Next meeting

36. The President informed that the Bureau will meet again one day prior to the commencement of CRIC 3. He thanked Bureau members for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 21:43 p.m.

**Bureau Decision
Bonn, Germany
9 June 2004**

Programme and budget for the biennium 2004-2005

The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties,

Recalling paragraph 5 of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decision 23/COP 6 on the budget for the programme and budget for the biennium 2004 – 2005;

Taking note of the alarming significant and continuing decline of the value of the US dollar versus the Euro since September 2003, when the value of Euro 1.00 was USD 1.085 until 8 June 2004 when the value of the Euro 1.00 is USD 1.2263;

Noting that the significant decline in the value of the USD to date versus the Euro, and any further future decline, will and has had a major impact on the functions of the Secretariat and the tasks mandated by COP6 including further reduction of staff and further decreases in basic and necessary operating expenses, if at all possible, and that the execution of core activities will further deteriorate as a result of the actual and any future declines in the value of the USD;

Notes with concern that a large number of Parties have not yet paid their contributions to the core budget for 2004 and, in many instances, for prior years, and strongly appeals to them to pay any and all unpaid contributions without any further delay;

Recommends that COP 7 consider increasing the amount of the working capital reserve to twenty (20 %) percent of the biennium budget;

Authorizes the Executive Secretary, for the biennium 2004-2005, to draw on available cash resources from the core budget, including unspent balances, contributions from previous financial periods and miscellaneous income to incur obligations and make payments for the purposes specified and up to the amounts in the approved core budget (see table 1), for exceptional reasons;

Requests the Executive Secretary to report to COP 7, through the Bureau of the sixth session of the COP where necessary, on the use of the authorization given herein;

Calls upon all parties to make additional voluntary contributions to meet, as much as possible, the budgetary shortfall that has arisen due to declines in the value of the USD;

Invites the host country to make additional voluntary contributions to cover as much as possible of the budgetary short fall (referred to above);

TO BE APPROVED THROUGH CONSULTATION:

Authorizes the Executive Secretary to maintain the equivalent values in current USD of the approved budget by the amounts necessary to sustain current staff salaries and related benefits at official UN exchange rates and at official UN salary and benefit levels, and to sustain minimum levels of operating costs;

Urges interested donors to make voluntary contributions to meet the travel costs for the inspection team, in order to undertake the evaluation requested by COP.6 decision 23;

Requests that the Executive Secretary provides additional detailed information of the current budget by cost category and the currently estimated budget shortfall, so that the Bureau Members may take a decision within two weeks of this meeting (23 June 2004).

List of participants

Belgium	Mr. Jozef Buys	Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations 345 East 46 th Street – 4 th Floor New York NY 10017 Tel: 1-212.378.6335 Fax: 1-212.681.7618 Email: Jozef.Buys@diplobel.org
Belarus	Mr. Vladimir Savchenko	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Kollectornaya st. 10 220048, Minsk Tel: 375-17.220.54.76 Fax: 375-17.220.55.83 Email: savchenko@tut.by
China	Mr. Sun Guoshun	Division Chief of the Department of Treaty and Law Ministry of foreign Affairs No.2, Southern Chao Yang Men Street Beijing Tel: 86-10.659.63.253 Fax: 86-10.659.63.257 Email: sun_guoshun@mfa.gov.cn
Colombia	Ms. Maria Elvira Posada	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Environmental Affairs Bogotá, D.C. Tel: 571-288.9860 / 571-332.3434 ext. 182 Fax: 571-562.7610 571-566.6081 Email: maria.posada@minrelext.gov.co
Cuba	Dr. Daniel Codorniú Pujals	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment Capitalio Nacional Ciudad de La Habana Tel : 537-867.0756 / 537-867.0618 Fax : 537-33.8654 Email : codorniu@citma.cu
Cuba	Lic. Jorge Luis Fernández Chamero	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment Capitalio Nacional Ciudad de La Habana Tel : 537-867.0756 / 537-867.0618 Fax : 537-33.8654 Email : chamero@citma.cu

Hungary	Ms. Dóra Kulauzov	Ministry of Environment & Water FÖ UTCA 44-50 1011 Budapest Tel: 36-1.457.3388 Fax: 36-1.201.1335 Email: kulauzov@mail.ktm.hu / kulauzov@mail.kuvm.hu
Mauritania	Ambassador El Ghaouth Mohamed Mahmoud	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Nouakchott Tel: 222-5252860 / 222-5253508 Email : elghaouth@yahoo.com
Morocco	Mr. Mohammed Arrouchi	Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations 866, 2 nd Avenue New York 10017 Tel: 1-212.4211580 Fax: 1-212.4217826 Email: arrouchi@morocco-un.org
Norway	Mrs Anne Marie Skjold	Ministry of Foreign Affairs PO Box 8114 Dep N – 0032 Oslo Tel: 47-22.243.600 / 47-22.243.607 Fax: 47-22.249.580 Email: ask@mfa.no
Swaziland	Mr. Bongani Masuku	PO Box 501 Manzini, Swaziland Tel: 268-51.84.162 / 268-51.86.329 / 268-614.5860 (mobile) Fax: 268-51.84.481 Email: moaclds@realnet.co.sz
UNCCD	Hama Arba Diallo	Executive Secretary United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 01 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: adiallo@unccd.int
GM-UNCCD	Per Rydén	Managing Director Global Mechanism of the UNCCD IFAD Via Serafico 107 00142 Rome, Italy Tel: +39 06 5459 2146 Fax: + 39 06 5459 2135 E-mail: p.ryden@ifad.org

UNCCD	Grégoire de Kalbermatten	Deputy Executive Secretary United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 24 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: gdkalbermatten@unccd.int
UNCCD	Ahmed Cissoko	Senior Scientific Officer United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 41 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: acissoko@unccd.int
UNCCD	Bettina Horstmann	Coordinator for Africa United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 16 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: bhorstmann@unccd.int
UNCCD	Massimo Candelori	Coordinator for COPSUBLA United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 43 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: mcandelori@unccd.int
UNCCD	Sergio Zelaya	Coordinator for Latin America and Caribbean countries United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 26 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: szelaya@unccd.int
UNCCD	Mikhail Outkine	Programme Officer Eastern and Central Europe United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 51 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: moutkine@unccd.int

UNCCD	Rui Zheng	Coordinator for Asia United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 22 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: rzheng@unccd.int
UNCCD	Rajeb Boulharouf	Coordinator for External Relations and Public Information United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 10 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: rboulharouf@unccd.int
UNCCD	Frank Meek	Chief Administration and Finance United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 44 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: fmeek@unccd.int
UNCCD	Melchiade Bukuru	Chief UNCCD Liaison Office New York United Nations Headquarters DC2 Building, 19 Floor, Office 1988 New York, NY 10017, USA Tel: 1-212.963.4871 Fax: 1-917.367.3441 Email: bukuru@un.org
UNCCD	Mansour N'Diaye	Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Martin-Luther-King Str. 8 53175 Bonn, Germany Tel: (49-228) 815 28 03 Fax: (49-228) 815 28 98/99 E-mail: mndiaye@unccd.int