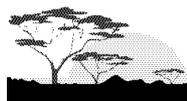




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Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention - Review and compilation of best practices in sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation

Review and compilation of best practices in sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

The present document provides an overview of the status of the 2010–2011 reporting and review process on best practices in sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation, and offers some options making the best possible use of this knowledge in the Convention process. It also proposes a classification and schedule of review of best practices within the time frame of The Strategy. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention may wish to consider the options presented in this document, and make recommendations on how to carry the process of collection, dissemination and further use of best practices forward.

* The submission of this document was delayed due to the postponement of the reporting deadline by Parties.

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I. Introduction and background information

1. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) established that one of the key functions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) in reviewing the implementation of The Strategy is to document and disseminate best practices from experience in implementing the Convention. Systematic documentation and dissemination of best practices was set as one of the priorities of the programme of work of the CRIC.¹ This was confirmed in the new terms of reference of the CRIC, adopted at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9), which state that the CRIC shall, among other functions, “review and compile best practices in the implementation of the Convention and forward this information for consideration by the COP with a view to disseminating it.”²

2. The COP, in establishing the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) of the Convention and of The Strategy,³ decided that review and compilation of best practices on the implementation of the Convention constitutes one of the four elements of the PRAIS.

3. The CRIC, at its seventh session, concluded that the secretariat should develop a common framework for the definition and selection of best practices for consideration by Parties. Based on a proposal formulated by the secretariat,⁴ COP 9 decided that best practices should be collected at the level of the CRIC according to the following seven thematic topics:⁵

- (a) Sustainable land management (SLM) technologies, including adaptation;
- (b) Capacity-building and awareness-raising;
- (c) Desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD), and SLM monitoring and assessment/research;
- (d) Knowledge management and decision support;
- (e) The policy, legislative and institutional framework;
- (f) Funding and resource mobilization;
- (g) Participation, collaboration and networking.

4. All reporting entities (affected and developed country Parties, entities reporting on the implementation of subregional and regional action programmes, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the secretariat, the Global Mechanism (GM), as well as accredited civil society organizations (CSOs), are invited to submit best practices for consideration by the CRIC and the COP.⁶ Templates and reporting guidelines developed by the secretariat for reporting of all entities

¹ ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1, decision 3/COP.8, annex.

² ICCD/COP(9)/18/Add.1, decision 11/COP.9, annex.

³ Ibid., decision 12/COP.9.

⁴ ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.5, para. 8.

⁵ Decision 13/COP.9, annex V.

⁶ Pursuant to decisions 11/COP.9 (annex) and 13/COP.9 (attachment), accredited CSOs are also invited to organize themselves to prepare collaborative reports on their work for the implementation of the Convention for transmission to the sessions of the CRIC held between ordinary sessions of the COP and the focal points of the countries. At its meeting on 1–2 March 2010, the Bureau of the CRIC decided to invite accredited CSOs to report to CRIC 9 on best practices using the same template and guidelines as those being devised for the other reporting entities.

that are expected to submit reports in 2010–2011, include the template and reporting guidelines for submission of best practices.⁷

5. At its meetings on 1–2 March 2010 and 21–22 June 2010, the Bureau of the CRIC decided that:

(a) All seven themes identified in decision 13/COP.9 for reporting on best practices (see paragraph 3 above) should be reviewed within the time frame of The Strategy;

(b) The theme to be addressed for the review of best practices by CRIC 9 will be: “Sustainable land management (SLM) technologies, including adaptation”;

(c) The theme to be addressed for the review of best practices by CRIC 11 will be: “Funding and resource mobilization”;

(d) A schedule for the review of best practices according to other themes will be established by COP 10.

6. The Bureau of the CRIC also decided that:

(a) Deliberations of the Committee on best practices should not focus on assessing/adopting a given practice as a “good” or “best practice”, but rather discuss how to support replication of best practices and aim to find ways for the knowledge presented in best practices to be distilled and translated into policy orientations for the COP to consider and adopt, where appropriate;

(b) A broad consultation process driven by civil society should be facilitated on how to effectively use information on best practices compiled for review by the CRIC, ensure their wide diffusion and translate lessons learned into policy recommendations. The consultation process should be launched at CRIC 9, making use of an interactive format as much as possible, and lead to further deliberations on how to handle best practices at COP 10;

(c) An evaluation of the first review on best practices should take place at CRIC 11.

7. Subsequently, a consultation process with accredited civil society organizations was facilitated by the secretariat, with a view to receiving feedback and further involving civil society in the reporting process, particularly with regard to best practices. The input received from CSOs is annexed to this document.

II. Status of 2010–2011 reporting and review process on best practices in sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation

8. The Bureau of the CRIC decided that the deadline for the submission of reports, including best practices, would be 12 November 2010. By that date, 81 national reports containing submissions on best practices had been uploaded onto the PRAIS portal, with a total of 238 best practices. Of these submissions 212 were put forward by affected country

⁷ ICCD/CRIC(9)/INF.2, 3, 4 and 5 and INF.8.

Parties⁸ and 26 best practices were submitted by developed country Parties. In addition, 10 reports, containing 15 best practices, were received from CSOs.

9. Submissions on best practices received after this deadline are not included in the above-mentioned figures. However, and irrespective of submission date, all best practices submitted by relevant reporting entities will be made available through the PRAIS portal on the secretariat website in due course.

III. Making use of the information on best practices

10. The framework for best practices recommended to CRIC 8 in consultation with the Bureaus of the CRIC and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST),⁹ provides for a twofold use of best practices collected in the UNCCD process:

(a) Establish an experience-sharing platform that will allow the CRIC to draw on commonly agreed standardized practices and advise on measures, including policy measures, to be taken by the COP;

(b) Develop a knowledge management system that will assist in the collection, identification and selection of good practices, with a view to facilitating replication and scaling-up of best practices.

11. While the two proposed uses of best practices are obviously intertwined, and will necessarily feed into each other, the main differentiation lies in their different objectives. The former will aim at facilitating the decision-making process and the translation of knowledge into policy recommendations; whereas the latter will feed the consultation process with solid scientific advice and provide stakeholders with evidence-based information of potential benefits in adopting such practices at field level.

12. The diagram below illustrates the main actors, procedures and activities in this process. In the proposed option, the CRIC would facilitate the establishment of an experience-sharing platform; propose for adoption a classification system and a calendar for review of best practices according to the themes that have been agreed; support the compilation and diffusion of best practices submitted by reporting entities including through the PRAIS portal; and propose for consideration by the COP policy measures and/or voluntary guidelines relating to the implementation of best practices.

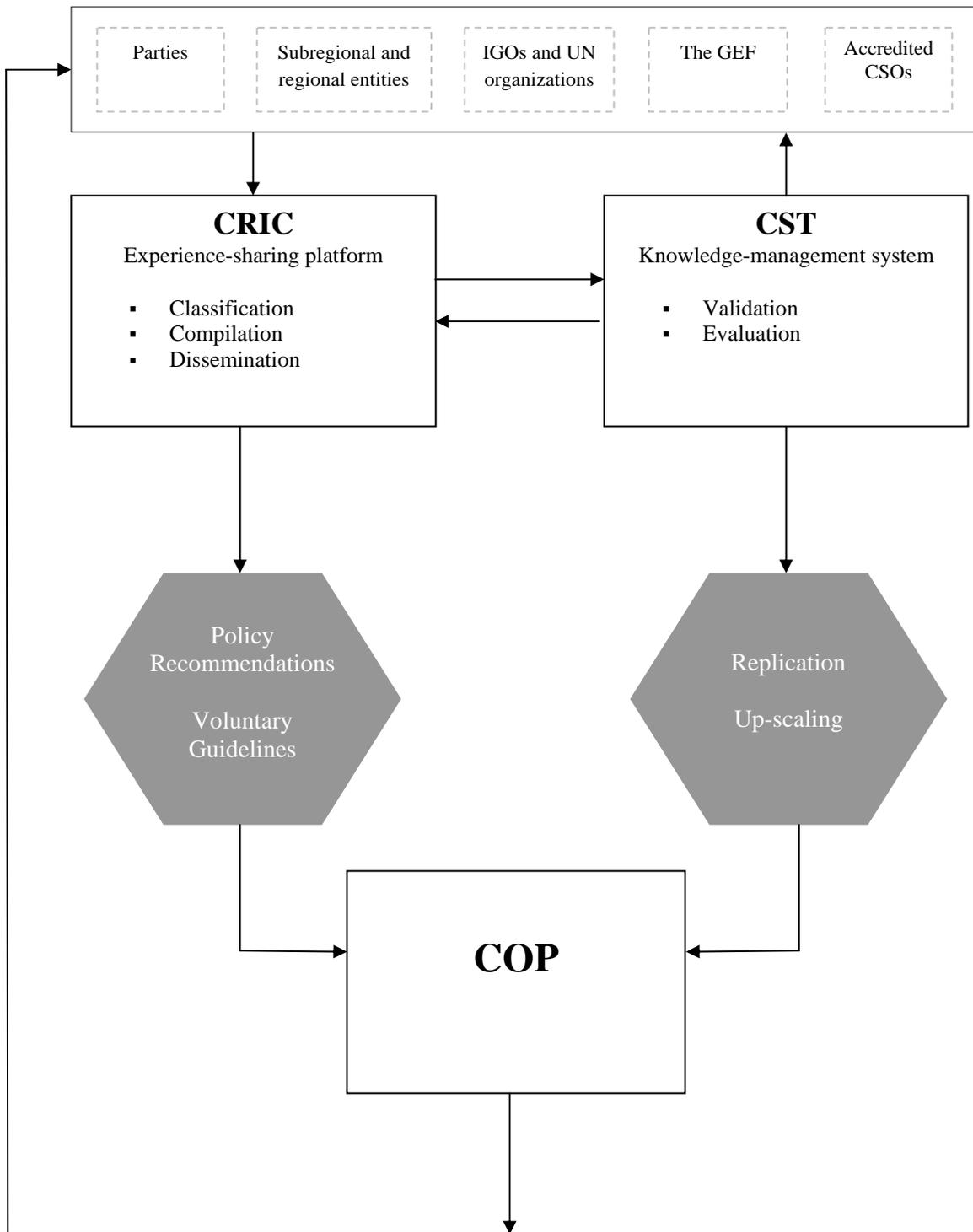
13. The CST would include best practices in the overall UNCCD knowledge management system, and provide scientific advice on methodology and criteria to validate best practices, facilitate their replication and scaling-up, and evaluate their applicability.

14. Close interaction and clear definition of responsibilities between the two subsidiary bodies will be required, in order to allow the CRIC to perform the functions of its mandate as it relates to best practices, as adopted in decision 11/COP.9, and enhancing interaction and synergies between the subsidiary bodies on this matter.

⁸ Fifty-two were from Africa, 61 from Asia, 83 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 5 from the Northern Mediterranean, and 11 from Central and Eastern Europe.

⁹ See ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.5, para. 24.

Diagram illustrating the main actors, procedures and activities relating to the collection of best practices



A. Experience-sharing platform

15. The exchange of information on best practices could be facilitated through an information-sharing platform built on the Web-based PRAIS portal. The portal will be made accessible to Parties and interested stakeholders, as well as the wider audience. It will contain all submissions on best practices provided by reporting entities, classified according to the proposal below, and will include a system for queries/retrieval of information in a user-friendly way. Secondly, the portal will also facilitate the review of information on best practices for consideration by the CRIC and the COP, providing substantive input to deliberations by Parties during official sessions.

16. Exchange of information from best practices collected in the reporting process would further be ensured by organizing special sessions at regional meetings preparatory to the CRIC and/or at COP, CRIC and CST sessions, where specific topics would be discussed in an interactive manner, taking advantage of the presence of policymakers, scientists, CSO representatives, national focal points and other participants to exchange and share information in the most efficient and inclusive way.

1. Classification

17. In accordance with the theme selected by the Bureau of the CRIC for review at CRIC 9, the methodological proposals put forward in document ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.5 and the relevant COP decisions on this matter, a classification of best practices relating to sustainable land management technology, including adaptations that were uploaded onto the PRAIS portal during the 2010–2011 reporting and review process, has been applied. The classification is based on the following elements:

- (a) Contribution to the strategic objectives of The Strategy (decision 3/COP.8);
- (b) Synergistic impact on the objectives of the other Rio conventions;
- (c) Thematic areas as defined in the Declaration on the commitments under the Convention to enhance implementation of the obligations of the UNCCD;¹⁰
- (d) Linkages with the other themes of best practices as contained in decision 13/COP.9, annex V.

18. The classification of best practices on sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation, is presented in table 1. The templates for all reporting entities have been designed accordingly.

¹⁰ ICCD/COP(4)/11/Add.1, decision 8/COP.4, annex.

Table 1
Classification of best practices on sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation

<i>Contribution to strategic objectives</i>	<i>Synergistic impact on the objectives of other conventions*</i>	<i>Thematic areas*</i>	<i>Linkages with the other themes of best practices*</i>
To improve the living conditions of affected population	Impact on biodiversity conservation	Cropland management and agriculture	Capacity-building and awareness-raising
		Rangeland management	
		Woodland management	
		Unproductive land restoration	
Impact on climate change mitigation	Impact on biodiversity conservation	Human settlements	DLDD and SLM monitoring and assessment/research
		Others	
		Impact on climate change mitigation	
		Impact on climate change adaptation	
To improve the conditions of affected ecosystems	Impact on biodiversity conservation	Impact on climate change mitigation	Knowledge management and decision support
		Impact on climate change adaptation	
		Impact on climate change adaptation	
To generate global benefits through UNCCD implementation	Impact on biodiversity conservation	Impact on climate change mitigation	The policy, legislative and institutional framework
		Impact on climate change adaptation	
		Impact on climate change adaptation	
To generate global benefits through UNCCD implementation	Impact on biodiversity conservation	Impact on climate change mitigation	Funding and resource mobilization
		Impact on climate change adaptation	
		Impact on climate change adaptation	
To generate global benefits through UNCCD implementation	Impact on biodiversity conservation	Impact on climate change mitigation	Participation, collaboration and networking
		Impact on climate change adaptation	
		Impact on climate change adaptation	

* Repetitive text in the boxes has been omitted for the sake of brevity.

19. Table 2 below provides a proposed classification of the remaining six themes of best practices in accordance with strategic objective 4 and operational objectives 1 to 5 of The Strategy, taking into consideration their expected impacts (for strategic objectives) and outcomes (for operational objectives). The classification is accompanied by a proposed schedule of review of the six themes, in compliance with the decision of the Bureau of the CRIC for all seven themes to be reviewed within the time frame of The Strategy (up to 2018). Further guidance by Parties will be required in terms of its application at relevant future reporting and review processes.

Table 2
Proposed classification and schedule of review of themes 2 to 7 of best practices

<i>Best practice theme</i>	<i>Proposed schedule for the CRIC review</i>	<i>Contribution to strategic objectives and related impact</i>	<i>Contribution to operational objectives and related outcomes</i>
Theme 6: Funding and resource mobilization	CRIC 11 in 2012	SO 4: To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors <i>(Expected impact 4.1)</i>	OO 5: Financing and technology transfer <i>(Outcomes 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4)</i>
Theme 3: DLDD and SLM monitoring and assessment/research	CRIC 13 in 2014		OO 3: Science, technology and knowledge <i>(Outcomes 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6)</i>
Theme 4: Knowledge management and decision support	CRIC 13 in 2014		OO 5: Financing and technology transfer <i>(Outcome 5.5)</i>
Theme 7: Participation, cooperation and networking	CRIC 15 in 2016	SO 4: To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors <i>(Expected impact 4.2)</i>	OO 1: Advocacy, awareness-raising and education <i>(Outcomes 1.2 and 1.3)</i> OO 2: Policy framework <i>(Outcome 2.5)</i>
Theme 2: Capacity-building and awareness-raising	CRIC 17 in 2018		OO 1: Advocacy, awareness-raising and education <i>(Outcome 1.1)</i> OO 4: Capacity-building <i>(Outcomes 4.1 and 4.2)</i>

<i>Best practice theme</i>	<i>Proposed schedule for the CRIC review</i>	<i>Contribution to strategic objectives and related impact</i>	<i>Contribution to operational objectives and related outcomes</i>
Theme 5: Policy, legislative and institutional framework	CRIC 17 in 2018		OO 2: Policy framework (<i>Outcomes 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4</i>)

20. Theme 6, “Funding and resources mobilization”, and theme 7, “Participation, cooperation and networking”, address matters that are linked both to strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy and would therefore be classified according to both objectives. Theme 2, “Capacity-building and awareness-raising”, theme 3 “DLDD and SLM monitoring and assessment/research”, theme 4 “Knowledge management and decision support” and theme 5 “Policy, legislative and institutional framework”, which are linked to the operational objectives of The Strategy, would accordingly be classified just by operational objectives and related outcomes.

21. The classification of best practices would be done a priori, that is to say that reporting entities would be asked to classify their best practices according to the agreed classification while submitting their inputs.

22. The schedule has been conceived in such a way that the review of those themes that are linked to strategic objectives of The Strategy would coincide with the consideration of reports submitted by Parties and observers that contain information on impact indicators, namely those reports provided in 2012 and 2016. Other themes, which are linked to operational objectives, would be reviewed at those sessions of the CRIC where reports by Parties and observers based only on performance indicators are considered (2014 and 2018).

23. Given the importance of theme 1 (sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation), and given also the fact that it is linked to the three strategic objectives of The Strategy, for which impact indicators are still in the process of being fine-tuned by the CST, it is proposed that the consideration of this theme will continue at CRIC 11 (2012). Extending the review of theme 1 until 2012 will enable CRIC 9 and COP 10 to consider the proposals contained in this document and allow for a systematic approach to using best practices in the context of UNCCD.

24. The proposed schedule allows for a first compilation of best practices (on themes 1 and 2) to be delivered to the CRIC at its 11th session in 2012.

25. The proposed classification of best practices would be transposed also onto the PRAIS portal so that information is retrieved in the same way as for the compilation of best practices used for the CRIC.

2. Compilation and translation of best practices into policy recommendations

26. In order to enable the CRIC to perform its task, submissions from reporting entities on best practices would be compiled using the classification proposed above.

27. The CRIC, according to its mandate, would use the compilation of best practices to extract from it the main principles emerging from the submissions made by Parties and other reporting entities. The CRIC will formulate policy recommendations at global and regional levels, so that country Parties can translate them into national measures and policies facilitating large-scale application of those retained principles contained in the best practices. The intergovernmental process steered by the CRIC may also facilitate developing guidelines in order to address specific issues relating to the most relevant

themes of best practices, whose application by stakeholders including civil society and the business community will be voluntary in nature.

B. Knowledge management system

28. The knowledge management system driven by the CST would capture scientific information pertaining to best practices for the end purpose of replicating and scaling them up, while the PRAIS portal will be used for collection and dissemination purposes. The nature and scope of this knowledge management system is still to be defined by the CST. It is important to note in this context that both the CRIC and the CST share the work relating to best practices and hence clear roles and responsibilities need to be defined by the COP. Consultations among Parties should start as early as possible, since best practices are now being collected through the reporting and review process steered by the CRIC and any scientific advice from the CST with regard to validation, replication, scaling-up and evaluation of those best practices should be provided in time.

1. Validation

29. Validation of best practices would be performed by the submitting entities, according to the methodologies and criteria to be recommended by the CST for COP endorsement. As already proposed in document ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.5, the set of criteria for validating best practices should focus on ascertaining whether the practices are: (a) ecologically sound, (b) socially acceptable and (c) financially viable.

2. Replication, scaling-up and evaluation

30. Taking into consideration that best practices are very often site-specific, it might be necessary to accompany any replication and scaling-up in a different environment with close assessment and monitoring of expected benefits. This could be performed under the guidance of the CST, with the support of research institutions, as well as United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations that are active in the field. The evaluation of best practices will take place after they have been replicated and scaled up, with the aim of adjusting and improving those elements which are considered unsatisfactory or in need of improvement.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

31. The first step towards a systematic use of best practices in the UNCCD context and particularly in the context of The Strategy was made through submissions of best practices on sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation, according to the common template and guidelines for all reporting entities in 2010.

32. The proposals made in the present document will serve as a basis for Parties at CRIC 9 to discuss on how to move this process forward. Together with the outcome of the consultation process to be launched at CRIC 9 with the involvement of the civil society, it is expected that a comprehensive framework for the use of UNCCD best practices will be established at COP 10.

33. To this end, Parties at CRIC 9 may wish to:

(a) Recommend to the COP, at its tenth session, that it adopt the schedule of review of best practices as proposed above, on the understanding that the review of theme 1 (sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation) will continue at CRIC 11;

- (b) Invite the reporting entities to continue reporting on best practices, irrespective of the expiry of the formal deadline for submission of reports, in order to increase the knowledge base of the Convention and the CRIC;
- (c) Request the secretariat to continue working on the development of the PRAIS portal on best practices and ensure that all submissions on best practices are classified and made available regardless of the date of submission;
- (d) Recommend to the COP, at its tenth session, to endorse the classification of best practices for themes 2 to 7 as proposed above;
- (e) Request the secretariat to facilitate a consultation process between the Bureaux of the CRIC and the CST prior to CRIC 10/COP 10 in order to develop validation and evaluation criteria for best practices and related methodologies;
- (f) Recommend that for COP 10 a joint CRIC/CST document be prepared that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the two subsidiary bodies in the work related to best practices;
- (g) Invite relevant research organizations, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations bodies to provide their input to the consultation process in order to build a basis for the development of a knowledge management system that will serve for the replication and scaling-up of best practices;
- (h) Invite Parties and observers, as part of the consultation process, to submit their proposals on the terms of reference for the evaluation of the review of best practices by CRIC 11, with a view to their adoption at COP 10;
- (i) Urge subsidiary bodies of the COP and the Convention institutions to include consideration of these recommendations in their respective 2012–2013 work programmes, following the results-based approach, with a view to providing the required assistance for the establishment of the UNCCD best practices system, according to their respective mandates.

Annex

Input received from civil society organizations on how to effectively use information on best practices compiled for the CRIC review, ensure their wide diffusion and translation of the lessons learned into policy recommendations, and on how to organize a broad consultation process thereon driven by civil society

1. For some respondents, the effective implementation of the PRAIS depends on the equitable participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Convention process and on the mechanisms to determine and facilitate this participation; on the further development of the CRIC network; on the formalization of the collaboration between CSOs and national focal points (NFPs); and on the modalities that will be determined for CSO involvement in the preparation of national reports.
2. With regards to the use of the PRAIS portal for collection and dissemination of best practices, it was suggested that it be kept as simple as possible, to involve a small number of CSOs in the development of the tool, and to support its uptake among CSOs.
3. Effective use of the information on best practices was often associated with good dissemination of the information, both at global and national levels. Mainstreaming of the information on best practices into the policymaking process and the development of guidelines for dryland development programmes and projects were also mentioned as ways to effectively use this information.
4. Best practices are seen as feasible, practical ways to address problems in the field. Their adoption at the implementation level should theoretically be preceded by an analysis/assessment of them at the strategic or policy level, where DLDD-related problems are prioritized and the regulatory frameworks that may influence the implementation of best practices are determined. Some respondents suggested that CSOs might support NFPs in this analysis/assessment exercise.
5. Suggestions on diffusion of best practices ranged from broad approaches, such as the elaboration of a dissemination strategy based on different media tailored to the target audience, to specific modalities such as:
 - (a) The creation of an easily and widely accessible platform dedicated to best practices and/or an online database, where the information is clearly organized, briefly presented and easily searchable through simple search options, besides being available in all United Nations languages. Regularly distributing links to uploaded best practices or using already existing platforms dedicated to best practices (WOCAT) was also suggested;
 - (b) Using relevant stakeholders, namely the NFPs and accredited CSOs to disseminate information. The latter, in particular, may disseminate information on best practices or publicize the platform/database dedicated to best practices among their associated partners or through the networks they belong to;
 - (c) Using events/initiatives to facilitate the exchange of experiences at all levels, such as exhibitions, exchange/exposure visits, meetings, seminars, dedicated spaces within other regional, national or local events, and dedicated meetings at the CRIC/COP sessions (half- or full-day events);

(d) Involving media, such as printing and electronic publications, brochures, photo stories, videos, national newsletters and/or journals published by accredited CSOs. The compilation of a reference document or of examples for distribution to, and further dissemination by, NFPs and accredited CSOs was also suggested, alongside the integration of information on best practices into educational material, for example in the manuals of secondary and high schools;

(e) Drawing on the technical and/or financial support of interventions at the field level, such as best practice-based pilot projects or demonstration sites. Financial reward for the application of best practices is also considered a way of facilitating the diffusion of best practices, if the best practices in question imply the provision of environmental services.

6. The translation of lessons learned through best practices into the policy process may be channeled through national action plans and programmes. This may happen:

(a) By involving informed and willing public actors;

(b) By creating a task force, a group of experts, a committee, or a similar mechanism, with the specific task of undertaking an analysis of best practices and translating their lessons into policy recommendations;

(c) By achieving a massive/significant uptake of the practices at the implementation level so that the consideration of the practices at the policy level becomes a consequence whose importance cannot be ignored.

7. It was also suggested that translation into policy recommendations of lessons learned could be achieved by directly requesting the inclusion of a policy recommendation or conclusion, at the end of the description of a given practice.

8. Views about the consultation process to be launched at CRIC 9 vary widely, both in terms of modalities and levels at which this process should occur. Some respondents suggested the process should be initiated at the grassroots level, others believed it might start as an internet forum among national desertification network(s) (to be developed), or at the subregional and regional levels by means of field visits to collect and assess information.

9. The purpose of the process was defined as screening existing situations, analysing, evaluating and finally selecting a few best practices on the basis of set criteria, such as easy dissemination/replication at national and regional levels, and making recommendations to the CRIC.

10. In general, the main stages of the process should include consultation, discussion, selection and the drawing up of recommendations. There is a suggestion to circulate a brief methodological document on how to run the process and discuss it electronically (if possible, prior to the CRIC).

11. The process should continue once CSOs are back in their respective countries, but there was no common view on the modalities or on the scope. Further discussion on the outcomes of the CRIC session, validation of conclusions, possibly through an internet forum, and dissemination of this information to other civil society members was suggested by some respondents.