I - Meetings planning, logistics and coordination

A. Official sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies

In Accordance with rule 4 of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties (COP) (decision 1/COP.1) the Parties decide on the date and duration of the next ordinary session at each ordinary session of the COP.

The same rule states that extraordinary sessions of the COP shall be held at such times as may be decided either by COP in an ordinary session or at the written request of any Party, provided that, within three months of the request being communicated to the Parties by the Permanent Secretariat, it is supported by at least one third of the Parties.

The sessions of the COP shall take place at the seat of the secretariat, unless the COP decides otherwise or other appropriate arrangements are made by the secretariat in consultation with the Parties (rule 3 of the rules of procedure).

Article 24, paragraph 1 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) delineates a pattern on the frequency of sessions for the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and decision 11/COP.9 for the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC).

The decision of the Parties on the date and place of the next sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies is communicated by the secretariat to the United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ), which is responsible for inclusion of the information in the draft calendar of conferences and meetings. This information is then recommended by the Committee on Conferences to the General Assembly for adoption.

In odd years, the General Assembly adopts a resolution on the patterns of meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies for the next biennium. An oral statement on the programme budget implications arising from that resolution is normally adopted, in order to cover the conference services requirements of the UNCCD process through the General Assembly budget. However, the UNCCD secretariat is obliged to include a conference services estimation in its own budget, in the event that the General Assembly decides not to include the sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies in its own budget.

1. Calendars of UNCCD meetings

The Conference Services unit of the UNCCD secretariat (COSE) establishes two types of calendars:

- Biennial calendar of all UNCCD official meetings and core events;
- Annual calendar of meetings, which updates and completes the information contained in the biennial calendar and may include also information on organization of other UNCCD meetings than those of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.
Both these calendars are established in due consultation with relevant units of the secretariat. These consultations usually concern, but might not be limited to one unit depending on the specificity of the meetings agendas. The calendars are based on the Parties’ decision regarding the organization of the COP and subsidiary bodies meetings for the biennium.

2. **Preparation of the host country agreement**

Meetings of the UNCCD Governing Bodies constitute official United Nations meetings. As such they are duly listed in the United Nations calendar of events and fall under the direct legislation of UNGA Resolution 40/243 of 18 February 1986 (section I, paragraph 5) overseeing the organization of Meetings held outside of their respective United Nations headquarters.

The organization of these meetings requires, with no exceptions, the signature of a Host Country Agreement (HCA), to be concluded by the UNCCD secretariat on behalf of the United Nations and the competent authorities of the host country.

The HCA is based on a standard United Nations model and designed to meet the requirement of the different venues. Through the agreement, the signatories commonly agree on the following: privileges and immunities, financial arrangements, liability, settlement of disputes, date and venue, participation and attendance. On the latter aspect, COSE unit serves as focal point for visa issues and ensures the liaison between the secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the host country for these matters.

The HCA usually carries five annexes that are an integral part of it. These annexes are elaborated in cooperation with AFS and address different operational aspects, as follows:

**Annex I**

(a) *conference rooms* (Plenary and Main Committee rooms);

(b) *meeting rooms* for regional annexes, regional groups and/or interest groups, Bureaus of CRIC/CST, civil society organizations (CSOs), side events, press conferences;

(c) *other areas* such as: registration, press and business centre, Internet café, information desk, bank office, restaurant and cafeteria, etc;

**Annex II**

A. Office space and required equipment for:

(a) UNCCD secretariat staff, UNOG, UN Security and Safety Section, GM staff;

(b) Other officials such as: President of the COP, Chairpersons of CRIC, CST and the CoW, etc;

(c) Other entitled partners: ENB, consortium, etc

(d) Other areas: document reproduction, document distribution, DSA payment, first aid, press working area, post office, internet café, exhibit area, tourist office, travel agency, UNCCD information point, etc.;

(e) Meetings rooms (see Annex I above);

B. Technical specifications as follows:

Workstations (including software), printers and supplies, webcast and broadcasting stations, conference information announcement system, tape backup unit, uninterruptible power supplies (UPS), LAN infrastructure, copying machines and supplies, internet connectivity for staff and delegates internet café, telephone lines
and cellular phones, specifications for registration area, press area and business
centre, office settings, security material, etc.;

Annex III- Local staff requirements such as:

- secretaries, logistical technical assistant, information, administrative and registration
  clerks, conference service assistants, documents reproduction and distribution
  assistants, drivers, technicians, assistant security officers, including their dates of
duty;

Annex IV- Estimate of direct incremental costs to be borne by the host country
government, which may include:

(a) Estimated incremental travel and related costs for UNCCD and United
Nations staff (including advance teams), United Nations Security, United Nations
Conference Services (incl. conference services officers and interpreters), planning missions;

(b) Other requirements such as: freight and related insurance, communication
costs, software license costs, etc.

Annex V- Security arrangements are foreseen, conceived and implemented by the UNDSS
through a comprehensive Security Plan. In-session the coordinator of COSE is the
secretariat focal point for UNDSS.

3. Planning missions

The signature of a host country agreement marks the conclusion of a lengthy, often
complex negotiation process with the host country. The diversity of partners involved on
the latter side (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, line ministries, security, finance, local
authorities, etc.) and ensuing thematic and differentiated agendas require a carefully
conceived calendar of in situ meetings that take the form of planning missions. These are
not only required to fine-tune the negotiation dynamic on several sensitive issues that
required face-to-face meetings but are also indispensable in order to determine, with the
assistance of supporting UN partners such as the Office of legal Affairs (OLA), UNDSSS
and the UNOG/Division of Conference Management, the specific component of annexes I,
II, III and V above.

The number and length of the planning missions may vary in regards to timing and venue,
but as a general rule a minimum of three such missions are required. The progressive
upgrading of United Nations requirements for official meetings held outside of respective
headquarters might however require the revision of such a rule. This is particularly true in
regards to the launching of technical modules such as “carbon neutrality” or “paperless
meetings”. The planning mission teams are headed by the Coordinator of COSE and
usually include representatives of:

- UNCCD Conference Services;
- UNCCD Administrative and Finance Services;
- UNCCD Information and Communication Technology (AFS-ICT).
- UNOG Division of Conference Management;
- UNOG Security and Safety Section (UNDSS).

The UNCCD legal adviser might be invited to join the planning mission teams when
required.
(a) **Planning and setting up of premises**

The planning mission includes a visit to the proposed conference site. The following areas and issues require thorough assessment:

(a) **Conference and meeting rooms**

(i) Number, size and capacity of available rooms: important modifications could be undertaken to fit United Nations requirements;

(ii) Type and setup of meeting rooms: classroom-style (seats at table), theatre style (notables) or a mix; The usual United Nations practice at major conferences is two seats at the table and two behind for all delegations and most observers;

(iii) Document distribution facilities: to be made available in the conference rooms;

(iv) Interpretation booths for all rooms requiring interpretation services: to be made available at United Nations standards and in the required number;

(v) Meeting rooms for the bureaus, as well as regional and other interest groups, scientific meetings, etc;

(vi) Meeting room for CSOs;

(vii) Meeting rooms for side events;

(viii) Meeting room for press conferences;

(ix) Meeting rooms for bilateral consultations;

(x) Working areas (press and others);

(xi) Type of sound equipment available or planned for each room;

(xii) Facilities for audio-visual presentations;

(xiii) Possibility of providing special meeting rooms;

(b) **Office space**;

(c) **Lounge for the interpreters**;

(d) **Document reproduction facilities**, including space and appropriate reproduction/photocopying equipment;

(e) **Document distribution facilities**;

(f) **Meeting and meeting-room announcements** within the conference centre – announcement boards, monitors, closed-circuit television, etc.;

(g) **Registration area**;

(h) **Press and media facilities**;

(i) **Exhibition facilities and storage rooms**;

(j) **Facilities for delegates and other participants**:

   (i) Business centre, services on a commercial basis, including telephone, fax, photocopying facilities, etc.;

   (ii) Information desk, message centre;

   (iii) Bank, travel agency, information desk, car rental service;
(iv) “Cyberspace” – PCs with Internet access for free use to participants;
(v) Delegates’ lounge, including any special requirement for high-level participants;
(vi) Restaurants, snack bars, cafeteria.

4. Participation, credentials, accreditation and registration (Articles 21.5, 22.7 of the UNCCD, and Rules 7, 17 and 18 of the Rules of procedure)

Participation and attendance at the conference

In accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the COP rules of procedure, the conference is open to:

(a) Representatives of the Parties to the Convention;

The composition of a delegation of a Party to one of the COP sessions is specified in rule 17 of the COP rules of procedure as consisting of a head of delegation and such other accredited representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as it may require. An alternate representative or an adviser may act as a representative upon designation by the head of delegation (rule 18).

(b) Representatives of observers referred to in article 22, paragraph 7, of the Convention and rule 6 of the COP Rules of procedure, such as: the United Nations, its specialized agencies, any State member thereof or observers thereto not Party to the Convention, as well as the organization housing the Global Mechanism (pursuant to article 21, paragraph (5) of the Convention);

Furthermore the same paragraph of the Convention and rule 7 of the COP rules of procedure specify that any other body or agency (national or international, governmental or non-governmental) may be admitted to act as an observer at the COP, if it is qualified in matters covered by the Convention and if it informed the Permanent Secretariat of its wish to be represented at a COP session as observer, provided that not at least one third of the Parties present object.

(c) Other persons invited by the Executive Secretary;

(d) Officials of the secretariat and other officials of the United Nations.

The public meetings of the conference are open to representatives of the information media accredited to the conference, in consultation with the host country government. Details about the necessary documents to be presented by the media for accreditation are usually specified in the information for participants issued for each session of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

Credentials

In line with rule 19 of the COP Rules of procedure, the credentials of representatives along with the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Permanent Secretariat if possible not later than twenty-four hours after the opening of the session. Any later change in the composition of the delegation shall also be submitted to the Permanent Secretariat. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or, in the case of a regional economic integration organization, by the competent authority of that organization.

The Bureau of any session shall examine the credentials and submit its report to the Conference of the Parties for decision (rule 20).

Representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the session, pending a decision by the Conference of the Parties to accept their credentials (rule 21).
Accreditation of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations

By its decision 26/COP.1 the COP has decided to accredit at its first session the non-governmental organizations previously accredited to sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.

The same decision specified that at subsequent sessions of the COP, the Parties might decide to accredit additional non-governmental organizations as recommended by the Permanent secretariat. In deciding on the accreditation of additional non-governmental organizations to the second and subsequent ordinary or extraordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties, the Conference of the Parties shall take account of decisions 1/1 and 2/1 concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations as adopted by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at its first and second sessions (A/45/46, annex I and A/46/48, annex I). Non-governmental organizations so accredited may participate in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties.

By decision 26/COP.1 the COP decided to accord observer status to all interested intergovernmental organizations previously accorded such status at sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

The same decision states that in deciding on according observer status to additional intergovernmental organizations to the second and subsequent ordinary or extraordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties, the Conference of the Parties shall bear in mind the established practice of the General Assembly of the United Nations. (Organizations accorded such status may participate in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties.)

Registration

Pre-registration for national delegations, United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the media, take place at the venue of the Conference.

Other relevant categories of participants will receive special badges upon the clearance of the secretariat’s management.

Usually, registration starts three days before the beginning of the Conference and continues throughout the session.

Identity badges are issued at the time of registration, and participants are requested to wear them at all times, as they are allowed access to the session venue only upon presentation of their badges. Badges might be scanned at several locations, depending on the security topography agreed upon in coordination with UNDSS. Information about the opening hours for pre-registration as well as about the pre-registration procedure is provided in the information for participants and throughout the conference in the Official Journal of the session.

i. CSOs procedural guidelines (Draft to be proposed by FCMI; OGM proposed deadline 02.11.10)

5. Coordinating conference matters with external partners

i. United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)
Interaction with UNOG on the organization of official meetings takes into consideration the following requirements:

(a) Interpretation services, more specifically:
   - Number of interpretation teams required in accordance with the structure of the conference;
   - Languages of interpretation beyond the six official languages, depending on the requirements of the host country;
   - Dispatching of interpretation teams;

(b) Documentation requirements, more specifically (more detailed information on documentation is presented in Series IV—Documentation):
   - Pre- and in-session documentation requirements;
   - Handling of in-session documentation through remote translation and text-processing, reproduction and distribution;
   - Report(s) of the session;

(c) Provision of summary records as per entitlement;

(d) Meeting room support (conference officers, meeting room attendants, documents distribution assistants);

(e) Technical services.

ii. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)/Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM)

Interaction with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)/Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) on the organization of official meetings takes into consideration the following requirements:

- Assistance in the conduct of the proceedings of the conference to be provided to the President of COP and Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies during official meetings of COP, CRIC, CST and CoW;
- Preparation of speaking notes for the Chairpersons of the Conference for each meeting and on each item of the agenda;
- Preparation of daily summaries for the journal and a programme of work for the next day (see item A.6 on publication of the daily Journal);
- Drafting the report on proceedings of the COP and Main Committees.

iii. United Nations Department on Security and Safety Services

The Security and Safety Services ensure a safe and secure environment for staff, delegates to the Conferences of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies through the provision of: identification checks, physical security services, explosive detection services, emergency response services and crisis management, safety and inspection services.

UNOG Security and Safety Service team is an integral part of the UNCCD integrated United Nations planning missions entrusted with the objective of negotiating, agreeing and adopting a finalized HCA for subsequent signature.

UNDSS is responsible for defining the conference security plan on the basis of the established United Nations requirements. As such UNOG Security and Safety Service
colleagues work in close collaboration with the COSE coordinator, as designated team leader of the integrated United Nations planning missions.

During the preparatory phase, they define the security requirements of the conference, including all matters pertaining to the security perimeter, access rules and evacuation procedures. In that regard, UNOG Security and Safety Service is directly responsible for the elaboration of annex V to the HCA, which further specifies requirements in that regard. UNOG Security and Safety Service may as well develop additional bilateral agreements with local security forces (Memorandum of understanding or exchange of letters), which derive from the HCA and aim at defining the operational detail of specific aspects (rules of engagement, coordination, line of communications, etc.).

During the conference, the UNOG Security and Safety Service chief officer is placed under the direct authority of the Executive Secretary to whom he reports. In practice, the UNOG Security and Safety Service chief officer provides daily security reports and weekly briefings to the Coordinator of COSE. He is also invited to general staff meetings.

6. Publication of daily Journal

(i). Background

Daily Journals are only published during and to close up a session of the COP and/or its subsidiary bodies. They consist of the programme of work of the day and for the day that follows, as well as of a summary of meetings, non-core events of the day and additional information relevant for the Parties.

The daily Journal is under the responsibility of COSE. As such, COSE is responsible for ensuring that all inputs received from UNOG, ECOSOC or other units are accurately reproduced in the final printouts, in accordance with formatting procedures.

(ii). Setup of Journal and procedures to follow

The daily Journal consists of highly codified text and is presented in a formalized style. In this chapter, the different parts of a Journal are introduced, in each case with the relevant actors identified.

Programme of meetings and agenda

The first part of a Journal provides the programme of meetings for the day based on the provisional agenda. Daily updates are however required through input received from plenary deliberations and Bureau meetings, as applicable. This information is channeled by ECOSOC and further ascertained with designated secretaries of the COP/CRIC/CST within the secretariat.

Meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes of the Convention

In those cases where the Regional Implementation Annexes of the Convention should meet, mention of them shall be made right after the agenda of the day. The information on time and venue of meetings will be provided to COSE by the designated UNCCD staff in charge. In order to facilitate the smooth channeling of information and avoid mistakes, all information on the different meetings foreseen should be centralized and communicated by one designated UNCCD staff per unit. This information needs to be forwarded to COSE in writing as soon as available but imperatively the night prior to the envisaged meeting.
Meetings other than meetings of United Nations Bodies

Meetings of regional groups other than the Regional Annexes will be mentioned under a specific heading of the Journal. The information on times and venue of meetings will be provided to COSE by the designated UNCCD staff in charge. Again, all information on the different meetings foreseen should be centralized and communicated by one designated UNCCD staff. This information needs to be forwarded to COSE in writing as soon as available but imperatively the night prior to the envisaged meeting.

Meetings of the Bureaus

Meetings of the Bureaus of COP, CRIC and CST are also reflected in the daily Journal. Information about the timing of the Bureaus meetings is normally provided by ECOSOC technical secretariat. However, the secretariat’s staff servicing the Bureaus should also ensure that this information is communicated clearly and comprehensively to COSE, for cross-checking purposes.

Side events

This section of the Journal provides an overview of the side events scheduled for the day. Interested parties or secretariat units are required to request a side event slot from COSE to be considered for inclusion into the daily calendar. Such a request needs to make use of a form (either electronic or hard copy) to be made available to interested parties before the beginning of the session. The coordination and scheduling of side events is undertaken by COSE logistics assistant under the coordination of the meetings services, logistics and coordination officer and will be communicated on the website and to secretariat staff. All relevant information shall then be channeled through COSE logistics assistant by the appropriate deadlines, as communicated by COSE (usually two months before the session, in order to allow for a proper organization of side events).

Forthcoming meetings

To give participants an easy overview of the sessions of the coming day, forthcoming meetings are presented in the aptly named section. The information is fed into the Journal process by ECOSOC and/or designated secretaries of the COP/CRIC/CST respectively, taking into account developments on the floor and decisions by the Bureaus.

Summary of meetings

This part of the Journal contains a proceedings-oriented run-down of the meetings of the previous day. ECOSOC shall provide the necessary information for this part, as revised by COP/CRIC/CST/CoW secretaries.

List of draft decisions

This will constitute a new section to be added to the Journal, starting with COP 10 (2011) as a follow up to the relevant COP 9 post mortem recommendation. It shall constitute a recurring feature of future COP Journals, giving an overview of new decisions and their status and availability. Updated daily lists of draft decisions in circulation, also accounting for their status, will have to be provided by the secretaries of the relevant subsidiary bodies to COSE as soon as available but imperatively at the end of the day.

Announcements

A list of announcements of interest to delegates will also be published in the daily Journal. The matters dealt with under this section vary in content, ranging from the generic to very specific matters like invitations or presentations outside of the scope of the conference. Any
accredited participant can feed announcements into the process, but COSE retains the right
to shorten or reword, where necessary, as well as to refrain from printing certain
announcements, based on United Nations editorial guidelines and internal assessment.

**Directory**

In order to provide delegates and other parties with relevant information pertaining to the
setup of the conference venue, a directory of important offices and functions is given at the
end of the Journal, together with floor plans indicating the most crucial areas.

(iii). **Summary of required inputs by units/colleagues**

It is the responsibility of the secretaries of the COP, the CRIC, the CST and the CoW to
ensure that relevant information is passed on to the COSE for publication in the daily
Journal. In order to facilitate the smooth channeling of information and avoid mistakes, all
pertinent information on the different meetings foreseen should be centralized and
communicated by one designated UNCCD staff per unit. This information needs to be
forwarded to COSE in writing as soon as available, but imperatively the night prior to the
envisaged meeting. The information provided should be as accessible and comprehensive.
Titles of side events are rendered as received from the requesting party.

Units and appointed officers are called to provide the following input, as outlined above in
more detail:

- Time and venue of meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes (RCF/RCUs);
- Time and venue of meetings of regional and interests groups (RCF/RCUs and
  other appointed officers for the interest groups);
- Time and venue of Bureau meetings (as per the proposed procedure at point
  (ii) above) (secretaries of the COP, the CRIC and the CST);
- Information on side events (PAGI for CCD sponsored/associated side-events
  and external requesting parties);
- Information on required announcements (upon request).

(iv). **Internal workflow and cooperation with UNOG for publishing**

A focal point and an alternate for Journal posting will be identified within COSE for each
session and communicated to secretariat units as well as ECOSOC and UNOG services.
Relevant inputs will have to be communicated in writing directly to the focal point, copied
to the alternate.

The information hence gathered will be compiled into a final draft, proofread within COSE
and subsequently submitted to UNOG following a commonly agreed procedure.

In the case of a substantial mistake in the Journal (erroneous information that might carry
an incidence on the proper running of business), one of the following options may be
chosen, depending on the timing and nature of the mistake:

- Reprinting the daily Journal;
- Printing a correction;
- Correcting the mistake from the floor;
- Correcting the mistake on the screen;
- A possible combination of the steps above.
B. Organization of other UNCCD related events

1. Type and category of meetings

The COSE unit services core meetings of the UNCCD process. The preparation of a core secretariat-serviced event would usually require the undertaking of a series of formal steps aiming at ensuring the delivery of required services, as per the established standards in the United Nations.

In the UNCCD practice, other core secretariat events may refer to:

- **Meetings of process management bodies (COP Bureau, CRIC Bureau, CST Bureau);**
- **Regional meetings particularly those preparatory to the governing bodies’ sessions (Regional meetings preparatory to the CRIC/CST session, preparatory meetings to the COPs);**
- **Meetings of the Chairpersons of the Regional Implementation Annexes;**
- **Ad Hoc core meetings (Policy dialogues, high-level round tables, etc).**

The secretariat might also co-service a meeting in collaboration or coordination with an external partner. In those cases the volume and nature of COSE’s involvement is decided on an ad hoc basis and depending on a series of driving factors, such as, i.e. the status of the partner (belonging to the United Nations family or not), the venue of the meeting, the costs involved.

The secretariat might also extend its support for the organization of third party meetings, requiring the provision of a different range of conference facility services. In those cases as well, the volume and nature of COSE’s involvement is decided on an ad hoc basis and depending on the requirements of the requesting partner. Some additional specialized services might also be covered in that respect, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Administration Services. As a general rule, those services are delivered on the basis of resources available and fees, which vary on the basis of the extent of services provided and are decided through consultations with Administration and Finance Services Unit (AFS) in line with the Regulations and Rules of the United Nations. This assistance can be extended in situ, if the meeting is being organized at the Headquarters of the secretariat or at a different location. In the latter case, the fee charged would include any travel cost, if required.

Finally, the secretariat might also be requested to extend limited assistance conceived as targeted input to the requirements of a demanding partner. This specifically applies to the provision of specific operational modules for major or medium size external conferences, such as the UNCCD registration system. This service is also provided on the basis of a fee determined in consultation with ICT and based on varying and static criteria such as number of badges, hardware involved, operating staff, maintenance costs, etc.

As a general rule however the services of COSE are fundamentally and primarily conceived to service UNCCD generated events. As such, the priority is always given to core meetings of the process and their ensuing requirements. Accordingly, COSE’s work programme and schedule of service provision is established on that basis.

Taking staff limitation factors into account, COSE support can be extended to service external requirements as per the above nomenclature. Within that perspective, COSE services can be custom-tailored to fit a flexible range of requirements. However, proper organization is required in that regard and requesting partners and/or units on their behalf...
should forward queries in that regard with the sufficient time span so as to allow for proper internal planning.

2. Types of agreements

Core secretariat-serviced events would usually be required to follow a set of system-wide references, ranging from standard of services to legal considerations. These form part of well codified processes often relying on General Assembly legislative guidance.

If such events are held outside of the secretariat headquarters they would further require the conclusion of some type of formal agreement. Depending on the type/level of meeting considered, such agreements might range from the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding, an exchange of letters or the signature of a host country agreement. Every such agreement, notwithstanding its specific type or nature, would require prior review by the UNCCD legal officer and clearance by EDM.

Meetings of process management bodies (COP Bureau, CRIC Bureau, CST Bureau)

Based on the established practice, and if held outside of Bonn, Bureau meetings (COP or subsidiary bodies) would require an agreement usually in the form of an exchange of letters with the hosting country. Such an agreement would define, either in the text of the letter or as an annex to it, the type of requirements needed, including any in cash contribution, if foreseen.

Meeting of the Bureaus shall be held at the headquarters of the UNCCD secretariat, unless differently decided by the Bureaus.

Regional meetings particularly those preparatory to the governing bodies’ sessions (Regional meetings preparatory to the CRIC/CST session, preparatory meetings to the COPs);

Regional meetings have traditionally been convened in the respective regions, upon invitation of a country Party. These meetings, unless held within United Nations premises (Regional Commissions, offices for United Nations Development Programme, etc.) shall require the signature of an agreement, delineating the differentiated responsibilities of contracting parties, a savoir the UNCCD secretariat and the host country.

In specific circumstances, the regional meeting could also be organized back-to-back with the sessions of the governing body. In that case, they will be covered by the provisions of a host country agreement (HCA) concluded for that purpose (Ref section below on “Meetings of the UNCCD Governing Bodies”).

Meetings of the Chairpersons of the Regional Implementation Annexes

These meetings are usually held at the headquarters of the secretariat in the sidelines of official or other relevant UNCCD events. In such cases logistic and other arrangements would apply mutatis mutandis.

Ad Hoc core meetings (Policy dialogues, high-level round tables, etc)

The secretariat might engage in the convening and organization of different types of core ad hoc meetings, such as policy dialogues, expert seminars, high-level round tables. These meetings could be organized at the secretariat headquarters or an outside location.

For meetings convened outside of Bonn, and depending on the hosting partner (institutional or a party), different types of agreement could be considered. Meetings hosted by an institution (public or private) may only require an exchange of letters. However, the consideration of specific needs requiring the involvement of governmental authorities, such as visa issuance or privileges and immunities, might call for the involvement of national
authorities which could in turn require a more elaborated type of agreement, such as a memorandum of understanding.

3. Logistical arrangements for meetings

The general objective of logistical support for meetings is the timely provision of space, standard and technical equipment, specialized services (interpretation, web streaming, etc.), human resources and documentation, in accordance with the agreed budget.

According to the adopted work programme of the secretariat, COSE unit is among others, in charge with providing support in the organization of meetings other than those of the COP and its subsidiary bodies (E.A.6.4, W.P.6.4.1). In this respect, based on inputs received from the secretariat’s units COSE establishes an annual plan of meetings which should be completed within the 1st quarter of each year so as to ensure proper requirements’ planning as well as effective allocation of resources. This also allows for extended organizational flexibility should there be changes on the requisites of the meeting.

All meetings request should be centralized through COSE. Substantive unit should provide all the requirements of the meeting in a timely manner. Changes or additional services that will be required at a later stage of the organization can be accommodated provided that the administrative rules are respected, the overall secretariat schedule of meetings is not disrupted and any financial incidence is covered.

All data provided by the requesting unit can be found in the Meetings overview table on x:/COSE unit/Meetings overview.xls or the UNCCD Intranet.

 Depending on the location of meetings (inside or outside of the headquarters) different procedures and responsibilities for logistical support apply.

(a). Meetings at the headquarters

Meetings at the headquarters refer to those that are held in Bonn and either organized by the secretariat or to the organization of which the secretariat extends its assistance.

The following logistical arrangements are provided by COSE:

(a) General coordination with substantive units and service providers;

(b) Booking of meeting rooms - Meeting rooms can be booked within the UN Campus or outside. An overview of the meeting rooms and equipments in the UN Campus can be found on the X drive;

(i) Meeting rooms within the UN Campus are free of charge and are coordinated with Common Services unit (CSU) or other United Nations organizations in Bonn. The layout of the meeting room is indicated by the substantive unit. Setup in Langer Eugen is done by CSU

(ii) Meeting rooms outside the UN Campus are booked according to the UN procurement rules and regulations. The layout of the meeting room is indicated by the substantive unit. Setup is done by the contractor;

(c) Provision of meeting materials – COSE will provide the following:

(i) Written information display/presenters;

(ii) Nameplates;

(iii) Badges;
(iv) Other materials as requested;

(d) Arrangements for technical setup – There are two types of technical arrangements, as follows:

(i) Basic technical setup – consists of equipment in the meeting room that does not require an external technician to operate. For meeting rooms in Langer Eugen, the Common Services Unit for the United Nations premises in Bonn (CSU) is in charge of the operation booth for the speakers, lighting, microphones and projectors. IT setup is done by the secretariat and may in some cases require the procurement of specialized equipment or services;

(ii) Specialized technical setup – consists of equipment in the meeting room that requires an external technician to operate and cannot be provided by the secretariat. This arrangement is made in addition to the basic technical setup. For the meeting rooms in Langer Eugen, it is usually required for interpretation booths;

(e) Arrangements for local staff – in coordination with the AFS, local staff are hired to assist the substantive unit during the meeting. The terms of reference are provided by the substantive unit and processed by the Administration unit according to United Nations rules and regulations. In the case of services extended to third parties for non-UNCCD meetings, the organizer may request specific local staff profiles. COSE and ITC regularly gather feedback on local staff performance and overall service delivery satisfaction;

(f) Arrangements for interpretation services – can be provided by the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG) or a local interpretation service company; If UNOG services are needed, a request is to be submitted to the Conference Services unit indicating language requirements, in particular, special instructions if different or special combinations of languages are requested for specific meetings of the session and other relevant information on the meeting. As UNOG services are often booked early requests are highly encouraged. Furthermore, any such service to be provided by UNOG outside of the agreed UN conference services requirement is to be paid by the secretariat.

• If local interpretation services are required, rules and regulations for procurement apply. Language requirements and other relevant information on the meeting are to be provided.

(g) Translation of documents – Documents for translation are to be submitted to COSE for document processing. For details, please refer to Part II – Documentation;

(h) Reproduction of documents – Substantive units should provide the documents to be reproduced and indicate the number of copies. The documents for reproduction should be submitted to the COSE logistics assistant at least a week before the meeting.

Procedures for conference services and logistics arrangements

The following steps should be followed in requesting conference services and logistics for a particular meeting:

(a) The meeting request form should be prepared by the substantive unit and signed by the unit coordinator;

(b) Cost implications are to be certified by the AFS unit and approved by EDM;

(c) The services requested are then processed by COSE in collaboration with AFS as follows:
Arrangements with external service providers are coordinated by COSE and processed by the AFS according to the United Nations rules and regulations on procurement. The United Nations Procurement Manual can be found on: http://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/pdf/pmrev6.pdf.

The procurement procedure is cost governed, as follows:

(i) Low value – cost is equal to but not more than 2,000 EUR;
(ii) RFQ (Request for Quotation) – cost is equal to but not more than 25,000 EUR;
(iii) ITB (Invitation to Bid) – cost is above 25,000 EUR;
(iv) RFP (Request for Proposal) – costs are established under a long-term agreement with a service provider.

(d) Catering services are arranged by the substantive unit with the service provider and coordinated directly with AFS;
(e) Prior to the meeting, COSE ensures that the requested services are executed in or delivered on time and any problems reported to the substantive unit;
(f) During the meeting, COSE monitors the operations of the meeting and provides conference service support and troubleshooting as required
(g) After the meeting, COSE coordinates with the service providers, AFS and the substantive unit for finalization of any administrative process;
(h) An evaluation of the service provided by all units concerned should be given by the substantive unit for assessment purposes and eventual improvement of services. The evaluation can then be included in the end of year report by COSE.

(b) Meetings outside the Headquarters

Meetings held outside the Headquarters refer to meetings convened outside of Bonn, organized, co-organized or hosted by a country or an organization.

Depending on a variety of factors, such as nature, length and volume of expected participants amongst others, the direct implication of cost for in situ service provision may vary. For instance, the organization of a workshop might not convey the same relevance for COSE’s direct in situ involvement as the organization of a regional meeting preparatory to a session of a subsidiary body. COSE in situ implication is decided by EDM on a case-by-case basis.

Logistical arrangements for the organization of workshops, groups of experts or the alike are made by the host country and coordinated directly by the substantive unit. COSE is to provide support upon request.

COSE’s support consists of general coordination with the substantive unit and the host country and the provision of technical specifications required for the meeting. Procurement of services and materials is ensured directly by the host country. Meetings can also be organized at UNOG headquarters, subject to written permission from the Office of the Director-General. Since official activities have absolute priority, the availability of premises may be granted without guarantee and UNOG may withdraw its agreement at any time. Organizers are expected to cover all the costs pertaining to the servicing of their meetings.
C Provisions on ensuring environmental neutrality at UNCCD meetings
(Draft to be proposed by AFS/FCMI; OGM proposed deadline 02.11.10)
II - Tasks allocation and organization of work of COP sessions, meetings of its subsidiary bodies and core events

A. Tasks allocation to substantive and service units in the secretariat in preparation for the COP sessions and meetings of its subsidiary bodies

(to be further developed by EDM)

B. Standard task assignments to UNCCD officers during the sessions of the COP and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies

An official meeting with interpretation is up to three hours long. Meetings are normally held between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on working days (see General Assembly resolution 56/242). In accordance with ST/IC/2002/13 of 28 February 2002, no official meetings are to be held after 6 p.m. or on weekends.

If a meeting wishes to continue after 1 p.m. or 6 p.m., a courtesy extension of 10 to 15 minutes may be granted with the concurrence of the chief interpreter assigned to the session within the UNOG team. Such requests are channelled to the latter by the designated UNOG Conference Coordinator. If required, he/she could arrange a brief consultation between the committee secretary and the team leader. Beyond that time span no meeting should continue.

1. Generic tasks

   i. Responsible officer

   Main tasks of the ‘responsible’ officer may include:
   - Following-up of discussions held by Parties in Plenary or Main committees on the corresponding agenda item(s);
   - Interventions for clarification or delivery of information (including the introduction of the corresponding official document) if required by Parties, during official meetings on the corresponding agenda item(s);
   - Following-up and reporting to EDM on the status of draft decision(s).

   ii. Supporting staff /alternates

   The ‘responsible’ officer is supported in his/her work by alternate(s) and additional designated staff.

   Main tasks of the supporting staff may include:
   - Substantive support during the discussions of corresponding agenda item(s) with a view to assist in the preparation of draft decisions in the Contact Groups;
   - Technical assistance to ‘responsible’ officer for the accomplishment of his/her tasks.

   Due to the complexity and multitude of tasks involved in the running of conferences, one staff may be named as ‘responsible’ for several tasks under the same cluster or under different clusters.
In case the staff ‘responsible’ for a particular task is unavailable, an alternate is designated to the extent possible among the supporting staff, or among the ‘responsible’ staff for activities under the same cluster. The main tasks of the alternate at the moment of replacing the staff ‘responsible’ for a particular activity coincide with those of the ‘responsible’ officer.

iii. COP/CRIC/CST/CoW secretaries

The respective CRIC/CST/CoW secretaries are the primary interlocutors of the Deputy Executive Secretary as Secretary of the COP during the session of an intergovernmental body.

The main duties and responsibilities of the COP/CRIC/CST/CoW secretaries may involve the following:

- Planning, managing and coordinating the programme of work and schedule of the meeting for which they act as secretaries. Consult with COSE on the feasibility of any proposal in terms of schedule and venue. Transmit the required information to COSE for integration in the calendar of meetings. All meeting requirements should be sent to COSE in writing, the day prior to its scheduled session. On exceptional cases, meetings could be scheduled the same day provided that facilities are available. COSE is responsible to liaise with UNOG Conference Services Coordinator on all matters pertaining to the servicing of in-session meetings;
- Review the “summary of the meetings” and the “programme of meetings” as drafted by ECOSOC for inclusion in the daily Journal;
- Consulting with the Executive Secretary/Deputy Executive Secretary, secretariat officials, representatives of delegations and, as necessary, representatives of the regional groups on the work of the respective body;
- Convening and facilitating meetings of the respective bureaus, in consultation with other relevant secretariat officials;
- Meetings among CRIC/CST/CoW secretaries;
- Facilitating the work of their respective negotiating bodies (including Contact Groups and Friends of the Chairs Groups) and assigning staff to assist them in their work;
- Reporting to EDM on the status of work of all negotiating bodies.

For specific issues related to the standard management of the sessions (otherwise referred to as “standard podium interactions”), the secretaries of designated bodies will interact directly with UNOG staff. This interaction refers to evolving and up-to-date information on the conference servicing requirements of the session. Such information, which can be transmitted through the staff member in the meeting room, includes the following:

- In situ confirmation on a daily basis of the meetings programme and thus the conference services requirements (including meeting record coverage) for the next day;
- Any changes in the meetings schedule such as cancellation of meetings;
- Urgent documentation requirements, which should be communicated to the documents management office;
- Additional conference service requirements with as much advance warning as possible in order to give time to ascertain the availability of services;
• Technical problems within the meeting room.

All of the information above need however to be imperatively confirmed to COSE in writing (as per the indication of section D above) for further coordination and follow-up with UNOG.

In general terms, COP/CRIC/CST/CoW secretaries need to be aware of the differentiated functions assigned to the various conference services concerned – including meeting planning, protocol, central support services, security, information technology services, accreditation – so that the question or problem is addressed in a timely and orderly manner to the relevant service.

2. COSE Unit responsibilities concerning:

i. Sessions of the COP and meetings of its subsidiary bodies

COSE unit responsibilities during official meetings include also:

• Assistance to the secretary of the conference in the organization, preparation and management of the conference;
• Coordination of the work of the working and drafting groups;
• Supervision of the preparation and submission of all in-session documentation, including draft resolutions, decisions and reports;
• Preparation and submission of daily summaries for the Journal and a programme of work for the next day in cooperation with ECOSOC technical secretariat;
• Carrying out procedural arrangements for all sessions, including Journal entries and podium positions in cooperation with ECOSOC and UNOG;
• Drafting the report of the plenary of the conference in cooperation with ECOSOC;
• Ensure in-session document reproduction upon request (COSE document submission form should be duly filled by the requesting unit and addressed to COSE focal points with a turn-around of 12 hours to allow for sufficient time to address the matter).
• Providing logistic support to the secretariat during the sessions;
• Ensure, in liaison with UNOG conference service, the collection of the list of speakers, statements and audio/audiovisual records of all meetings.

ii. Non-official meetings and parallel events held during official meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies

COSE unit responsibilities with regard to non-official meetings and parallel events to be held during the official meetings include:

• Announcing and monitoring the schedule of side events as well as other non-official meetings and parallel events to be held in session, in coordination with UNOG Conference Services;
• Coordinating services and responses to all enquiries concerning the organization of informal meetings arrangements;
• Compiling of information with regards to the accreditation of non-official participants such as invitees, resource persons and/or interpreters to side events.
iii. **High-level segment held during COPs**

The high-level segment is a special segment addressed to high-level Party representatives at the meetings of the COP. As per established practice, it has duration of two days and its format is decided by EDM, in cooperation with the COP Bureau.

The substantive organization of the high-level segment is under the responsibility of EDM. COSE provides technical and logistical assistance to EDM, as follows:

- Assistance in the planning and organization of the meeting involving the authorities of the host country, Member States, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- Assistance in the preparation and processing of letters of invitation to Heads of State or Government and Member States, keeping track of replies and following-up on logistical arrangements for their participation;
- Provision of information upon request and process queries of government representatives or permanent missions related to the programme of work and schedule of the meeting;
- Conference services assistance is provided during the meetings in cooperation with UNOG staff (see section D above on Servicing official meetings);
- Processing of in-session documents resulting from high-level exchanges (declarations, statements) (see Series IV on Documentation, also).

C. **Standard responsibilities of external partners during the sessions of the COP and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies**

1. **UNOG staff members**

The main responsibilities of UNOG staff members who provide services inside conference rooms are:

- Acting as liaison between the secretariat staff responsible for servicing the meeting as regards requests for meetings and services and their scheduling;
- Ensuring the required seating arrangement as per United Nations rules and regulations;
- Transmitting in a timely manner all information regarding future meetings of the body concerned and checking in advance that required technical services are available;
- Serving as liaison with technical services on such matters as lighting, ventilation and cleaning of conference rooms;
- Serving as liaison with information technology services when meeting requirements include PCs, overhead projectors, etc.;
- Ensuring correct posting of meetings outside conference rooms;
- Preparing rooms and podiums before sessions and during intervals, including proper placement of nameplates in accordance with United Nations seating protocol;
- Receiving advance text of statements, making the necessary copies and transmitting them to officers on the podium, interpreters, information officers, précis writers, report writers or editors, and keeping a master file of statements;
distributing texts to all participants in the meeting if sufficient quantities are provided;

- Keeping a list of speakers, when required, with their names and countries, a record of attendance and of the opening and closing time for each meeting;

- Following closely proposals from members of intergovernmental bodies relating to conference servicing parameters of the organ concerned, both short-term and long-term, and informing UNOG staff in charge;

- Furnishing information and assistance in the meeting room to podium officers, delegates, secretariat staff, representatives of the press and public, as appropriate;

- Maintaining stocks of necessary material, such as nameplates, voting forms, ballot papers, voting “dominoes”, etc.;

- Provision of documents to interpreters, report writers, précis writers/verbatim reporters, press officers.

2. ECOSOC technical secretariat

The ECOSOC technical secretariat fulfils the role of procedural secretary during the COP/CRIC/CST sessions, with the following duties and responsibilities:

- Providing competent and informative advice and overall assistance to the Chairperson and other officials of the conference on the rules of procedure and established practices regarding arrangements and proceedings and on the conduct of business of meetings (see detailed information in Series III.1- Procedural guidelines for Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies of the COP);

- Providing procedural assistance to the COP/CRIC/CST Bureau members (see detailed information in Series III.1- Procedural guidelines for Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies of the COP).

D. Tasks allocations to substantive and service units in the secretariat for the organization and servicing other UNCCD core events

1. COSE Unit responsibilities for the organization and servicing of COP/CRIC/CST Bureaux meetings

COSE is also responsible for the logistical organization and servicing of COP/CRIC and CST Bureau meetings.

The unit provides conference services and logistical assistance to EDM for the organization of the COP Bureau meetings and to FCMI and KMST for the organization of the CRIC and CST Bureau meetings at the secretariat’s headquarters, more specifically in terms of:

- Meeting room reservations, following the completion of the meeting request form;

- Liaison with CSU for the provision of the seating arrangement requested. Requesting units are however responsible to ensure the service provided is in conformity with the request. Any modification departing from the original request as submitted in the meeting booking form is under the responsibility of the substantive unit.

- Provision of interpretation services, if required;
• Information of Langer Eugen security on the upcoming meetings. The list of participants is handed directly by the respective units to Langer Eugen’s security services; Electronic announcement of the upcoming Bureau meetings at Langer Eugen’s board located at the reception;

• Issuance of badges for Bureau members and other invited participants;

• Preparation of the name plates for the Bureau members and other invited participants;

• Processing documents and information notes for Bureau meetings, as prepared by the respective substantive units, and preparing folders with said documentation to be distributed to the Bureau members.

• Any requirement in terms of catering does not fall under the attributions of COSE and should be sent directly to AFS.

For Bureau meetings that are not organized at the secretariat’s headquarters, COSE unit also ensures, beyond the requirements above, all matters pertaining to the liaison with the host country on the logistics and conference services requirements.
III- GUIDELINES FOR PRESIDING OFFICERS

1. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR CHAIRPERSONS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Foreword

These Procedural guidelines for chairpersons of subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the Parties (“The Guidelines) are prepared by the UNCCD secretariat. They are designed to serve as source of information and guidance for the Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the Parties (COP) on the conduct of negotiations in the UNCCD process.

The Guidelines contain information on the following:

I. Institutional structure of the Convention;

II. Conduct of business and the role and responsibilities of the Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies of the COP;

III. Negotiating forums.

The Guidelines shall be reviewed and updated periodically by the secretariat, in particular after COP sessions, for sake of consistency, uniformity and legal and procedural coherence, as required.
1. Institutional structure

The standard institutional arrangements for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (“UNCCD” or “Convention”) intergovernmental process are established as follows:

- A supreme governing body – the Conference of the Parties (COP);
- Subsidiary bodies:
  - The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC);
  - The Committee on Science and Technology (CST);
- Process Management Bodies:
  - Bureau of the COP
  - Bureaus of subsidiary bodies: CRIC and CST
- The secretariat;
- The Global Mechanism (GM).

Collectively, these institutions participate in the process of developing policies, providing and giving support to Parties on the implementation of the Convention.

A. Conference of the Parties (article 22 of UNCCD)

The COP is the supreme body of the Convention and its highest decision-making organ. The COP shall take, within its mandate, the decisions necessary to promote effective implementation of the Convention. In particular, it is responsible for regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements. At its first session, the COP adopted its own rules of procedure (decision 1/COP.1), which include decision-making procedures for matters not already covered by those stipulated in the Convention (article 22 of the Convention).

Between 1997 and 2001, five annual sessions of the COP have been held. Beginning with the sixth session of the COP, the UNCCD process revolves around the biennial sessions of the COP (article 22.4 of the Convention). These sessions bring together Parties to the Convention, as well as observer States, organizations and the media. These sessions take place at the headquarters of the secretariat, unless another Party offers to host the sessions and meet the incremental costs generated, as per UNGA Resolution 40/243 of 18 February 1986 (section I, paragraph 5). As at December 2009, nine sessions of the COP have been convened.

B. Subsidiary bodies (articles 22.2 (e) and 24 of UNCCD, rule 28, decision 11/COP.9)

In line with Article 22.2 (c) of the UNCCD and rule 28 of the rules of procedure, the COP shall establish such subsidiary bodies as are deemed necessary for the implementation of the Convention. Such “subsidiary bodies” include committees and working groups.

Two subsidiary bodies of the COP are established as follows:
• The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) is to provide the COP with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought (article 24 of the UNCCD);

• The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) is a standing subsidiary body, which assists the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy (decision 11/COP.9).

In line with provisions of article 24.1 of the UNCCD, the CST meets in conjunction with the ordinary sessions of the COP. However, following decision 12/COP.8 on the functioning of the CST, the COP decided to consider the possibility of the CST holding one intersessional meeting and one shorter meeting that will be held in conjunction with the COP. The CST organized its first special session (CST S-1) in 2008. Following decision 25/COP.9, a CST second special session (CST S-2) shall take place in 2010.

In accordance with decisions 11/COP.9 (on additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention) and 12/COP.9 (on the performance review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention and of the Strategy), from 2012 onwards the CST is also meeting intersessionally.

Decision 11/COP.9 adopted the terms of reference (TORs) of the CRIC and spells out the frequency of CRIC sessions. In line with it, CRIC sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP shall be held every two years, the second of which will be held subsequent to the intersessional sessions of the CST. Sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP and held in conjunction with the sessions of the CST should last not longer than two weeks, including the duration of the session of the CST. Sessions held between ordinary sessions of the COP and held separately from the sessions of the CST should last not longer than one week (five working days). Extraordinary sessions of the CRIC shall be held at such times as may be decided by the COP.

Subject to rule 31 of the rules of procedure, subsidiary bodies shall not take votes (rule 32).

Subject to article 24 of the Convention, the COP shall determine the matters to be considered by each subsidiary body and may authorize the President, upon the request of a subsidiary body, to adjust the allocation of work (rule 33).

The main outcomes from the deliberations of subsidiary bodies are reports or recommendations for decisions and adoption by the COP.

C. Process Management Bodies

1. Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (article 22.6 of UNCCD, rules: 20, 22, 24, 26)

In line with the provisions of article 22.6 of the UNCCD, at each ordinary session, the COP shall elect a Bureau. The Bureau serves not only during the session but also between sessions. The structure and functions of the Bureau are determined by the rules of procedure 20, 22, 24, 26. The Bureau consists of the following officers: the President, nine Vice-Presidents and the Chairpersons of the CST and of the CRIC. One of the Vice-presidents shall act as Rapporteur. In line with the same above-mentioned article of the Convention, above-mentioned, in appointing the Bureau, due regard shall be paid to equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa. The offices of the President and the Rapporteur shall normally be subject to rotation among the regional groups (rule 22 of the rules of procedure).
The President is responsible for presiding over the session of the COP and facilitating its work in order to promote agreement among Parties. At the first meeting of each ordinary session, the President of the previous ordinary session, or in the absence of the President, his representative (as per UNCCD pattern of conferences) or a Vice-President shall preside until the COP has elected a President for the session (rule 26). The President remains under the authority of the COP, and he/she must remain impartial and cannot exercise the rights of a representative of the Party to which he belongs (rule 22).

One of the Vice-Presidents assists the President in this work, and may preside over sessions of the COP (as Acting President) if the President is temporarily absent from a meeting or any part thereof. The President so designated shall not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a Party (rule 24).

At the first meeting of each ordinary session, a Vice-President may also preside (as Temporary President), in the absence of the President, until the COP has elected a President for the session (rule 26).

The Rapporteur is responsible for preparing the report of the session. He/she is assisted in this task by the secretariat.

The Bureau of any session is also responsible to examine the credentials and submit its report to the COP for decision (rule 20).

If an officer of the Bureau resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, a representative of the same Party shall be named by the Party concerned to replace the said officer for the remainder of that officer's mandate (rule 25).

2. **Bureaus of subsidiary bodies (rule 31, decision 11/COP.9)**

Each subsidiary body established by the COP elects a Bureau. Rule 31 of the Rules of procedure spells out the issue of election of officers of subsidiary bodies.

In line with this, the Chairperson of the Committee on Science and Technology shall be elected by the COP. Unless the COP decides otherwise, the Chairperson of any other subsidiary body shall be elected by the COP.

The Chairperson of each subsidiary body together with its respective four Vice-Chairpersons which are elected by the CRIC and CST, form the CRIC and the CST Bureaux. In each case, one of the Vice-Chairpersons shall act as Rapporteur.

The Chairperson and four Vice-Chairpersons of the two subsidiary bodies shall be elected with due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa, while not neglecting affected country Parties in other regions and shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

The Chairperson of a subsidiary body is responsible for facilitating the work of that subsidiary body, with the assistance of the Vice-Chairpersons. The Rapporteur is responsible for preparing the report of the session. He/she is assisted by the secretariat in this function.

In the case of the CRIC Bureau, as per paragraph 9 of the annex to decision 11/COP.9, the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons of the CRIC shall be elected at the final meeting of the session of the CRIC, held in conjunction with the sessions of the COP, and shall assume their office immediately.
D. Secretariat (article 23 of UNCCD, decision 3/COP.8)

The secretariat services the COP, its subsidiary bodies and their Bureaus, as established under the Convention.

Its functions are delineated in article 23 of the Convention, as follows:

(a) to make arrangements for sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies established under the Convention and to provide them with services as required;

(b) to compile and transmit reports submitted to it;

(c) to facilitate assistance to affected developing country Parties, on request, particularly those in Africa, in the compilation and communication of information required under the Convention;

(d) to coordinate its activities with the secretariats of other relevant international bodies and conventions;

(e) to enter, under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, into such administrative and contractual arrangements as may be required for the effective discharge of its functions;

(f) to prepare reports on the execution of its functions under this Convention and present them to the Conference of the Parties; and

(g) to perform such other secretariat functions as may be determined by the Conference of the Parties.

The secretariat is required to strengthen its core servicing, advocacy and agenda-setting and representation functions for the implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018), in order to support Parties, the COP and its subsidiary bodies in fulfilling their respective roles1.

E. Global Mechanism (article 21.4 and 5)

The Global Mechanism serves the UNCCD process by promoting actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, on a grant basis, and/or on concessional or other terms, to affected developing country Parties, is hereby established. The Global Mechanism functions under the authority and guidance of the COP and is accountable to it (article 21.4 of the Convention).

Its functions are stated in paragraph 5, of article 21(financial mechanisms) of the Convention, as follows:

(a) Identify and draw up an inventory of relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes that are available to implement the Convention;

(b) Provide advice, on request, to Parties on innovative methods of financing and sources of financial assistance and on improving the coordination of cooperation activities at the national level;

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1 Document ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1, decision 3/COP.8, Annex, paragraph 19
(c) Provide interested Parties and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations with information on available sources of funds and on funding patterns in order to facilitate coordination among them; and

(d) Reports to the Conference of the Parties, beginning at its second ordinary session, on its activities.

2. **Conduct of Business and the Role and Responsibilities of the Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies of the COP**

A. **Rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties (decision 1/COP.1)**

The conduct of business at any session of the Conference of the Parties is regulated by the rules of procedure. The Parties to the UNCCD have adopted the rules of procedure as contained in document ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1, decision 1/COP.1.

The rules apply to any session of the COP convened in accordance with article 22 of the Convention (rule 1 of the rules of procedure). Also, they apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of any subsidiary bodies (rule 27).

Core rules of procedure are addressed herein as follows: agenda, quorum, the functions of the presiding officer, procedures for speaking, submission of proposals, motions, and voting.

B. **Agenda and its adoption (Rules of procedure - Chapter IV Agenda)**

In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure, the provisional agenda of each session of the COP is prepared by the secretariat in agreement with the President.

In accordance with rule 27, which specifies that the rules of procedures shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of any subsidiary body, the provisional agenda of each session of the subsidiary bodies is prepared in agreement with the Chairpersons of those bodies.

Pursuant to decision 11/COP.9 (on additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention, containing the ToR of the CRIC), the provisional agenda of the sessions of the CRIC shall be prepared by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau of the CRIC.

*Items*

In accordance with rule 10 of the rules of procedure, the items that shall be included in the provisional agenda are: items arising from the articles of the Convention, including those specified in its article 22, items for which the inclusion has been decided at a previous session, items from a previous session whose consideration had not been completed (rule 16), the proposed budget as well as questions arising to the accounts and financial arrangements and any item proposed by a Party and received by the secretariat before the provisional agenda is circulated.

*Distribution*

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2 Section VI (Organization of work), paragraph 23 of the Annex to decision 11/COP.9.
The rules of procedure require that the provisional agenda, together with supporting documents, be distributed by the secretariat in the six official languages of the United Nations at least six weeks before the opening of a session (rule 11).

Supplementary provisional agenda

An item proposed by a Party and received by the secretariat after the provisional agenda has been produced but before the opening of the session shall be included in a supplementary provisional agenda (rule 12).

Addition, deletion, deferment or amendment of items

When adopting its agenda, each body may decide to add, delete, defer or amend items (rule 13). However, only those items that are considered urgent and important by the Parties may be added to the agenda.

Provisional agenda of extraordinary session

It shall consist only of those items proposed for consideration in the request for holding of the extraordinary session. It shall be distributed to Parties at the same time as the invitation to the extraordinary session (rule 14).

C. Quorum (rules 29 and 37)

The rules of procedure establish two types of quorum: the quorum for opening a meeting and the quorum for decision-making (rule 37), the latter still pending a final decision by the COP. For meetings of the COP and open-ended subsidiary bodies, the quorum required to declare a meeting open and permit debate to proceed is at least one third of the Parties to the Convention. The presence of two thirds of the Parties to the Convention is required for any decision to be taken.

In the case of a subsidiary body that is not open-ended – that is, participation is restricted to a pre-determined number of Parties – the quorum required is a majority of the Parties designated to participate therein (rule 29).

Determining the existence of a quorum is part of the powers of the presiding officer. In UNCCD practice, the presiding officer always makes sure that the representatives of all the negotiating groups are present before opening the meeting and allowing the debate to proceed or before a decision is taken. If during a meeting the issue of quorum is raised, the presiding officer should request the secretariat to verify the existence of a quorum.

Quorum for adopting amendments to the text of the Convention (article 30 of the Convention)

Any Party may propose amendments to the Convention. Amendments to the Convention shall be adopted at an ordinary session of the Conference of the Parties. The text of any proposed amendment shall be communicated to the Parties by the Permanent Secretariat at least six months before the meeting at which it is proposed for adoption. The Permanent Secretariat shall also communicate proposed amendments to the signatories to the Convention (article 30.1 and 2 of the Convention).

The Parties shall make every effort to reach agreement on any proposed amendment to the Convention by consensus. If all efforts at consensus have been exhausted and no agreement reached, the amendment shall, as a last resort, be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the Parties present and voting at the meeting (article 30.3 of the Convention).

\[\text{See rule 47 on majority required.}\]
D. Functions of the presiding officer (rule 23)

The rules of procedure define, inter alia, the functions of the President of the COP. Rule 23 outlines/specifies the general powers. However, throughout the rules of procedure other specific functions are established. These rules apply, mutatis mutandis, to chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies (see point A above).

1. Obligation of impartiality (rule 22.3)

A cardinal principle in the exercise of the powers conferred on the presiding officer is the obligation of impartiality. The rules of procedure consequently provide that the President of the COP shall participate in the session in that capacity and shall not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a Party (rule 22.3).

2. General powers of the presiding officer (rule 23)

Rule 23 of the rules of procedure specifies the general powers of the President of the COP, as follows:

- Declare the opening and closing of the session;
- Preside at the meetings of the session;
- Ensure the observance of the rules of procedure;
- Accord the right to speak;
- Put questions to the vote;
- Announce decisions;
- Rule on points of order;
- Control the proceedings and maintain order.

Rule 23 also provides that the President may propose to the meeting:

- The closure of the list of speakers;
- A limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers;
- The number of times a representative may speak on a question;
- The adjournment or the closure of debate;
- The suspension or adjournment of a meeting.

In the exercise of the functions of his/her office, the President remains under the authority of the COP. In practical terms this means that the COP can at any time override a decision of the President.

3. Authority of the presiding officer with regard to irrelevant or offensive statements (rule 23)

Rule 23 provides that the President “shall have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order thereat”. The presiding officer therefore has the power to call a speaker to order if his or her statement is not relevant to the subject under discussion or is offensive. The common practice in international conferences is for the presiding officer to call upon speakers to confine their statements to the issue on the agenda. If the speaker persists, the presiding officer may suspend the meeting.
In cases where the offending statement is directed at another Party, the presiding officer may grant the delegation of that Party “a right of reply”.

4. **Points of order (rules 40 and 43)**

   A point of order is an intervention directed to the presiding officer, requesting him or her to use certain powers inherent in his/ her office or vested in him/ her by the rules of procedure. A point of order may relate to:
   
   - The manner in which debate is being conducted;
   - The maintenance of order in the meeting;
   - The compliance with the rules of procedure;
   - The manner in which the presiding officer is exercising the powers conferred on him by the rules of procedure.

   Rule 40 of the rules of procedure provides that a representative may at any time raise a point of order during the discussion of any matter. The President is required to decide immediately on the point of order. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. Such an appeal shall be put to the vote immediately and the President’s ruling shall stand unless overruled by the majority of the Parties present and voting. “Parties present and voting” means Parties present and casting an affirmative or negative vote.

   A point of order has precedence over any other matter including the procedural motions specified in rule 43 of the rules of procedure. Points of order are also distinct from procedural motions in one important respect: they involve issues requiring an immediate ruling by the presiding officer, subject to possible appeal to the meeting. Procedural motions are to be put to the vote and do not require a ruling by the presiding officer.

E. **Procedures for speaking (rule 38)**

   Rule 38 of the rules of procedure provides that no one may speak at a meeting of the COP without having previously obtained the permission of the President.

   The presiding officer shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak, subject to rules on precedence (according to which the Chairperson or the Rapporteur of a subsidiary body may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining conclusions arrived at by that subsidiary body), points of order, decisions on competence and order on procedural motions.

   The presiding officer may call a speaker to order if the speaker’s remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

   The COP may, on a proposal from the presiding officer or from a Party, limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on a question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of and two against a proposal to set such limits.

   When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the presiding officer shall call the speaker to order without delay.
F. Motions and proposals

A “motion” is a formal proposal by a Party that the meeting takes a certain action, either procedural or substantive. A “proposal” refers to that part of the motion that contains the text proposed by the Party in its motion.

1. Procedural motions (rule 43)

Rule 43 of the rules defines procedural motions that have precedence over all other proposals or motions subject to rule 40 (except points of order), and establishes a hierarchy among them. These motions are:

- To suspend the meeting;
- To adjourn the meeting;
- To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion;
- To close the debate on the question under discussion.

The rules of procedure of most international conferences require a presiding officer to put a procedural motion to a vote after granting the proposer and one speaker for and two against the motion permission to speak. This is also the letter and spirit of rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

2. Motion on the competence of the COP or subsidiary body (rule 41)

Rule 41 of the rules of procedure provides that “Any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Conference of the Parties to discuss any matter or to adopt a proposal or an amendment to a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before the matter is discussed or a vote taken on the proposal or amendment in question”. A request by a Party for a decision on competence is a procedural motion and not a point of order to be decided by the presiding officer. It must therefore be decided upon by the meeting itself. The issue of competence is for the COP to determine in the exercise of its sovereign authority.

The secretariat cannot be requested to give an opinion on whether or not the body has competence to discuss a matter. Such an opinion would amount to pre-empting the sovereignty of the COP.

3. Submission of proposals (rules 42 and 44)

Rule 42 of the rules of procedure establishes the procedures for the submission of proposals by Parties or groups of Parties for consideration:

- Proposals and amendments to proposals shall normally be introduced in writing by Parties, in one of the official languages, and handed to the secretariat for circulation to delegations;
- As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or a decision taken on it at any meeting unless copies have been circulated to Parties not later than the day preceding the meeting;
- The President, however, has discretion to dispense with the above requirements regarding circulation and time frame and to permit discussion and consideration.

All proposals must be sponsored. They may be sponsored by a Party or a group of Parties. The only exceptions are the basic proposals contained in the documents prepared by the secretariat as the convening authority or proposals submitted by the presiding officer. Non-
governmental organizations cannot sponsor proposals because an inter-governmental process only addresses issues raised by Governments.

A proposal or motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting, provided that it has not been amended (rule 44). Once withdrawn, a proposal or motion may be re-introduced by any other Party.

The rules of procedure contain detailed provisions (rules 48–51) regarding voting on proposals.

4. Reconsideration of proposals (rule 45)

Proposals once adopted or rejected can only be reconsidered at the same session if a motion for reconsideration is supported by a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting (rule 45). Permission to speak on a motion for reconsideration shall be accorded only to the mover, to one speaker in favour of, and two against, the proposal, after which it shall be put immediately to vote.

G. Voting (article 32 of UNCCD and rules 6, 7, 37 and 47.2 to 47.4)

In line with article 32 of the UNCCD, each Party to the Convention shall have one vote. Regional economic integration organizations are an exception and they exercise their right to vote in matters within their competence, with a number of votes equal to the number of their member States that are Parties to the Convention. However, such an organization shall not exercise its right to vote if any of its member States exercises its right, and vice versa.

Observers such as the United Nations, its specialized agencies, any State member thereof or observers thereof not Party to the Convention, as well as the organization housing the Global Mechanism may, upon invitation of the President, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any session, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the session object (rule 6).

Also, observers such as any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental which is qualified in matters covered by the Convention and which has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session of the COP may, upon invitation of the President, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any session in matters of direct concern to the body or agency they represent, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the session object (rule 7).

As regards the majority required for agreement on all substantive matters, the draft text of the rule 47.1 has been amended by decision 21/COP.2. However, as of October 2010, this draft rule of procedure is still outstanding and is to be re-considered at the COP10 in 2011.

The decision-making on procedural matters requires a majority of the Parties present and voting (rule 47.2).

If the question arises as to whether a matter is one of a procedural or substantive nature, the President shall rule on the question (rule 47.3).

If, on matters other than elections, a vote is equally divided, a second vote shall be taken. If this vote is also equally divided, the proposal shall be regarded as withdrawn (rule 47.4).

The presence of two thirds of the Parties to the Convention is required for any decision to be taken (rule 37). The presiding officer, with the assistance of the secretariat, must ensure that there is a quorum for decision-making.
1. **Method of voting for general matters (rules 52.1 and 52.2)**

   Voting, except for elections, shall normally be by show of hands. A roll-call vote shall be taken if one is requested by any Party. It shall be taken in the order used or established by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of the United Nations. However, if at any time a Party requests a secret ballot that shall be the method of voting on the issue in question. When the Conference of the Parties votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands and a recorded vote shall replace a roll-call (rules 52.1 and 52.2).

2. **Conduct during voting**

   After the President has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The President may permit the Parties to explain their votes, either before or after the voting. The President may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations. The President shall not permit the proposer of a proposal or of an amendment to a proposal to explain his/her vote on his/her own proposal or amendment, except if it has been amended.

3. **Voting majorities under the Convention (articles 30.3 and 31.1 of UNCCD)**

   The Convention establishes voting majorities on a number of further issues:
   - Amendments to the Convention require a two-thirds majority vote of the Parties present and voting at the meeting (article 30.3).
   - Adoption and amendment of annexes to the Convention shall be proposed and adopted in accordance with article 31.1.
   - In adopting an additional regional implementation annex or amendment to any regional implementation annex, the majority provided for in that article shall include a two-thirds majority vote of the Parties of the region concerned present and voting.

4. **H. The Meaning of “consensus”**

   Except for the foregoing matters and other matters discussed above for which the rules of procedure define a voting majority, decision-making under the Convention process is on the basis of consensus. What does the term “decision-making by consensus” entail?

   The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Annex 2 of the WTO Agreement) are the only international legal instruments that provide a definition of the term “consensus”. Article 161.7(e) of UNCLOS states that “consensus” means “the absence of any formal objection”. Article 2.4 of the DSU stipulates that the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) shall take decisions by consensus. A note to this provision states that “the DSB shall be deemed to have decided by consensus on a matter submitted for its consideration, if no Member, present at the meeting of the DSB when the decision is taken, formally objects to the proposed decision”. These formulations though capturing the essential legal element do not fully reflect the nuances inherent in the term.

   In a memorandum to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity dated 17 June 2002, the Legal Counsel of the United Nations stated as follows regarding the legal interpretation of the term:

   “In United Nations practice, the concept of ‘consensus’ is understood to mean the practice of adoption of resolutions or decisions by general agreement
without resort to voting in the absence of any formal objection that would stand in the way of a decision being declared adopted in that manner. Thus, in the event that consensus or general agreement is achieved, the resolutions and decisions of United Nations meetings and conferences have been adopted without a vote. In this connection, it should be noted that the expressions ‘without a vote’, ‘by consensus’ and ‘by general agreement’ are, in the practice of the United Nations, synonymous and therefore interchangeable.

“Adoption in this manner does not mean that every State participating in the meeting or conference is in favour of every element of the resolution or decision. States so participating have the opportunity, both prior to and after the adoption, to make reservations, declarations, statements of interpretation and/or statements of position. In so doing, a State may:

- disassociate itself from the substance or text of parts of the document;
- indicate that its joining in the consensus does not constitute acceptance of the substance or text of parts of the document; and/or
- present any other restrictions on its Government’s position on substance or text of parts of the document.

“Provided that the State concerned does not formally object to or challenge the existence of consensus or call for a vote on the resolution or decision, it is understood that consensus or general agreement is preserved.”

Thus, Parties may put their views on record, explaining their position, either before or after the adoption of a decision. Another way to express disagreement with the text or part thereof is by entering a reservation after adoption indicating that a Party does not agree to comply with one or more of the text’s provisions. Reservations are used rarely and are intended to be temporary, simply indicating that a Party agrees with the decision in principle but is unable to effectively implement it at the present time. Finally, a Party may express disagreement with the text by issuing an “interpretive statement” defining its position and outlining its understanding of the decision. Statements of position, reservations and interpretive statements are usually put on record at the request of the Party or Parties concerned.

### III. Negotiating forums

Information on negotiations that take place in the plenary, main committees and the sessional Committee of the Whole is provided below.

#### A. Plenary and subsidiary bodies meetings

The plenary meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies are the formal forums for discussion and decision-making by Parties to the Convention. Plenary meetings are open to participation by all Parties, observer States and organizations, the media and other participants registered for the official sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

The conduct of plenary meetings by the presiding officer, seating arrangements of participants, languages of the session, and other details concerning the meeting are governed by the rules of procedure.
It is during plenary meetings that decisions are taken by the COP and subsidiary bodies. These include procedural decisions, such as the adoption of the agenda and the organization of work of the session, as well as substantive decisions and conclusions of the session, such as the adoption of policies, procedures and guidelines pertaining to the implementation of the Convention.

Accordingly plenary meetings provide Parties with the forum to make general statements on items on the agenda of the meeting. Negotiations on key issues rarely take place in plenary meetings. These are conducted in other forums, namely contact groups, informal consultations and “Friends of the Chair” meetings. These groups are set-up by the respective Presidents/Chairpersons of the COP/CRIC/CST/COW on the basis of the agenda requirement, for the duration of the session. Presidents of the contact groups might be invited to specific sessions of the Bureaus.

During the opening of plenary meetings, the COP will decide which agenda items to allocate to the subsidiary bodies, contact groups or informal consultations; and on which issues the President would consult further with Parties. Similarly, the subsidiary bodies will also allocate specific agenda items to contact groups or informal consultations, or request the chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies to consult further with Parties. The President and the chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies will inform the meeting of the presiding officers selected to chair the various contact groups and informal consultations for their approval.

During the last plenary meetings, the presiding officers will report on the outcome of their work in the contact groups and informal consultations, and on whether the negotiations were completed successfully. The presiding officer will also inform the President or Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies of any documents containing decisions or conclusions forwarded for consideration and adoption by the COP.

Following the reports on the outcome of the negotiations in the contact groups and informal consultations, or consultations by the President or Chairperson, the Parties will be invited to consider and adopt the documents containing the draft decisions and conclusions forwarded from these negotiating bodies. The draft decisions and conclusions will be adopted if there is consensus among the Parties for their adoption. If there is no consensus, the issue will be forwarded for consideration to the next session (rule 16).

B. Establishment of a Committee of the Whole and allocation of its tasks

As per established practice, at its opening plenary meeting, the Conference establishes a sessional Committee of the Whole (COW) to consider items on the agenda allocated to it by the COP and to submit recommendations thereon to the COP.

The COW is open to the participation of all delegations. It has the task of recommending decisions on matters delegated to it by the COP, for adoption by the Conference. Its Chairperson has the authority to delegate work, as appropriate, to drafting groups and acts as ex-officio member of the COP Bureau at COW sessional meetings.

As per established practice, the Executive Secretary appoints a senior officer of the staff to serve as Secretary of the COW.

Glossary of terms
“Acting President” means the Vice President designated to act as President in case of temporary absence of the President; The President so designated shall not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a Party; he/she shall have the powers and duties of the President (rule 24);

“Acting Chairperson” means the Vice-Chairperson of a subsidiary body designated to act as Chairperson in case of temporary absence of the Chairperson.

“Chairperson” means the Chairperson of a subsidiary body of the Convention, i.e., CST (rule 31 and decision 15/COP.1) and CRIC (decision 11/COP.9);

“Convention or UNCCD” means the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, adopted at Paris on 17 June 1994;

“Extraordinary sessions of COP” means the COP sessions held at such times as decided either by the COP or at a written request of a Party; in the latter case, it shall be held not more than ninety days after the date at which the request is supported by at least one third of the Parties (rules 4.3 and 4.4);

“Parties” means Parties at the Convention;

“Parties present and voting” means Parties present at the meeting at which voting takes place and casting an affirmative or negative vote; Parties abstaining from voting shall be considered as not voting;

“Presiding officer” refers to both, the President of the COP and Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies;

“President” means the President of the COP elected in accordance to rule 22.1; term used whenever reference is made to a specific rule of procedure;

“Regional economic integration organization” means an organization defined in article 1.(j) of the Convention;

“Rule” means a specific rule of procedure contained in decision 1/COP.1 (Rules of procedure of the COP);

“Rules of procedure” means the set of rules adopted by the COP by its decision 1/COP.1.

“Session” – any ordinary or extraordinary session of the COP convened in accordance with article 22 of the Convention.

“Temporary President” - the President of a previous ordinary session, or in the absence of the President, a Vice-President that shall preside until the Conference of the Parties has elected a President for the session (rule 26).