

CSO PARTICIPATION IN THE UNCCD PROCESS



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1. Introduction

In order to achieve the objective of this Convention and to implement its provisions, the Parties shall be guided, inter alia, by the following:

(a) the Parties should ensure that decisions on the design and implementation of programmes to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought are taken with the participation of populations and local communities and that an enabling environment is created at higher levels to facilitate action at national and local levels;

(c) the Parties should develop, in a spirit of partnership, cooperation among all levels of government, communities, non-governmental organizations and landholders to establish a better understanding of the nature and value of land and scarce water resources in affected areas and to work towards their sustainable use;

(Article 3 - Final Text of the Convention, A/AC.241/27, 1994)

Civil Society Organisations play an important role within the UNCCD process, implementing activities at a grass-roots level, conserving, documenting and spreading traditional knowledge, and monitoring advances within the UNCCD at national, regional and international level. In general, civil society organisations working for the implementation of the UNCCD have the following objectives:

- Make the Convention a useful tool in local level actions towards combating land degradation and promoting sustainable livelihoods;
- Get recognition of the expertise of civil society and be included in contributing to programmes and projects and all facets of the implementation of the UNCCD;
- Lobbying for the respect of their engagement towards national and international institutions;
- Informing, training, and sensitising public opinion and policy-makers; and
- Increasing public aid to development for the implementation of the UNCCD.

CSOs in the North and the South have different roles related to the UNCCD. The Northern CSOs have a strong role to play in monitoring the donors, identifying problems and causes in cooperation with their Southern partners, and feeding these concerns into the national and international policy making process through a policy dialogue. They can also play a strong role in strengthening capacities of their Southern partners, and facilitating partnerships. The southern CSOs can be much more involved in policy design and implementation in their respective countries, being the eyes and the ears of the local population. They have an overview of the local conditions and impacts on the ground. By that, they can also critically follow the projects and programmes funded in their region.

Drynet is a network of 14 CSOs representing 4 continents. It aims to strengthen civil society networks to influence dryland development policies. Drynet is: BOTH ENDS (Netherlands), CAREC (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan), CARI (France), CENESTA (Iran), EMG (South Africa), ENDA-TM (Senegal, Madagascar, Morocco), INSTITUTO SERTAIO (Brazil), LPP (Germany), LPPS (India), OLCA (Chile). PROBIOMA (Bolivia), SCOPE (Pakistan), TEMA (Turkey), TENMIYA (Mauritania).

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Nevertheless, several barriers limit the degree of CSO participation in, and contribution to, the Convention. Firstly, they are not recognised as official partners, but rather *observers*, and their role and responsibilities within the convention are not clearly defined. That is to say, they can observe proceedings, and in some instances voice opinions, but they have no vote or recognised negotiating role, and can only influence decision making indirectly, thus placing restraints on the level and quality of CSO contributions.

Secondly, a lack of available funds for CSO participation in national, regional, and international events, and their predictability if any, strongly impedes their contributions, particularly for CSOs from developing countries. Whilst CSOs can apply for funding from the UNCCD Secretariat, the division of these funds has, to date, been inconsistent, non-transparent and highly rotational, leading to many CSOs participating in just one event. As a result, CSO participation loses continuity, and is often perceived to be uncoordinated and / or ineffective:

...the quality of CSO participation in the most recent COPs and CRICs has been judged by various stakeholders to have been of low quality, it has not contributed enough to the policy discussions and decision-making processes.
(ENID/DRYNET, 2008)

Notwithstanding the above, positive steps have been made during the latest COP and CRIC conferences. The adoption of a 10 Year Strategic Plan in 2008 further outlined the importance of CSOs within the convention. This was backed up by decisions taken in COP-8 and CRIC-7, which aim to increase CSO participation, provide transparency to the allocation of funds to CSOs, and hold CSOs accountable for the quality of their contributions.

A recent side event held by Drynet during CRIC-7 brought together a panel of experts to analyse the role of CSOs within the UNCCD, and the degree of participation achieved to date. The side event shed light on positive experiences regarding CSO engagement, and further highlighted the important roles that CSOs should play within the UNCCD process. Its observations can be used to guide preparations prior to COP-9, where important decisions must be taken to further cement the role of CSOs within the convention, and capitalise on the *untapped resource*, in terms of knowledge and experience, that they represent.

2. Engaging with Civil Society: True Improvement or Chasing Butterflies? – A reflection on the Drynet Side Event during CRIC-7

During CRIC-7 in Istanbul, Turkey, Drynet held a Round Table side event, aimed at paving the road to COP-9 in terms of the role of civil society within the 10 year Strategic Plan to enhance the implementation of the convention. The event brought together a group of experts representing the UNCCD secretariat, the CST, the Global Mechanism (GM), National Parties and Civil Society Organisations from a number of developing and developed countries. After a brief introduction on the benefits of participation and partnerships, which highlighted that “*partnerships should be built on trust and transparency, must be goals orientated, results driven, and should reflect local priorities*”, the panel were given the opportunity to express their views.

The Canadian delegate, Christopher Braeuel, highlighted that CSOs are important partners in their National Programme, having served on the Canadian Delegation, and fulfil roles such as knowledge sharing and awareness raising. CSOs have also been involved in policy development. In his opinion, CSOs represent a largely **untapped resource that must be harnessed in the service of the convention.**

The German delegate, Kristoph Kohlmayer, brought to light the lack of CSO participation to date in the convention, mentioning that the majority of the accredited CSOs had only made contact with the UNCCD once, and stating that there is only a small band of faithful CSOs. He also highlighted the important **watchdog role** that CSOs play with respect to the implementation of the convention.

On behalf of the UNCCD secretariat, Massimo Candelori highlighted the lack of communication of the convention to the broader public, and proposed that CSOs can play an important role in filling this void. He stated that for the UNCCD, **CSOs are seen as a major tool to help improve the implementation of the convention.**

The Ugandan delegate, Stephen Muwaya, demonstrated how his country has moved from a point where the benefits of CSO participation were not fully understood, to a point where CSOs have been incorporated into the National Programme to such a degree that “we now find that they [CSOs] are better able to share information than our own civil servants”. He emphasised the importance of **South-South collaboration**, although he recognised that this can be limited by a lack of resources and the absence of a common language.

In representation of the CST, Antoine Cornet stated that CSOs have an important role to play in the introduction of innovation. Although it was highlighted frequently that CSOs represent very diverse fields, he felt that this should be seen as a **source of great potential**. As such, he stated that for the UNCCD to improve, it **must get CSOs on board** and build partnerships between national bodies, international bodies and civil society. One such move would be to include experts from CSOs in the Roster of Experts at a national level. He also suggested that a mechanism should be developed that **allows CSOs to contribute to the national reporting process.**

Finally, on behalf of the Global Mechanism (GM), Elizabeth Rundquist highlighted CSOs important role at a national level in influencing the development and planning process, and in the allocation of resources. CSOs, in her opinion, should also be seen as **important partners as investors.**

Following the presentations, Daniela Tarizzo, the Secretariat’s CSO officer, concluded by stating that **much is expected of civil society within the UNCCD, but that ways must be found to better engage CSOs in the process.**

3. The 10 year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the Convention (2008-2018)

The 10 Year Strategic Plan was adopted during the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-8), held in Madrid during September 2007. It sets out revised Strategic and Operational Objectives for the ten year period, aimed at forging “a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.” (ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1).

Whilst the plan falls short of clearly outlining the role that CSOs will play in the implementation of the convention during this 10 year period, important references are made to their contributions. For example, Outcome 1.3 of Operational Objective 1 (Advocacy, Awareness Raising and Education) states:

*Civil society organizations (CSOs) and the scientific community in the North and the South are **increasingly engaged as stakeholders** in the Convention processes and desertification/land degradation and drought are addressed in their advocacy, awareness-raising and education initiatives.*

Nonetheless, it should be noted that no mechanisms have been put in place to bring about this increased level of engagement.

Similarly, the importance of the knowledge that CSOs can bring to the convention is recognised in Outcome 3.5 of Operation Objective 3 (Science, Technology and Knowledge), though no methods of encompassing this knowledge are mentioned:

*Effective knowledge-sharing systems, **including traditional knowledge**, are in place at the global, regional, subregional and national levels to support policymakers and end users, including through the **identification and sharing of best practices and success stories**.*

In this regard, whilst the importance of CSO contributions are recognised, the degree to which these contributions materialise within the UNCCD framework will depend on the level of CSO participation in future COP, CRIC and CST events, and on the decisions taken in these events regarding CSOs and their role within the convention.

4. COP 8 and CRIC 7 Decisions Regarding CSO Participation.-

During the latest sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), held in Madrid (Spain) and Istanbul (Turkey), respectively, CSO participation and contributions have been notable. As a result, several decisions and recommendations have been made, which suggest a move towards greater CSO involvement in the UNCCD.

The decisions and recommendations have focussed on the need to increase CSO participation within the convention, its implementation at local level, and in the review processes at both national and international levels. For example, National Parties have been asked to **ensure CSO participation in the process**, and to **promote awareness of the convention at a local level** (COP 8, Dec. 1 and 3). Furthermore, National Parties have been requested to **include relevant local NGOs and CSOs in their roster of local experts**, recognising the important role that these actors play as a conduit of local and traditional expertise (COP 8, Dec. 11). At an international level, COP 8 has led to the establishment of Interactive Dialogue Sessions with all relevant actors, including CSOs, which aim to set the COP 9 agenda prior to this event (COP 8, Dec. 27). Furthermore, it has been suggested that CSOs should have a **greater involvement in the CRIC process**, and should be **incorporated into the national reporting processes**, recognising their role as watchdogs of the implementation of the convention and the fulfilment of agreements and commitments by National Parties (CRIC 7, Dec. 90 and 129).

With regards to the Committee on Science and Technology, it has been decided that presentations from relevant NGOs should be incorporated into the agenda of future CST meetings, and that additional funds should be channelled so as to **ensure NGO participation in the CST meetings** (COP 8, Dec. 13).

However, many of the decisions do not go far enough, *encouraging* and *urging* National Parties to improve CSO participation and collaboration, **rather than making it an obligatory part** of the convention, for which they will be held accountable through their National Reports. Furthermore, CSO inclusion in the review process (CRIC and National Reports) is at this stage just a suggestion put forward by CSOs and some National Parties, and no official decision has yet been taken. It will be important to further this proposal during the 9th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9).

For a list of the decisions taking during COP 8 and CRIC 7 concerning CSO participation in the UNCCD process, see Annex 1.

5. Selection Criteria for CSO Participation.-

So, poor information flows lead to weak contributions by civil society actors at UNCCD events. This causes a reduction in support for these actors, which then further limits their participation. The fact that there is a serious shortage of funds and other resources to facilitate CSO participation, and that the selection of CSOs that do receive funds to participate is made by the Secretariat in a nontransparent way based on criteria that are not public, does not help the participation process either. (DESIRE/DRYNET/ENID, 2008)

One of the areas of debate during the latest CRIC event held in Istanbul, Turkey, was the criteria used for selecting the CSOs who receive funding to participate in the conference. During each COP and CRIC event, a selected number of CSOs from developing countries receive funding which facilitates their participation. However, to date the process of selecting the beneficiaries of this funding has been unclear and non transparent. The CSOs involved in the UNCCD process understand that it is impossible to fund participation for every organisation at any one event, and accept that funding should be allocated on a rotating basis, to allow all interested CSOs the chance to participate. However, it is also felt that effort is needed to ensure continuity in CSO participation and contributions in substance to the UNCCD process. That is to say, to date it has been difficult to maintain momentum in the contributions and efforts of CSOs linked to the UNCCD process, as in each event different CSOs participate, with many attending for the first time.

In terms of sustainable development, we can define ‘participation’ according to the following criteria:

- Consult with all stakeholders and qualified decision-making bodies
- Give all stakeholders the chance to independently negotiate their views and ideas (including the right to say ‘no’)
- Establish information means in a timely fashion, debate and evaluate together on equal basis
- Integrate all social, economic, and political actors
- Promote gender equality
- Integrate the costs of the participating process with the global costs

We base these criteria on principles of pro-activity, being pre-informed and trained, gender integration, the equilibrium between social actors, collective cost bearing and the principle of flexibility.

When trying to understand and evaluate participation it is important to ask ourselves the following questions:

- **What** will people participate in? (Related to for example planning, decision-making, approval of projects)
- **Who** will participate? (Questions such as: in what capacity, who will they represent)
- **When** will participation occur? (Before, during, or after decisions making, research, and implementation).
- **Where** will it take place? (Physical location, levels in society and governmental structures).
- **How** will it be carried out? (Costs, processes, feedback, facilitation)

These five questions highlight key issues in participation and enable us to more critically analyse projects and policy implementation. They allow us to evaluate and force us to take into account contextual factors that directly impact participation such as the political power in place, the existence of particular legislation, and the quality and quantity of information diffusion. The use of indicators may also help in the evaluation of participation. What is important to remember when discussing issues of participation is that sharing of decision making power is what is at issue here. Additionally, participation as understood in this context is generally **largely overestimated and only used as a justification**.

Based on the questions above we are able to get an insight into the multiple aspects of participation. We also come to realize that participation is a challenging and not clear-cut process. The clarification paper “Participation: Beyond the Tyranny”¹ explains that practitioners should realise that participation:

- Can occur in a number of different ways
- Is driven by contextual factors
- Is a time consuming endeavour
- Always involves issues of power
- Needs to be grounded in clear values and principles
- Is a process not a product or form, and
- May result in misunderstanding, misrepresentation and conflict if its purpose is not clarified.

In this regard, Draft Eligibility Criteria for funding the participation of CSOs in the UNCCD process and events were drawn up during the CRIC 7 by the secretariat, which aim to clarify the selection process, set a fixed quota of CSOs per continent, and establish a healthy ratio between new and experienced CSOs. The document was socialised amongst CSO members, who made several recommendations and modifications. A final draft document was agreed upon during a special session of CSO participants during the CRIC. This document will be further improved prior to COP 9.

¹ by D. du Toit and N. Tubtim, personal communication to Both ENDS, 2003.

**Draft Eligibility Criteria for Funding for the Participation of Civil Society Organisations in
UNCCD Processes and Events
CRIC 7, Istanbul, 3-14 November 2008**

Former experience in leading the UNCCD process can help readdressing these draft criteria and match the needs of the environment posed by the international conferences. The main goals of this exercise include:

- a) Ensuring an equitable participation¹;
- b) Guaranteeing a fair and transparent selection process;
- c) Supplying the process with targeted¹ participation by structures that can provide sound contributions.

The criteria that could be adopted in selecting on each occasion (COP sessions and meetings of the subsidiary bodies) could be as follows:

1. Geographical balance: with a special attention to Annex I, for which the Convention itself has a special focus and mandate; all regions should be represented in ratio of a quota that keeps into account the amount of organizations from each region that have been accredited; same criteria would be applied within the regions.
2. Turnover regime: all accredited organizations are able to participate into the international conferences. In order to facilitate the participation of accredited organisations that will be able to add value to the negotiations and other business of the Convention, care should be taken to achieve a fair balance in terms of the prior involvement and proactivity of accredited organizations in partnering with other CSOs, the Parties, and international agencies, as well as their propositive dialogue with the secretariat not only on the occasion of the conferences; a ratio of "old" (i.e. having already taken part into past UNCCD conferences) and "new" (participating for the first time) organizations to convene (regardless of their funding needs) could be 80/20, in order to ensure complementarity of input;
3. Consideration of representative networks: this applies to countries/regions/subregions that have put into place networks that elect their representatives on rotational basis, and ensure wide participation and circulation of information.
4. Experience/expertise balance: special focus should be placed onto organizations with scientific and/or technical specialization, in fields such as participatory research, policy analysis or implementing participatory SLM field activities;
5. Gender balance: this concern is easier to convey to the organizations selected upon the above-mentioned criteria, fostering gender participation in order to ensure fair representation (in ratio of at least 50/50).
6. Support for delegates from developing countries: support will only be provided for CSO delegates from developing countries.

The following repartition helps classifying geographically the origin of the CSOs accredited to the Conference of the Parties as of 26 November 2007:

Annex	Region	Country parties (%)	CSOs	
			Accredited (%)	Proposed for funding (%) ¹
Annex I	Africa	27.6	50	49.6
Annex II	Asia	25.5	15	25.8
Annex III	Latin America and the Caribbean	16.6	14	19.5
Annex IV	Northern Mediterranean	0.7	8	0
Annex V	Central and Eastern Europe	6.2	2	5.2
Other affected country Parties		23.4	11	0
Developed country Parties				
TOT		100.00	100	100

Furthermore, it has been suggested, both by National Parties (CRIC 7, Dec. 130), and CSOs themselves that detailed Terms of Reference for sponsored CSOs should be drawn up, with the aim of maximising the use of the funds towards effective and worthwhile CSO participation and contributions. Such TORs would hold CSOs accountable for their efforts prior to, during and after the UNCCD event, and would instil CSOs with set commitments, such as participation in national and regional networks prior to the event, participation in daily CSO events, and reporting back to national and regional stakeholders on outcomes and results of their participation. Furthermore, it would be expected that participating CSOs are knowledgeable of the relevant UNCCD documents prior to the event, and are capable of communicating in at least one of the conventions official languages.

6. Recommendations.-

1. During COP-9, the role and responsibilities of CSOs within the UNCCD should be clearly defined, and CSOs should be recognised as partners in the process, in line with Article 3 of the Convention's founding document, granting them a recognised voice within UNCCD events (COP, CRIC, CST and others).
2. CSOs have an important role to play as watchdogs, overseeing the implementation at a local, national and regional level and holding national parties accountable for decisions and commitments made during UNCCD events. In this regard, CSOs should be formally incorporated into the UNCCD review processes, with respect to the elaboration of National Reports and the biannual Conference for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.
3. The Draft Eligibility Criteria for funding for CSO Participation in UNCCD Events, drawn up and approved by CSOs during CRIC 7, should be adopted prior to COP-9, ensuring a fair representation on CSOs in all UNCCD events, and guaranteeing a sound combination between experienced and fledgling CSOs, so as to maximise CSO's efforts and contributions during such events.

4. In line with the Draft Eligibility Criteria, we call upon the Secretariat to set up the Civil Society Reference Group, compiled of selected CSO and Secretariat representatives. This group must oversee the allocation of funds for CSO participation in UNCCD events, as proposed in the Draft Eligibility Criteria.
5. Furthermore, the Civil Society Reference Group, once established, should draw up detailed Terms of Reference for funded CSOs, outlining their commitments prior to, during, and after the UNCCD event.

In order to reach these aims, we suggest to the different actors:

To all countries that are Party to the UNCCD:

Take clearly defined and understood decisions to assure the frame and the conditions for effective, efficient and independent participation of civil society in the UNCCD, at all levels and ensure the adhoc confidence especially through recognition of their contribution.

To the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism:

- Put in place an open and transparent process of civil society involvement, including at the level of negotiations;
- Assure the access to relevant information at all required levels, with a special effort towards the actors that are far from the decision-making centres;
- Respond to the needs for strengthening the capacities of civil society on the content and the procedures of the UNCCD in view of genuine participation.

To the donors, the Parties from developed countries and the GEF:

- Provide accessible information in time and at different levels, especially at the decentralized level;
- According to the terms of the Convention, take a clear position to promote the involvement of civil society as a full actors at all levels and provide the process with adequate means in operational terms;
- Put in place earmarked ad accessible funds for civil society (process and activities);
- Support and strengthen strategic north – south and south – south partnerships;
- Clearly take into account the time and costs of participation.

To the Parties from affected countries and the local decentralised authorities:

- Provide accessible information in time and at different levels, especially at the decentralized level;
- Put in place a clear national platform for discussion, which is understood and accessible;
- Accept to share the power in decision-making and built the trust;
- Develop – and base the work on - quantitative and qualitative indicators for participation in a way that guarantees the conditions for a constructive dialogue with civil society;
- Provide support to national groups and networks of civil society dedicated to combating land degradation / sustainable development of drylands;
- Clearly take into account the time and costs of participation.

To civil society organisations:

- Provide accessible information in time and at different levels, especially at the decentralized level;
- Take a pro-active attitude and contribute at all levels;
- Strengthen its capacities regarding the content and the procedures of the UNCCD;
- Form strategic partnerships with actors in the North and the South including networks;
- Capitalise and share the experiences and the information.

As can be seen from these suggestions, participation is not something that can be done by one actor alone, it needs all actors to take their best effort together.

ANNEX 1

CSO RELATED DECISIONS IN COP 8 AND CRIC 7

COP 8 (Madrid, Spain)

GENERAL DECISIONS:

Decision 1 - Strengthening the implementation of the Convention in all regions:

3. *Urges* affected country Parties to facilitate the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention, including, inter alia, environmental and socio-economic non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and local development associations, in accordance with national policy;

8. *Encourages* affected country Parties and donors to ensure civil society participation in UNCCD processes and to take this issue into account when setting priorities in national development strategies;

Decision 3 - The 10-year strategic plan:

36. *Requests* Parties to promote awareness of, and include, local populations, particularly women and youth and civil society organizations, in the implementation of The Strategy, consistent with operational objective 1;

37. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to take into account input from civil society organizations when formulating the selection criteria for financial support for their participation at UNCCD meetings and processes, consistent with the established rules of procedure of the COP;

Decision 11 - Roster of independent experts:

1. *Encourages* Parties, through their national focal points and, where applicable, in coordination with the science and technology correspondents, to revise and update the details of the national experts already on the database of the roster of independent experts, and to propose new candidates in order to achieve better gender balance and representation of all relevant disciplines, of social scientists, of NGOs, and of all individuals with expertise in the field of desertification;

Decision 13 - Reshaping the operation of the Committee on Science and Technology:

Recognizing that in order to achieve this goal the CST would benefit from the involvement of institutions, consortia (including non-governmental organizations (NGOs)) and individuals with the greatest expertise in these areas,

1. *Decides* that each future ordinary session of the CST shall:

...

(d) Include presentations by other institutions, other environmental conventions, NGOs and individuals with experience of the thematic topic concerned, as decided upon by the **Bureau of the CST** in consultation with the lead institution/consortium, ensuring that there is a global call thereby giving every opportunity for contributions from all regions;

2. *Requests* the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in consultation with the **CST Bureau**, to consider mechanisms to secure additional funds to support attendance from the developing countries and eligible countries in all implementation annexes, ensuring support for the participation of experts, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders;

Decision 14 - Networking of institutions, agencies and bodies:

2. *Further requests* the **CST Bureau**, in collaboration with the lead institution or consortium selected to co-organize the next CST scientific meeting, to include the non-governmental organizations and other civil society stakeholders in the network, in line with the participatory approach recommended for combating desertification.

Decision 26 - Declaration of non-governmental organizations attending the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties:

1. *Takes note* of the Declaration with appreciation;

2. *Decides* to include the Declaration as an annex to the report of the Conference of the Parties on its eighth session.

Decision 27 - Programme of work for the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties:

Decides to include interactive dialogue sessions with the relevant stakeholders, including ministers, non-governmental organizations and members of parliament, on agenda items of relevance to them;

CST

Decision 1 - Strengthening the implementation of the Convention in all regions:

10. *Also invites* the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to assist in creating an international policy environment for the provision and transfer of adequate technology, particularly remote sensing technology, to affected country Parties for the establishment of effective monitoring and assessment systems;

11. *Urges* the CST to accelerate its efforts to establish links with scientific communities in order to make full use of relevant initiatives in areas relating to sustainable land and water management;

CRIC 7 (Istanbul, Turkey)

GENERAL DECISIONS:

45. With regard to future efforts of the GM to mobilize resources, Parties particularly emphasize the opportunities provided by the private sector, foundations and CSOs.

90. Some Parties believe it would be useful to name the relevant stakeholders that should be integrated into the reporting process and to specify which stakeholders should be involved in the consultative processes relating to the reporting, including decentralized administrative bodies and CSOs.

129. There is a need for stronger involvement of civil society in the proceedings of the CRIC and a need for CSOs to be involved in the review of the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy, through a specific segment at the intersessional sessions of the CRIC. However, while agreeing on this, some delegations draw attention to the intergovernmental nature of the UNCCD process. It is proposed that a broader concept of CSOs be adopted to include, for instance, local authorities. Some Parties propose going further by giving civil society the opportunity to get involved in the debates held under other segments, particularly those on exchanges of information on best practices.

130. Some Parties underline the need for clear terms of reference for the involvement of CSOs in the proceedings of the CRIC. This should include consideration of the timing of the CSO segment during the CRIC sessions.