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Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

**Sustainable development: implementation of the
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought
and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa**

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/65/L.21

**Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance
with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly**

I. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 9 and 10 of draft resolution A/C.2/65/L.21, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide to convene a one-day high-level meeting on the theme, “Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”, to be held on Monday, 19 September 2011, prior to the general debate of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly;

(b) Convinced that the high-level meeting would constitute a significant event that would raise the awareness of desertification, land degradation and drought at the highest level, reaffirm the fulfilment of all commitments to the Convention and its ten-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018), ensuring a higher priority for desertification, land degradation and drought on the international agenda, in particular at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio plus 20):



- (i) Decide that the meeting would be structured around an opening plenary meeting followed by one interactive panel in the morning, on the same theme as the high-level meeting, followed by an interactive panel in the afternoon and a closing plenary;
- (ii) Decide that the panels would be co-chaired by Heads of State or Government, with due regard to geographical balance, in consultation with regional groups;
- (iii) Decide that the meeting would be held at the highest possible political level, with the participation of Heads of State or Government, ministers, special representatives and other representatives, as appropriate;
- (iv) Decide that the preparations for the meeting would be undertaken under the aegis of the President of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly;
- (v) Request the Secretary-General to prepare a background paper for the high-level meeting, in consultation with Member States, to be available no later than June 2011;
- (vi) Decide that the meeting would be chaired by the President of the General Assembly, who would present to the closing plenary a summary of the discussions prepared by the co-chairs to be transmitted, under his authority, to the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to be held in the Republic of Korea, in 2011.

II. Relationship of the draft resolution to the strategic framework for the period 2010-2011 and to the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

2. The activities referred to above relate to programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and subprogramme 4, Support services, of programme 24, Management and support services, of the strategic framework for the period 2010-2011 (A/63/6/Rev.1). They also fall under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/64/6 (Sect. 2) and A/64/6 (Sect. 28D)).

III. Activities through which the requests would be implemented

3. The one-day high-level meeting to be held on Monday, 19 September 2011, as proposed in operative paragraph 9, is not included in the programme of the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations in 2011, and thus constitutes an addition to the calendar.

4. To service the high-level meeting, interpretation from and into the six official languages of the United Nations and related meeting support services would be required on 19 September 2011 for the first three-hour session, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., comprising an opening plenary and an interactive panel, then a second three-hour session, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., comprising an interactive panel and a closing

plenary, while the allocation of verbatim records would apply only to the plenary portion of the meeting. In addition, documentation services would be required for the translation into the six official languages of six documents, including two pre-session, two in-session and two post-session documents, with each comprising 17,000 words.

5. Although the date of 19 September 2011 is indicated in the draft resolution, the attention of the Second Committee is drawn to a pending decision of the General Assembly on the scheduling of other high-level meetings and the general debate of the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly during or around the same period.

IV. Estimates of additional requirements

6. It is estimated that additional requirements of \$413,800 would arise from the activities described in paragraph 4 above, namely: (a) \$407,300 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, including \$22,500 for interpretation services, \$70,700 for verbatim records and \$314,100 for the translation of six documents; and (b) \$6,500 under section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, for sound engineering and other meeting support services.

V. Potential for absorption and contingency fund

7. It is the understanding of the Secretariat that the high-level meeting would be scheduled such that on the day of its convening there would be no parallel meetings of the General Assembly itself, no other high-level meetings and no meetings of any working groups of the Assembly. Consequently, interpretation services, verbatim record services and other meeting support services could be provided from within the provision available in the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011. As a result, it is proposed that additional requirements amounting to \$99,700 could be absorbed, namely: (a) \$93,200 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, including \$22,500 for interpretation services and \$70,700 for verbatim records; and (b) \$6,500 under section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, for sound engineering and other meeting support services. Accordingly, the net additional requirements for servicing the high-level meeting would amount to \$314,100 for the translation of six documents.

8. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures were proposed that exceeded the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

VI. Action required by the General Assembly

9. **Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/65/L.21, net additional resource requirements of \$314,100 relating to the translation of six documents under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require an additional appropriation for the biennium 2010-2011.**
