

**UNCCD 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties**  
**12<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015**  
**Ankara, Turkey**

**Call for Applications (3 to 19 August 2015)**

**Overview**

The UNCCD secretariat will sponsor 15 journalists from around the world to report on its 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP12) from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October in Ankara, Turkey. This is an open call for journalists who wish to cover the event and be considered for sponsorship. Sponsored journalists will be required to participate in a 2-day media training (10-11 October), and to publish reports on the event and to report on targeted events.

The objective of the media training is to equip journalists with essential background and thematic knowledge about the Conference to enable them to produce high-impact products from COP12.

The UNCCD secretariat invites applications for sponsorship to attend the conference. We invite each applicant to specify which themes and issues they are interested in publishing. In this way, we hope to create the most relevant stories, and to gain media enthusiasm for reporting on COP12. Applications are open to environmental journalists with specialties in print, radio, television, social media and cartoonism. We are also seeking journalists specializing in sustainable development issues (economic, social and environmental). To ensure maximum promotion of the event, particularly high regard will be given to journalists with a large readership. The UNCCD is seeking representation by international journalists, and five journalists from Turkey.

**Objectives**

- Draw public attention to the issues considered and decisions made at COP12, and how the conference is linked to wider global issues
- Raise global awareness about the goal of Land Degradation Neutrality
- Increase media coverage on drought, land degradation and desertification (DLDD) issues
- Ensure that high-impact stories about the event are published in a variety of media formats
- Promote the continued coverage of UNCCD activities and DLDD issues after the conference
- Increase the number of local journalists covering DLDD issues

**Rationale**

Desertification isn't about deserts. It's about the land degradation that is occurring under our feet, in every country. Every year, 12 million hectares of fertile land are lost in the world's dry areas, and 2 billion hectares of once-productive land is already degraded. Land degradation is seriously endangering our future ability to feed ourselves. Scientists expect a

2% drop in crop yields per decade for the rest of the century, which could push food prices up by 50% by 2030. Forced migration, already a hot issue on the international agenda, could spiral as communities struggle to feed their families. Over 135 million migrants are expected to move by 2050 because of desertification. As communities become more desperate, and opportunities close up, intra-regional conflicts will flare and radical groups will continue to gain popularity.

It's not all bad news, however. At COP12, parties will be looking to the implication of the SDGs adopted by the General Assembly. Goal 15 focuses on land degradation, and crucially includes a global target on land degradation neutrality. Land degradation neutrality is about working together to stop the drivers of land degradation and increase rehabilitation of degraded lands. When we achieve a land degradation neutral world, the fertile land available will remain stable going forward. Goal 15 is arguably one of the most important SDGs – if humans cannot eat or drink, any other development is out of the question. At the UNFCCC COP21, soil carbon sequestration will be a major part of climate talks.

Sustainable land management projects are starting to spread around the world, with startling results. From Brazil to Ethiopia to China, land restoration and management is doubling crop production, improving livelihoods and removing the incentives to migrate or start conflicts.

Mass media plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion. It is indispensable in reaching out to decision-makers and the public, to influence policy and promote sustainable practices. COP12 is an opportunity for journalists to interact with world experts on these issues, and to report on the conference's outcomes.

### **Eligibility**

Submissions are open to all journalists who report on sustainable development issues. Prospective candidates should submit, in English:

- Two by-lined articles (print, online, radio, TV reports or cartoons), at least one of which is related to land degradation, drought, desertification or climate change. Articles written in a language other than English should be accompanied by a short summary in English.
- A letter from the journalist's supervising editor, committing to publish the journalist's articles.
- A one-page motivation letter from the applicant:
  - Setting out the journalist's interest in taking part in COP12
  - Outlining previous reporting on the topics listed above
  - Stating the number of articles s/he will publish before, during and after COP12, as well as a provisional time for publication.
  - Previous COP events that s/he has covered

### **COP12 Overview and Programme**

Training will run for 2 days, consisting of two segments. It will consist of one full day of presentations on the SDGs, COP12 agenda and the relationship to the UNFCCC's COP21. The

second day will be a field trip to the outskirts of Turkey. The training will be facilitated by a well-known journalist, in English.

The event will highlight the link between the COP12 issues of land degradation/ drought and 'hot' global issues, such as climate change, migration, internal displacement, conflict and food and water insecurity. We will also explore the costs of action versus inaction. On request, the UNCCD will facilitate access to individual experts on major agenda issues like human rights, land degradation neutrality, the sustainable development goals and climate change. Daily media briefings will be held in the morning to inform journalists about progress in the negotiations and introduce them to targeted events that they could cover in the course of the day.

Two weeks after COP12, journalists will be asked to submit their articles and reports, which will also be featured on the UNCCD website.

### **Sponsorship**

Full sponsorship costs, include a return travel ticket and a daily subsistence allowance. Self-financed participants will be eligible to participate, but must also submit their applications and meet the stipulated conditions.

Participants will be issued with invitation letters, as required, for visa and travel purposes. Participants are responsible for making the necessary travel arrangements, including visas, health certificates and travel insurance.

The organizers will confirm journalist sponsorship no later than 15 September 2015.

### **Time and Venue**

COP12 will take place from 12<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October in Ankara, Turkey. The working language of the workshop is English.

### **Deadline for Applications**

Complete applications should be sent to [press@unccd.int](mailto:press@unccd.int) with the subject line: **Application for Journalist Sponsorship at COP12**. The application period will close on 19 August 2015. Shortlisted candidates will be notified by 4 September 2015. Shortlisted candidates must indicate their commitment to attend COP12 by 11 September. The final list of participants will be issued no later than 30 September 2015.