

## UNCCD CRIC 23

### Annex IV Opening Statement

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mrs. Executive Secretary,

Madam Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As Annex IV acting chair, it is an honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Northern Mediterranean Region. We extend our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Mrs Yasmine Fouad on her appointment as Executive Secretary. We are ready to be on her side on reinforcing the UNCCD implementation.

The Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean and its thirteen affected country Parties would like to extend their sincere appreciation to the government of the Republic of Panama and the UNCCD Secretariat for organizing the 23rd session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

As we convene to deliberate upon a wide array of crucial agenda items, it is vital to underscore the significance of our collective efforts in addressing desertification, land degradation and drought. The agenda before us today encompasses critical aspects of the UNCCD's mission. All of the agenda items bear substantial implications for the well-being of the environment and the people, for present and future generations.

Despite our ongoing efforts, desertification, land degradation, deforestation and biodiversity loss continue to be global environmental problems of great importance, and are exacerbated by climate change.

Moreover, the thematic topics on the agenda call for innovative, integrated and inclusive approaches that consider all the diverse needs of our regions.

The implementation of voluntary land degradation neutrality targets represents an essential cornerstone of our collective commitment to cope with these issues. We welcome the report on the implementation of the LDN Target Setting Programme

2.0, and we are looking forward to discuss ways to scale up and maximize synergies and complementarities.

Regarding the reporting process, we appreciate the ongoing efforts made to improve the PRAIS Platform and make the best use of the UNCCD Data Dashboard. Annex IV believes that there is a need to continue enhancing comparability between reported data and improving the data analytics tools and the reporting platform, as well as their links to Trends.Earth. We highlight the relevance of further strengthening technical support and capacity building for the reporting process activities also for our Annex IV Parties.

We consider the growing relevance of the SDS phenomena for our region and we welcome the activities carried out by the UNCCD secretariat and the GM and we highlight the need for including the drivers, impacts and measures in the UNCCD implementation.

Annex IV underlines that capacity building must remain an ongoing effort, and recall for exploring long-term building blocks and key priorities. We welcome having regional hubs on capacity building, and wish to explore synergies with existing mechanisms and initiatives for technical and scientific cooperation, such as under the CBD.

We celebrate the establishment of the SPI as permanent body and the nomination of the new SPI members, and we support the coordination activities and cooperation of the SPI with other intergovernmental science and policy bodies. Like all affected regions, Annex IV needs a strong scientific guidance, which should be delivered in accessible formats to support its effective translation into national policies.

We strongly welcome the work carried out by the Secretariat to include gender-specific indicators in the future reporting process, and we welcome that the Gender Caucus sessions are now part of the official agendas of upcoming sessions of the COP and the CRIC, boosting the inclusion of civil society organizations and gender mainstreaming in the UNCCD and in land degradation and drought policies and plans.

We also welcome the work carried out so far by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework and we are looking forward to its continuation.

In conclusion, the challenges we face are vast, but our commitment to addressing them is unwavering. The Northern Mediterranean Region stands ready to

collaborate, share knowledge, and contribute to constructive discussions that will guide us towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Northern Mediterranean Region, I would like to emphasize our continued support to the UNCCD. We urge Parties to step up efforts to properly address desertification, land degradation and drought and achieve a land degradation neutral world.

Therefore, we look forward to engaging in fruitful dialogues throughout these sessions. Together, we can make a meaningful impact.

Thank you for your attention, and I wish us all a successful and productive CRIC 23.

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