

FAO Statement

Opening session of the CRIC 23.

Chair,

Many thanks for giving the floor to FAO:

1. As this is the first time FAO takes the floor, we would like to thank Panama Government for hosting the CRIC 23 and renew our appreciation to UNCCD Institutions and Parties for the strong and long-standing collaboration.
2. In October, the leadership of UNCCD and FAO, renewed the MoU between our two institutions, focusing on 3 major areas:
 - **One:** Avoiding, reducing and reversing land and soil degradation in agricultural land
 - **Two:** Resilience to drought
 - **Three:** Global/regional initiatives and intergovernmental processes, knowledge sharing and learning, communications and awareness raising, and other initiatives as appropriate.
3. Our collaboration will be delivered through policy dialogue, technical assistance, capacity development, and enhancing data and information systems.
4. FAO as a UN technical agency for food and agriculture is committed to transform agrifood systems to become more efficient, inclusive, sustainable and resilient through providing support to its Members to **generate science-based evidence on sustainable land use systems** and their potential to address desertification/land degradation and

drought while **addressing tenure security, food security, biodiversity and climate goals.**

5. This year, **was a LAND year for FAO with three flagship reports that form a unifying body of data and information, knowledge and solutions:**
 - a. **SOLAW 2025** (The state of the world's land and water resources for food and agriculture – how to produce more and better), launched this morning at the FAO Council in Rome.
 - b. **SOFA 2025** (The State of Food and Agriculture) focused on challenges of land degradation across **different landholding scales**; launched in November; and
 - c. **The State of Land Tenure and Governance**, which examines the governance frameworks and tenure systems that determine land use and management, to be launched in February 2026

Chair, distinguished delegates,

6. The growing degradation of agricultural lands, including cropland and pastureland, is placing the world's agrifood systems under unprecedented pressure.
7. Restoring these lands is therefore essential to sustainably produce more and better agricultural products and to meet rising global demand.
8. We stand ready to support Parties in accelerating the restoration of agricultural lands and soils as part of a broader shift toward sustainable land use and resilient agrifood systems.

Thank you!