



Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought 9th IWG Coordination Committee Meeting

Meeting (Virtual) Report

23 April 2021

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INTRODUCTION

The chair of the IWG, Dr. Gunilla Björkhund welcomed all participants to the virtual meeting and opened the session by briefing members on the achievements made to date and the objectives of the meeting. She then introduced the agenda of the day highlighting the issues including timelines, updates from Task Groups, reflections on CRIC, and regional meetings. She asked Dr. Gaius Eudoxie (Vice-Chair) to facilitate the presentations on the regional meetings. Before that, she asked Mr. Rajeb Boulharouf, from the Secretariat, for a brief intervention.

Mr. Rajeb Boulharouf, Chief of Staff at the Secretariat, commented that, process-wise the IWG has been able to finalize one of the benchmarks, that the COP had identified which is the first interaction with the CRIC, one of the governing bodies of UNCCD. The question is to what extent that feedback will allow IWG to fundamentally build upon and mark new impetus in the report dynamic or narrative, how to proceed from now on integrating the inputs that IWG has been developing. One interaction with the CRIC, particularly in a virtual form cannot be the panacea to the IWG. Subsequent delineation of statements on some issues at the CRIC was helpful. CRIC was useful on the basis of its overall agenda item with respect to the IWG process, but it does not fundamentally change the main elements of the equation for the IWG report concerning the focus and deadlines that are set internally for the formulation of the final report that goes to COP.

KEY MESSAGES

- *Even though the CRIC meeting was virtual held under special conditions and that it was not a negotiating meeting, but with a subsequent delineation of statements on the IWG issues, it was helpful.*
- *Regional consultations meetings held prior to the CRIC (The following issues were raised by the Parties):*

Annex I (Africa): Countries indicated that the issues of drought and flooding are serious phenomena in the African region and that concrete actions must be taken by the convention. In addition, the countries called upon the IWG to present strong arguments and cases on drought impacts. The countries indicated that the effect of climate change is getting intense, and it is affecting agricultural activities in the African Region. Measures proposed under



the IWG report must be addressed at a national, sub-regional and international levels, respectively.

Annex II (Asia): Countries requested the IWG to put a special focus on drought management at the early stages of preparing for drought. The need for a global commitment to combatting drought was also highlighted. Parties stressed the need for capacity development, knowledge management and sharing of best practices.

Annex III (Latin America and the Caribbean): Parties recognized the progress presented in the interim report of the IWG and its analysis for the reform of policy and institutional frameworks, as well as the analysis of financing instruments and approaches to vulnerability and drought risk analysis, especially the implementation of early warning systems.

Annex IV (Northern Mediterranean): Parties noted that the ecosystems and land use could have a large impact on drought preparedness and thus, among others, they called upon the IWG. to enhance the integration of the biodiversity and ecosystems aspect of drought and its impacts.

Annex V (Central and Eastern Europe): Highlighted the need to understand the specific drought-related problems that exist locally and globally, the mechanisms which already exist to address these problems and thus identifying the specific gaps which are not covered by the existing mechanisms. Parties noted that the issues of land degradation are not sufficiently reflected in the interim report, encouraged adding in the annex of the final IWG report a list of: all running or continuing projects, success stories, case studies, and their long and short-term measures categorized by region.

- *The need for further guidance regarding existing IWG partnerships, the need for establishing and enhancing new partnerships and partnership modalities was emphasized.*
- *Parties urged for the IWG report to be a balanced document, providing pragmatic, comprehensive & concrete options, elaborating the challenges and opportunities of each of the options for Parties to consider at COP15.*



- *The new GEF approved project on “Enabling Activities for implementing UNCCD COP 14 Drought decisions” was presented and well received. Supporting the IWG process is one of the components of the overall project. FAO and UNCCD/Global Mechanism are the executing agencies for the project.*
- *The need to define clear timelines, proposed activities, the major milestones and phases of the IWG was highlighted.*

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS- REFLECTIONS ON THE INTERIM REPORT

Gaius Eudoxie (Vice-Chair) chaired this session.

The key messages from the presentations on the regions meeting are included above Annex I (Africa)

Stephen Muwaya stressed that climate changes are intensifying, we need to see how to raise the profile of drought issues, and how to address them. Addressing drought under the convention, means delivering on many socio-economic challenges that emanate from desertification and drought. If we address drought, we reduce the incidence of food emergencies, improve productivity, and reduce household poverty. Drought has a huge impact on the economy and livelihoods especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where countries are dependent on agriculture. Strong political action is needed, high level of commitment of governments and stakeholders, to strengthen and increase investment to address drought, focus more on mitigating the drought, instead of responding to the effects. A lot is spent on food emergencies, in sub-Saharan Africa, if only a fraction of these resources would be committed more to addressing the drought, to improve the capacity of the vulnerable communities for more resilience and to assist to address the challenges before they occur. It is important to build stronger partnerships, a political commitment that allows partners to work together in harmony. In terms of vulnerability, a common arrangement, and systematic approach is needed. A strong system that brings together agencies, governments, and institutions related to drought is essential. There is potential for UNCCD to provide that leadership,



given the mandate that it has. A strong instrument enables countries to address these concerns, leadership and to achieve partnership.

Annex II (Asia)

Abdu AlSharif shared his reflections about the CRIC report, debated annexes, comments, suggested adding them to the IWG report. He underlined the need for capacity development, knowledge management and sharing of best practices as capacity gaps exist in drought management also suggested a greater focus on drought response and recovery. The need for a global commitment to combatting drought was also highlighted, the importance of reaching a consensus on drought. He pointed out the need for drought management to be more integrated and enhanced in the marginalized communities affected by droughts and greater focus should be given on drought response and recovery.

Annex III: Latin America and the Caribbean

Gaius Eudoxie, on behalf of the region, informed the IWG that the work of the group is welcomed by the LAC region. He highlighted the level of the strategic objective of drought for the implementation of the Convention, its linkage to land degradation as an underlying cause and priority for dryland. Special emphasis should be placed on preventive measures, monitoring and management. He highlighted how much the region pays attention to the drought problem, but also that there is a need for a high-level discussion on preventative actions, reducing and mitigating the impacts of droughts. Progress has been made on a baseline for monitoring and early warning systems, resources and incentives, policies and governance. The focus should be on drought prevention, especially the further development of monitoring and early warning systems.

Annex IV (Northern Mediterranean)



Gunilla Björkhund, representing IWG in the Mediterranean region meeting, highlighted that the region has a lot of drought problems. The importance to methodologies and structures to combat the effect of droughts was highlighted. Israel emphasized the importance of ecosystems and biodiversity and land issues. Socioeconomic and ecosystem aspects should also be observed together - in accordance with sustainable development goals. Different linkages are recognized.

Annex V (Central and Eastern Europe)

Yuriy Kolmaz expressed concern about the complexity of the interim report. He highlighted the need to understand the specific drought-related problems that exist locally and globally, the mechanisms which already exist to address these problems and thus identifying the specific gaps which are not covered by the existing mechanisms. Concerning legal frameworks and arrangements on drought, the use of existing instead of creating new legally binding mechanisms is supported to complement existing legal and financial frameworks, sectoral and institutional cooperation to serve proactive drought management process. He highlighted the lack of efficient collection of drought impact data in the different sectors and called for the IWG to provide valuable input in preparing a collection of possible drought impacts. He supported the idea of adding in the annex in the final IWG report with a list of all running or continuing projects, success stories, case studies, and their long and short-term measures listed by region. More tailored regional guidance for an effective drought action plan and its implementation would be very much appreciated.

German Kust underlined the need for guidance on how to prepare better action plans and a better relationship between drought management and land degradation. Issues of land degradation are not sufficiently reflected in the interim report. Knowledge gaps should be synthesized, especially regarding the integration of the tools and concepts available inside the Drought Initiative into national drought management and to enhance global and regional initiatives, programs, fora, and knowledge hubs including top-down and bottom-up learning processes.

CRIC REFLECTIONS & PROPOSED NEXT STEPS - Daniel Tsegai (Secretariat)

Terms of References recap.



Stocktaking of/review existing policy, implementation & institutional coordination frameworks, including partnerships, on drought preparedness & response. Preliminary work has been carried out. But more can be done – the impetus to start the work.

Considering options for appropriate policy, advocacy & implementation measures at all levels for addressing drought effectively under the Convention. This is the expected result of the IWG process.

Carrying out the task in the context of a wider **holistic & integrated approach** to disaster risk reduction & enhancing the resilience of communities & ecosystems. The need for establishing partnerships.

Revisiting the IWG structure: What can/could be revised?

Coordinating/Steering Committee: Composed of Task Group leaders + Chair/V. Chair [Diagram above].

Writing Team: Two IWG Members led the drafting of the interim report [Caroline King & Ted Horbulyk; Completed!]

Synthesis Team: Three IWG Members will lead the drafting of the final report [Caroline King, Michael Bruentrup & German Kust]

Targeted Partnerships:

Regional Economic Commissions, in response to a COP decision & to also ensure regional considerations into the IWG process. UNECE responded and contributed a paper on transboundary waters.

UNFCCC, maximize positive synergies at the land-climate interface & to profit from the ongoing global stock take under the Paris Agreement. Two meetings have been held. They shared some reports on the expert dialogue periodic reviews.

UNEP, learn lessons on institutional, legal & governance matters & the UNEP Finance Initiative experience on financial mechanisms, (incl. insurance companies that could help manage drought



risks) Paper on legal matters was shared with us. It was well received by IWG. No further development on the financing component.

UNDRR, to allow mutual learning between both processes. UNDRR Special Issue on Drought presented @ IWG meeting, launch/Panel of IWG/UNDRR proposed @ World Day (17th June).

CBD, maximize +ve synergies at the ecosystems, biodiversity and land interface; clear demand from Parties for vigorous coordination & integration b/n the three Rio Conventions. Initial contacts are made.

Others, further guidance on the needs and modalities of partnership is required. Should we start inviting outside experts and partners to the IWG meetings?

Highlights of the Interim Report

G-1: Monitoring & Early Warning Systems

Towards periodic global early warning & monitoring of drought risks, exposure & impacts (not only hazards!)

Regional/sub-regional programs for knowledge exchange, capacity strengthening, harnessing modern technology (AI, remote sensing) & role of traditional knowledge.

G-2: Vulnerability Assessment

Strengthen nations' assessment processes to be more sensitive to both decision-makers' & vulnerable communities' needs (& inclusive of them).

Translate drought impacts/vulnerability into economic terms for decision-makers by sensitizing national/ regional economic accounting to drought risk.

G-3: Financing

Providing incentives for communities & private sector actors to invest on drought risk mitigation and response measures.

Identifying innovative financing instruments, such as insurance products, bonds, microfinance, drought funds.



Enhance catalytic global financing mechanisms to redress the immediate human causes of drought exposure and vulnerability.

G-4: Policy and Governance

Strengthen connections across different scales of governance and within levels, including the integration of planning and financing systems.

Considerations of the scope for heightened global commitment & the steps needed to build consensus.

Reinforcing regional & global level capacity building, networks, collaborative centers.

The interim report was informed by substantive documents incl. the scoping paper; Stocktaking synthesis; Case studies on Early Warning & Monitoring and Vulnerability Assessment; GIZ paper, UNEP & UNECE report.

Main CRIC Reflections for the IWG interim report

- IWG was urged to consider proposing the creation of an inter-agency coordination mechanism on drought under the Environment Management Group (EMG) to be discussed by Parties at COP 15.
- IWG report to be balanced document, providing pragmatic, comprehensive & concrete options, elaborating the challenges and opportunities of each of the options for Parties to consider at COP15.
- The IWG should focus on strengthening existing legal & financial mechanisms rather than developing new ones. IWG should deliver actionable near-term items to advance impactful efforts on the ground.
- The IWG should explore options to develop a binding agreement [protocol] on the drought that reflects the different contexts of the countries. The agreement should be accompanied by necessary financial resources for its implementation.
- The importance of assessing the benefits of action against the cost of inaction on drought was stressed.



- The relevance of addressing land degradation as a means of reducing the impact of drought and calling for synergies to be fostered with the other Rio conventions.
- Recommendation for “drought preparedness” to follow the example of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting Programme (TSP) and the LDN Fund.
- To tailor guidance and IWG report according to specific regions for effective drought action plans and their implementation.

Ongoing activities of the Task Groups

G-1: Connected effort to SPI; IDMP case study report; Advanced work on monitoring exposure & impact (Issa Garba); WMO (single to composite indicator).

G-2: Report in progress. Topic: “Challenges & opportunities for reducing vulnerability”.

G-3: Report submitted (supported by GM Consultant): Topic: “Innovative financing instruments for drought”

G-4: Report in progress: Topic: “Policy and governance instruments for drought”

Opportunities

GEF has approved a new project on “Enabling Activities for implementing UNCCD COP 14 Drought decisions”.

Supporting the IWG process is one of the components of the overall project.

FAO and UNCCD/Global Mechanism are the executing agencies of the project.

Project duration: Three Years [Jan 2021- December 2023]

GEF Project: Overview of the IWG Component

Project Component	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs
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<p>Supporting IWG on “Effective Policy and Implementation Measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD”</p>	<p>Country parties are enabled to fulfill their participation in the IWG process and beyond.</p> <p><u>Targets:</u></p> <p>Policy stock-taking document developed for IWG & periodical reports shared with the COP Bureau.</p> <p>Case studies on drought policies, land management and climate change synergies with drought, financing for drought risk mitigation</p> <p>One workshop for all IWG members on drought policy and implementation measures</p>	<p>Stock-taking of the existing policies, implementation & institutional frameworks, and partnerships, on drought preparedness & response of the Parties.</p> <p>IWG identified gender-responsive options for appropriate policy, advocacy & implementation measures at all levels for addressing drought effectively under the Convention.</p> <p>Strengthened strategic drought preparedness and response partnerships to guide action on drought for the UNCCD Parties & stakeholders.</p>
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Timeline - Proposed activities

2021	
May/June	Task Group Seminars, Reports . Tentative dates: End of June ¹
July	Outline of the final report (led by synthesis team), IWG Steering Committee Mtg. Tentative date: July 22 nd
July-Sep	Drafting of the IWG report (led by synthesis team) based on group reports & substantive documents.

¹ Modified after the meeting.



<p>Forthcoming IWG-related/Secretariat studies:</p> <p>IDMP Rapid review of drought risk mitigation measures</p> <p>UNDRR special report on Drought (June)</p> <p>SPI technical report on Monitoring Drought Resilience</p> <p>Good Practice Guidance for Strategic Objective 3 on Drought</p>		<p>Potential documents/studies (subject to discussion):</p> <p>Land - drought nexus approaches (under SPI)</p> <p>Economics of drought preparedness – Benefits of Action and Cost of inaction</p> <p>Further stocktaking of drought policies, case studies, success stories & evidences</p> <p>Increasing coordination at the political level</p> <p>Survey (structured questionnaire) with IWG, experts, consultations with CCD regional groups?</p>
Oct/Nov	Several IWG Meetings on the draft of the report; Reporting to COP Bureau	
December	Final Report among COP documents	
2022	COP15	

Daniel Tsegai, (Secretariat), ended the presentation with a reminder, that all IWG members use MS Teams more actively and commented that there is a lack of personal interaction between IWG members, due to the pandemic.

UPDATES ON TASK GROUPS - TASK GROUP LEADERS

Team leaders were invited to comment, share their achievements, current and planned activities, “to put layers on layers”. Gunilla Björkhund (IWG Chair) also asked the participants to put comments in writing. An interesting and productive discussion was held, and many topics have been raised.

Task Group 1

The group is scheduled to meet in early May, by then they will digest responses from the CRIC a little bit more and the path forward. TG1 DEWS *Drought Risk Reduction* Case Study report from consultant (Saravanan) under review/revision. This is cross-cutting across other IWG TG activities (3 pillars), not just DEWS. Review of the draft report on Global Good Practice Guidance: *Good Practice Guidance for National Reporting on Strategic Objective 3 – To mitigate, adapt to, and*



manage the effects of drought in order to enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems.

Crossover activities with UNCCD Science Policy Interface (SPI) Team (Obj. 2--Drought):

SPI work on a Draft Technical Report entitled: ***Multiscale Approaches for Assessment and Monitoring the Resilience of Vulnerable Populations and Ecosystems to Drought***

Inventory of drought (social/ecosystem) resilience indicators (by complexity)

- Case studies
- Proposed Indicator “Resilience Levels”
- Under internal SPI review and then we will open this up to outside expert review

Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP) Knowledge Products

- Case Study (Bob Stefanski/Caroline King/Issa Garba)
- Drought and Water Scarcity (to be published Q2 2021)
- Integrated Drought Management Framework (to be published Q2 2021)
- Floods and Droughts (FAO – work starts Q2- proposed pub date Dec 2021/Jan 2022)

Barron Orr noticed that change in the timeline of the COP gave flexibility to SPI, final confirmation in a change of COP was communicated to SPI. He also mentioned that wider SPI, external scientific review, will start on July 1.

Caroline King-Okumu thanked FAO and Issa Garba for the key study. Raised the question about protocol, considering the current events, incentive signs, controversy about the protocol, whether a protocol will be created, that was not discussed during the CRIC but could be heard on the sidelines of the meeting, about protocol focusing on global monitoring system and datasets, shared the remark about limited suggestions for the content of the protocol.

Robert Stefanski especially pointed out, among other things which are being done, try to link drought and floods. FAO is providing funds. A document is in the early stage of development. Drought and flood risk management can come together. Recognized from a technical and scientific point of view, the interactions of drought and floods, and challenges of different communities,



number of mitigation measures, prevent or mitigate the impact, both hazards are similar. From his point of view, the CRIC comments were very helpful.

Task Group 2

Sara-Jade Govia underlined the enormous progress of her group since the last IWG meeting. Group 2 has completed a survey, received a total of 46 responses, coming from 40 (NFPs) and 5 civil society organizations (CSO). An additional response was received from South Africa to make it a total of 46 responses. Tried to use the survey to assess the gaps, vulnerability, and impact, to identify and tried to understand assessments that are being used, what are their needs to address the vulnerability. They tried to find solutions to address these gaps, proactive in addressing the risk and vulnerability. She said that analyzing the responses was insightful, that they have come up with many solutions by analyzing the problems, when you see problems, solutions are imposed.

Jose Fidel Pérez invited all to a seminar, stressed that this survey gave significant answers not only for Task group 2 but also for other groups, it would be useful for other groups to participate in the seminar. Sara said that before the seminar the final draft will be completed and presented to the IWG, expecting feedback.

*Daniel Tsegai (Secretariat) emphasized that TG seminars should not depend entirely on reports, SPI, or other reports and by default, all IWG members are seminar participants.

Task Group 3

Luca Perez commented on the outcome of the CRIC meeting, as useful to get the pulls of the work so far, notice strong polarization, on some issues, the IWG has to reflect upon, to manage that, in his opinion consensus will not be reached. He said that there is a range of options for the final report, and some will not be supported by all IWG members.

Task group 3 held a meeting a few months before the CRIC, about the financial mechanism, useful to trigger further discussions. Follow up meeting will be on May 6. Luca sees it as a further opportunity to engage. He emphasized that it is necessary to be careful in planning the timeline, proposed activities, to clarify what are the main milestones and timelines, a common understanding



would be useful. He sees the benefit of the additional documents and he supports the GEF project and the proposed study on the economics of drought preparedness.

Task Group 4

Michael Brüntrup mentioned that protocol issue is a matter of finance, binding, or nonbinding. The level of ambition in different areas: support to Parties of UNCCD, communication, monitoring evaluation in every area and for finance can be one way to make more transparent and of sourcing, in this case, to make it more transparent. He believes that further discussion is needed about this issue and he greeted Caroline and Luca for starting it. Task group 4, held 2 meetings, processed 4 topics. Brought together, the first draft of the synthesis, report in progress with topic “Policy and governance instruments for the drought”. He stressed that it is necessary to provide options, inform recommendations, in a harmonized way. It is needed to incorporate other task groups' findings and recommendations, all must be harmonized with institutional and policies framework, incorporated, not to leave gaps, translate into the harmonized synthesis of the whole IWG. Information about good practices, lessons learned, best practices, bed ones also, must be included, without expanding the report too much, key studies, regional particularities, all that is consuming space, but a compromise must be found.

Remarks on the IWG report

IWG members underscored that the report should contain options and informed recommendations, and harmonized propositions. The IWG members were reminded of the tight timeline for the forthcoming Task Group Seminars and Reports..

Additional comments

Nathalie van Haren asked about the EU, USA, Canada, Australia, did they make their statements during the CRIC. **Luca Perez** answered that they were present, just not as part of regional annexes.

Miriam, (Secretariat), clarified that these countries do not belong to the annex in the convention, but the secretariat would offer support, for consultation of different items of the CRIC, secretariat received a request from the EU to join one of the party meetings. Australia, Japan, New Zealand



joined the consultation by the Asian region, more than happy to facilitate this type of exchange for any regional group as appropriate.

***Nathalie van Haren** expressed concern about the final report, which might be a bit outdated if the COP is planned for May 2022. **Daniel Tsegai** (Secretariat) explained that the COP documents should be ready in December 2021 for a COP in May 2022 to allow time for the usual internal procedures of COP documents. This is the timeline that is always followed.

* **Nathalie van Haren** - had a question about the presented GEF project: if it would possible to use some of the resources to make the content of the IWG report easier and digestible for people attending the COP using nice YouTube videos, infographics, podcasts and other supporting materials.

THE WAY FORWARD - FINAL REMARKS

In closing, the Chair, thanked the members for the lively discussion. She found the elements in the discussion extremely useful. Impressed with the work of all Task Groups, asked them to submit their achievements in writing, suggested that networking is missing and that it needs to be worked on, the controversy around the protocol should also be addressed. She stressed that there is a need for another meeting, to review how drafting of the final report is progressing, to look into the process leading up to that, and to digest what Task Groups are doing and to see how issues are linked or need to be linked.

Tina Birmpili, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNCCD Secretariat, was following the meeting. Due to technical difficulties, she was not able to speak up. But she sent a message to all participants and reaffirmed the secretariat's commitment to supporting the work of IWG. In her message, she highlighted the importance of the IWG process and the implications for the COP. While the CRIC session has been a major milestone in the work of the IWG, she emphasized that the IWG process has assisted the secretariat, to be even better more coordinated on the issue of drought. She appreciated the familiarity and close interaction of IWG members with the work of the SPI and vice versa. She announced that COP15 will take place in 2022 with the earlier



possible date being in May. Based on the options that the IWG will put forward to the COP, Parties will be to have an informed discussion on a drought issue that is important to all and see whether and how to set a path forward. The secretariat is carefully following the negotiations at the GEF and is grateful to those Parties that are raising the issue of drought in those negotiations that will determine the replenishment of the GEF.

ANNEX : Meeting Agenda

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Welcoming Remarks – Chair**
- 3. Overview: CRIC COP Dates**
- 3. Regional Consultations- Reflections on the Interim report**
 - Africa:** Stephen Muwaya
 - Asia:** Abdu Alsharif
 - Latin America & the Caribbean:** Gaius Eudoxie
 - CEE:** German Kust & Yuriy Kolmaz
 - Northern Mediterranean:** Gunilla Björklund
- 4. CRIC reflections & proposed Next steps:** Secretariat- **Daniel Tsegai**
- 5. Updates on Task Groups - Task Group leaders**
- 6. AOB/ Closure**