



United Nations

ICCD/COP(15)/17



## Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.: General  
10 February 2022

Original: English

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### Conference of the Parties

#### Fifteenth session

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 9–20 May 2022

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

#### Policy frameworks and thematic issues

## Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Gender

### Note by the secretariat

#### *Summary*

In line with the Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), set out in decision 30/COP.13, gender equality has remained a priority for the UNCCD, its secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) during the period under review. Anchored in the GAP, numerous gender-related activities took place to support the enhanced implementation of the Convention.

This note summarizes actions taken by the secretariat and the GM in response to decision 24/COP.14. It also contains a road map to be included in the GAP to provide impetus and a focus on actions relating to women and men, and girls and boys, as per decision 12/COP.14.

The document concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth session.



## Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Background .....	1–5	3
II. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan.....	6–38	3
A. Capacity development.....	6–9	3
B. Research for advocacy and policy guidance.....	10–20	4
C. Women’s participation in the UNCCD intergovernmental meetings .....	21–24	5
D. Development of tools and guidelines.....	25–32	6
E. Gender mainstreaming in projects and flagship publications .....	33–38	8
III. Gender equality as part of national reporting .....	39–41	9
IV. United Nations System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.....	42–48	10
V. Gender Action Plan roadmap .....	49	11
VI. Conclusions and recommendations .....	50–51	14

## I. Background

1. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was developed in response to decision 30/COP.13 to support the gender-responsive implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and to strengthen the implementation of the advocacy policy framework on gender (decision 9/COP.10). The GAP has been the backbone of the implementation of gender-related activities undertaken by the secretariat and Global Mechanism (GM) since its adoption at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13).
2. Through decision 24/COP.14, the COP requested the secretariat, the GM and appropriate UNCCD bodies, including the Science-Policy Interface (SPI), within their respective mandates, to continue their support for the UNCCD Parties on gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the GAP.
3. Decision 24/COP.14 also requests the secretariat and the GM to continue collaborating and building partnerships with the other Rio conventions, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), other United Nations entities, international organizations and other relevant organizations to explore further ways of strengthening awareness-raising, improving the GAP and developing further tools and guidelines for the use of Parties in the thematic areas of the GAP and the gender-responsive implementation of the Convention.
4. Decision 24/COP.14 further requests the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to strengthen gender-related knowledge and capacity, both in the secretariat and the GM, by providing regular training to all staff on gender mainstreaming methods, tools and techniques to enhance systematic gender mainstreaming in all work areas and support the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
5. This note reviews the progress made towards meeting the requests made by the COP in decision 24/COP.14 and presents other relevant activities of the secretariat and the GM in response to the decision. In addition, this note responds to the request to propose concrete activities and measures with a clear road map to be included in the GAP, to provide impetus and a focus on actions relating to women and men, and girls and boys, as per decision 12/COP.14. Parties may read this note in conjunction with documents ICCD/COP(15)/15, ICCD/COP(15)/16, ICCD/COP(15)/19, ICCD/COP(15)/20, and ICCD/COP(15)/21.

## II. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan

### A. Capacity development

6. The UNCCD GAP was adopted at COP 13. It includes four priorities for action and constitutes the guiding framework of the UNCCD gender work. In the above-mentioned COP decisions, Parties requested the secretariat and the GM to conduct capacity-building activities on gender to support the implementation of the Convention. In 2021, a Strategic Note on UNCCD Capacity Building on Gender was drafted, outlining the mandate, target audience, key stakeholders, partnerships, components and modalities for capacity-building on gender to be led by the secretariat.
7. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat was able to offer a series of capacity development activities on gender to UNCCD National Focal Points (NFPs) and staff. NFP training sessions took place in November and December 2021. Prior to launching the first training session, a training needs assessment was conducted online with NFPs. A total of 77 NFPs completed this survey. The main findings were that: approximately 50 per cent of respondents had never taken any gender training course or session previously, and that experience and capacity in applying a gender lens to their desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) work was uneven among the

countries and Annexes. In this survey, the NFPs stated that their biggest training need was to understand gender issues for reporting to UNCCD or other Conventions; secondly to develop project proposals for the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund or other funders; and, to some extent, to also develop national gender policies.

8. As a key component of capacity building, the introductory module of the gender training was implemented with NFPs from all 5 Annexes. The objectives of this module were: (a) to familiarize NFPs with key concepts and tools for gender mainstreaming in policy and projects; and (b) to provide examples and exercises which facilitate the practical application of these concepts.

9. To maximize engagement, various interactive virtual formats were used, and interpretation was provided into the pertinent languages for each Annex. Case studies from each Annex were developed for use in small group discussions to practise applying gender analysis. A resource list was provided with references to documents and guidance materials to support gender mainstreaming by the Parties. A total of 113 participants from 52 country Parties took this training and engaged in vibrant discussions. The assessment of the training by participations was overwhelming positive, with 86 per cent indicating that it met or exceeded their expectations. It is hoped that future training sessions will be held physically to cover all countries, provide more tailored support, and increase the level of participant engagement. Additional information on other actions taken by the secretariat and the GM to further the implementation of the GAP can be found in document ICCD/CRIC(20)/6.

## **B. Research for advocacy and policy guidance**

10. Decision 24/COP.14 requests the secretariat to strengthen gender-related knowledge in both the secretariat and the GM. Furthermore, decision 12/COP.14 requests the secretariat to enhance advocacy and policy guidance in order to systematically mainstream gender in the implementation of the Convention by implementing the GAP through, inter alia: raising awareness; promoting collaboration between DLDD and drought specialists and experts on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; ensuring that scientific work generated by the Convention is gender inclusive; engaging national gender equality mechanisms; improving capacities for gender analysis; and securing the necessary political support to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming in DLDD.

11. Data is critical for advocacy and policy guidance. With a view to enhance the understanding of gender-related issues affecting the implementation of the Convention, the secretariat commissioned a study on the differentiated impacts of DLDD on women and men, which will be presented during the COP 15 and made readily available in the UNCCD website. This research contributes to the development of a baseline on gender-related issues in DLDD and builds on the efforts of the Parties to produce gender-related knowledge and sex-disaggregated data on matters relevant to the Convention. The study seeks to apply a gender lens to the socio-economic dimensions of land degradation and desertification, and to document existing best practices. It includes 55 country profiles which highlights significant convergence of gender issues and the incidence of DLDD.

12. As part of the methodology, the study reviewed reports submitted by Parties and, more specifically, the level of integration of gender considerations within these reports. It found that, while all 30 land degradation neutrality (LDN) country profiles posted on the UNCCD website included a mention of gender under the section “the way forward,” the level of gender mainstreaming ranged from moderate to significant.

13. In addition, out of the 48 National Drought Plans (NDPs) reviewed, 46 include references to gender. Four distinct strategies were utilized by countries to address and promote gender equality in the NDPs (noting that some NDPs may include more than one of these strategies): (1) a gender normative framework in relation to drought management; (2) the use of sex-disaggregated data or a methodology to collect such data; (3) gender as a transversal axis or theme; and (4) explicit mention of the national mechanism for the advancement of women.

14. Furthermore, of the 49 performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) reports reviewed, 39 Parties responded to one or more of the three gender-related questions contained in the report format. Four of these countries included targets relevant to strategic objectives 1 and 2 of the GAP.

15. The study also includes a review of national reports under the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)<sup>1</sup> on women's land rights (both secure access to land assets and access to non-land assets are covered under restricted access to productive and financial resources, one of the four SIGI dimensions). In all regions, the study found that women face various obstacles to accessing land and non-land assets including legal literacy, discriminatory gender stereotypes around land ownership or legal discrimination under customary laws.

16. Furthermore, as primary caregivers, women are disproportionately affected by extreme events, including drought. This correlates with information contained in NDPs, which also indicate that women spend more time looking for water and caring for their families when drought occurs. Carrying water may have a negative effect on the health of women of all ages: young women, girls, and pregnant women are exposed to various types of risks and the potential to cause musculoskeletal disorders and related disabilities.

17. This inequity is further aggravated with the pandemic. Indeed, the economic and social fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that women experienced an increased burden of unpaid care and domestic work and the concomitant loss of jobs and livelihoods, thereby jeopardizing women's resilience and prospects for recovery in the face of climate and environmental crises. Understanding care work, the right to care, and the impact on caregivers is another consideration in the gendered impacts of environmental degradation and disasters.

18. Drought reduces the availability of natural resources such as fish, trees, timber, mushrooms, honey, fuel wood and medicinal plants. The reduction in forest cover and the non-availability of natural resources primarily affects women, since they must walk long distances to fetch valuable natural resources, and this increases their work burden. It also reduces their participation in income generating activities, as well as educational opportunities.

19. Drought-induced crop and income losses force many women to take up less productive and low-paying activities, such as subsistence farming, foraging for forest crops, undertaking seasonal work and participating in public employment programmes. Women take on a more significant share of the work burden during droughts by working extended periods and undertaking more tasks. Women also tend to reduce their food consumption in times of crises which leads to illness and malnutrition. Food scarcity also exacerbates the challenges women experience during pregnancy. The prevalence of miscarriages and complications during childbirth – at worst, maternal and child death – are higher in times of drought due to undernourishment. Recovery after childbirth also takes longer in food-scarce environments.

20. These findings shed light on the differentiated impacts of DLDD on women and men. Understanding and addressing these issues is essential for the development and implementation of gender-responsive programmes that contribute to the enhanced implementation of the Convention.

### **C. Women's participation in the UNCCD intergovernmental meetings**

21. Enhancing women's participation in UNCCD processes at all levels is one of the objectives of the GAP, which was adopted in decision 13/COP.13. The United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/76/206 also recognizes that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remains a crucial contribution to the effective

<sup>1</sup> Data from 2019 national reports of the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index.

implementation of the Convention, including its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda. This resolution stresses the need for Parties and partners to pursue the equal participation of women and men in planning, decision-making and implementation at all levels, and to further promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in DLDD-related policies and activities. It also notes the importance of the effective implementation of the four priority thematic areas of the GAP adopted by the Parties.

22. With a view to accelerating the implementation and achievement of the GAP objectives, the secretariat has collected data relating to women's participation in the UNCCD process as part of the study of the differentiated impacts of DLDD. A compilation of currently available data shows that the average breakdown by sex of all the delegations to the UNCCD's COP 14, including observers, was 21 per cent female and 79 per cent male. A greater gender balance could enable women's contributions and leadership in combatting DLDD.

### **Gender Caucus**

23. To facilitate implementation of the GAP, the UNCCD Gender Caucus was launched at COP 14. The Gender Caucus was established as an informal group by likeminded negotiators, representatives of delegations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and scientists interested in gender issues related to COP 14 themes and committed to ensuring a gender perspective throughout the implementation of the Convention. This first session was organized in partnership the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Landesa, Both ENDS, and the Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification of the United Nations Development Programme.

24. The Gender Caucus has proven to be an effective platform for advancing discussions on gender equality within the context of the implementation of the Convention. This platform can serve as an advocacy mechanism and an awareness-raising vehicle to increase understanding of gender-related matters amongst delegates attending the COP. Given the expertise that it assembles, the Gender Caucus can also serve as a sounding board and as a network of experts to provide technical assistance to Parties. The second session of the Gender Caucus will take place during COP 15. It will be organized in partnership with United Nations entities including UN Women, the IUCN, CSOs and relevant experts. Further measures to strengthen the Gender Caucus for an effective acceleration of the implementation of the GAP are proposed in the roadmap (section V of this note).

## **D. Development of tools and guidelines**

### **1. Sustainable land management gender-responsive tool**

25. Decision 19/COP.14 acknowledges "the continuing efforts by the secretariat and the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) in promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of sustainable land management (SLM) best practices". The UNCCD GAP emphasizes that gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention. Enhancing women's access to improved knowledge and technologies that relate to effective UNCCD implementation is one of the priorities under the GAP.

26. In line with decision 12/COP.14, the secretariat continues to collaborate with WOCAT on the design of a gender-responsive SLM tool that will allow data collection and analysis on SLM practices from a gender perspective. The joint WOCAT-UNCCD project on gender-responsive SLM technologies and approaches was launched in 2020 to fill the gap in the availability of sex-disaggregated data, to deepen the analysis of SLM practice adoption patterns, and to assess their differentiated impacts on women and men. The extended UNCCD-WOCAT partnership aims to boost the uptake of gender-responsive SLM practices around the world through a strengthened global partnership to effectively support UNCCD implementation.

27. Direct and indirect gender-related barriers prevent women from adopting SLM practices. These barriers include land tenure insecurity; land availability; education or literacy levels; access to seeds, fertilizers, or extension services; and access to technologies and financing. As a result, women adopt SLM technologies at a rate that is typically lower and slower than that of men. The data from 1,510 technologies and 24 technology groups documented by WOCAT demonstrates that the percentage of female users exceeds the percentage of male users in only one SLM technology group: home gardens (29 per cent of women/10 per cent of men). Although women are present in multiple technology groups, their percentage presence is typically lower than the percentage of men using the same technologies.

28. In 2021, the WOCAT and UNCCD developed a gender questionnaire with five key sections focusing on: the description of the SLM technology or approach; general information on the compiler, the key informants and data and information sources; the context in which the technology is being applied; the SLM technology/approach related activities and impacts; and recommendations on how to improve the gender-responsiveness of the SLM technology or an approach for improved adoption.

29. The draft questionnaire was reviewed by 20 gender and SLM experts and practitioners – representing UN Women, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, IUCN, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Alliance Biodiversity International-Center for Tropical Agriculture, Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research Gender Platform, Tottori University, University of Costa Rica, as well as the Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment (Iran), Both ENDS (the Netherlands), Corepage Consulting and Finnish Consulting Group Ltd – during an experts’ workshop organized by the secretariat and WOCAT in September 2021.

30. Subsequently, the questionnaire has been piloted in 13 countries<sup>2</sup> to test the methodology, its efficacy and the relevance of the data collected through this process. Countries were selected based on the existence of SLM technology or approaches previously documented in the WOCAT database, as well as on their capacity to hold focus group discussions and to conduct data collection exercises. As a result, the 13 countries will be taking part in the testing phase which has already started in a few countries.

31. The lessons learned from this process will contribute to strengthening and finalizing the tool. In the long run, the sex-disaggregated data generated as a result of the project is expected to improve the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of SLM best practices and inform gender-responsive policy design aimed at achieving LDN.

## **2. Technical guide on the integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into land degradation neutrality**

32. Decision 26/COP.14 requests the secretariat and invites the FAO and other relevant partners to collaborate to produce a technical guide on how to integrate the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), adopted by the United Nations Committee on World Food Security, into the implementation of the Convention and LDN. Complementary to the VGGT principles and the human rights framework, the technical guide promotes a gender-responsive approach as one of the key considerations to be mainstreamed in the implementation of all LDN initiatives. In addition to the mainstreaming approach, Pathway 3 of the technical guide (“Strengthening women’s tenure rights and access to land and natural resources”) identifies potential activities at the national

<sup>2</sup> Bangladesh, Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, India, Jordan, Laos, Nepal, Niger, Philippines, Spain, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

and local level to address existing gender inequalities in structures, relations and social norms (including perceptions, attitudes and values about gender and secure tenure rights) in relation to land governance. The pathway demonstrates how gender-responsive LDN initiatives strategically contribute to the achievement of LDN, while strengthening women's tenure rights and access to land and natural resources. For more information on the technical guide, Parties may refer to document ICCD/COP(15)/19 on land tenure.

## **E. Gender mainstreaming in projects and flagship publications**

### **1. Mainstreaming gender in the work of the Science-Policy Interface**

33. In decision 18/COP.14, Parties prioritized in the work of the SPI, two scientific assessments. The first involved the provision of science-based evidence on the potential contribution of integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management to positive transformative change, achieving LDN and addressing DLDD issues. The second involved the provision of science-based evidence on the approaches for the assessment and monitoring of the resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems to drought, also considering the effect of climate change on drought risk. The SPI worked with the secretariat to mainstream gender into the procedures followed while conducting these scientific assessments and developing the corresponding technical reports and their policy proposals, which have been detailed in ICCD/COP(15)/CST/2 and ICCD/COP(15)/CST/3, respectively.

34. Furthermore, in decision 18/COP.14, Parties requested that the SPI analyse the key messages of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems<sup>3</sup>. The SPI took into consideration the interdependence of land and climate and the disproportionate impact of DLDD on those most vulnerable to climate change and desertification, including women. The results include information on the critical role that women can play in land-related decision-making, financial inclusion and monitoring. This analysis and the outcomes relevant to gender mainstreaming are available in ICCD/COP(15)/CST/4.

### **2. Fighting land degradation and desertification through gender-sensitive and transformative approaches**

35. Decision 2/COP.14 encourages Parties to facilitate a more efficacious implementation of the Convention, in particular on the themes of gender-sensitive and transformative approaches, especially, but not limited to, LDN. The GM's establishment of gender-responsive design as a foundational principle for both the LDN target setting processes and transformative projects and programmes (TPP) has significantly helped to raise the profile, understanding and application of gender mainstreaming in country efforts to establish an enabling environment for the achievement of LDN. It recognizes that gender-responsiveness is an integral, essential facet of transformative project design, and encourages the provision of high-quality technical support on gender mainstreaming.

36. The GM, in collaboration with the secretariat, assisted countries in setting national voluntary LDN targets and developing gender-responsive land-based transformative projects, both in terms of decision-making and stakeholder consultation processes. During preparation, the GM also ensures that gender is mainstreamed in project concept notes and project documents by supporting gender gap analysis and GAPs, for example. Following decision 20/COP.14, the incorporation of existing sex-disaggregated data and information is encouraged during project design as articulated in the manual for gender responsive LDN TPP<sup>4</sup> and the LDN TPP features checklist, which are used to guide project preparation. Further details can be found in ICCD/CRIC(20)/5.

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<sup>3</sup> <<https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>>.

<sup>4</sup> <[https://catalogue.uncd.int/1223\\_Gender\\_Manual.pdf](https://catalogue.uncd.int/1223_Gender_Manual.pdf)>.

### 3. Mitigating the impacts of drought through gender-responsive and transformative approaches

37. Through decision 23/COP.14, the Parties requested the secretariat, the GM and appropriate UNCCD bodies, within their respective mandates, to build on the Drought Initiative during the 2020–2021 biennium by, inter alia, expanding collaboration and partnerships with relevant agencies, organizations and platforms to design and test innovative, gender-responsive and transformative approaches to supporting countries in mitigating the impacts of drought. Through decision 29/COP.13, the COP invited Parties to promote drought resilience building which is gender-responsive and which prioritizes people in vulnerable situations. To this end, the GM has supported all countries participating in the Drought Initiative in mainstreaming gender in their NDPs. Further details are available in document ICCD/CRIC (20)/5.

38. In addition, the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on Drought established at COP 14 focused on gender-responsive drought policy options from its inception. A specific task group in the IWG is dedicated to assessing vulnerability and impact of drought on vulnerable communities, including women and children. The task group conducted a survey and received responses from 42 countries on the needs and challenges of vulnerable populations, including the gender dimensions of drought vulnerability. As presented in the IWG interim report and the report by the task group, relatively few of the country submissions to the IWG so far have indicated the routine use of assessment processes involving vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

## III. Gender equality as part of national reporting

39. The GAP recommends using national reports to document the efforts made to address gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the Convention. As part of these efforts, the secretariat has included new sex-disaggregated indicators and a new set of questions relating to gender and women's empowerment in the narrative section of the report template, also known as "implementation framework."

40. Two new indicators aimed at tracking trends in the proportion of population exposed to land degradation and drought disaggregated by sex will be used for the first time during the 2022 reporting process. These new indicators will provide information about the proportion of male and female populations exposed to land degradation and drought, as a first step towards addressing the gender data gap within the UNCCD reporting framework, as requested in decision 11/COP.14. Additionally, a third indicator, the Drought Vulnerability Index, has the potential to be disaggregated by sex, thereby providing specific information on which sex within the population is more vulnerable to drought. However, there are currently limitations in data availability to support the necessary level of additional sex disaggregation, and the pre-processing of data to achieve this requires additional technical capacity.<sup>5</sup>

41. As for the narrative section contained in the reporting template, gender-responsive questions have been added in order to capture the nature of interventions implemented at national level and how these impact the affected population, i.e. men and women. It is important to note that reporting on the implementation framework is voluntary, and therefore it is up to Parties to use the 2022 UNCCD reporting process to showcase their activities in relation to gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women. Information submitted through national reports has the potential to raise awareness and further the understanding of Parties on this important aspect and ensure that a continuous debate on gender equality becomes a standing item to be discussed at the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

<sup>5</sup> Further information on the modalities for reporting on UNCCD strategic objectives can be found in ICCD/COP(15)/CST/7-ICCD/CRIC(20)/8.

#### **IV. United Nations System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**

42. With its enrolment in the United Nations System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP),<sup>6</sup> the secretariat took a considerable step to increase accountability for gender equality. The UN-SWAP, managed by UN Women, is the first unified accountability framework in the United Nations common system that is designed to accelerate and support strengthened gender mainstreaming and gender equality, and boost women's empowerment results in all functions of United Nations entities.

43. In 2020, the UNCCD met or exceeded requirements for 82 per cent of the UN-SWAP indicators, corresponding to meeting or exceeding requirements for six more performance indicators, a 35 per cent increase when compared with the 2019 performance.

44. The most significant gains were on reporting, audit, leadership, organizational culture and knowledge and communication. The UNCCD newly exceeded requirements in two areas: reporting on gender related SDG results and organizational culture; and newly met requirements in four areas: evaluation, gender-responsive performance management, equal representation of women and capacity assessment. Furthermore, in relation to the overall United Nations system, in 2020, the UNCCD met or exceeded requirements for significantly more indicators than both the average of the United Nations secretariat and the United Nations system at large. In addition, the UNCCD did not rate any indicators as not applicable or missing requirements.

45. Several internal processes contributed to the achievement of these results. With the aim of ensuring progress toward the objectives of the GAP, in keeping with the principles of the UN-SWAP, the secretariat and the GM established an internal process to monitor whether their own capacities, policies and practices are adequate to support the inclusion of gender equality in their respective activities. A staff survey on capacity for gender mainstreaming was carried out during the first half of 2020, followed by a gender audit later the same year. The audit was conducted in line with the principles of the International Labor Organization's Participatory Gender Audit methodology.

46. The findings of the capacity assessment and the gender audit were aligned and pointed to the same strengths and weaknesses, albeit each from their own perspective. In general, they indicate that the secretariat and the GM have most of the key requirements for gender responsiveness in place or under development, including the following:

(a) The UNCCD actively uses available United Nations system support, mechanisms, and practices, assisted by relevant partners, to mainstream gender in its activities;

(b) The UNCCD has made good progress in planning, developing, and delivering gender-responsive policies, products, and services for both external and internal purposes;

(c) The organizational culture is assessed as gender-responsive in that management proactively promotes gender equality; and that staff performance, positions or assignments are not perceived to be dependent on gender;

(d) The UNCCD human resources management and related policies are gender-responsive; in fact, the secretariat and the GM workforce has achieved gender parity;

(e) The UNCCD allocates funding to gender mainstreaming and other gender activities from both the core budget and voluntary funding.

47. While most findings of the capacity assessment and the gender audit were positive, they also indicated a need for major improvements in the tracking of resources allocated to gender equality and in building staff capacity for gender-responsive budgeting. These

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<sup>6</sup> <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2006/12/un-policy-on-gender-equality-and-empowerment-of-women-ceb-2006-2>>.

results correspond with the UN-SWAP report results in the same areas. The secretariat, in collaboration with UN Women, has started to take measures to address these capacity gaps.

48. As the next step in enhancing their internal gender responsiveness, the secretariat and the GM have begun the preparation of a gender policy, building on the findings of the capacity assessment and the gender audit. This policy will be aligned with existing frameworks within the United Nations, while acknowledging the specific circumstances of the secretariat and the GM.

## V. Gender Action Plan roadmap

49. In decision 12/COP.14, Parties requested the secretariat to propose concrete activities and measures with a clear road map to be included in the GAP to provide impetus and a focus on actions relating to women and men, and girls and boys. The following roadmap (see table below) outlines activities to be implemented by Parties, the secretariat, the GM and other relevant institutions, as appropriate, at the national, regional and global levels. It builds on the efforts of the Parties in various domains while proposing new actions and measures that will accelerate the implementation of the GAP. It also recognizes the need to partner with institutions at various levels to achieve these outcomes.

Table

### Roadmap to accelerate the implementation of the Gender Action Plan

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Deliverables/ outputs</i>	<i>Level of implementation</i>
<b>Objective 1: To enhance women’s role as agents of change by addressing the gender inequalities they face</b>				
1.1. Increase women’s participation in national level processes on land use planning, budgeting and decision-making in programmes and entities addressing DLDD	<u>Leading:</u> Parties, relevant organizations <u>Contributing:</u> secretariat and the GM	By 2030 <sup>a</sup>	Increased representation in national level decision-making bodies	National, regional, global
1.2. Promote actions to remove structural barriers that impede women’s participation in planning and decision-making processes concerning DLDD, which may include:  - revising legislation to improve women’s access to and rights to land and other natural resources  - implementing policies that provide equal opportunities and outcomes to women and men, especially with regards to access to finance for land	<u>Leading:</u> Parties, relevant organizations <u>Contributing:</u> secretariat and the GM	By 2030	Revised legislation, policies  Economic schemes targeting women	National, regional
1.3. Engage women’s groups and national women and gender institutions in the process of developing and updating policies related to DLDD	<u>Leading:</u> Parties <u>Contributing:</u> secretariat	By 2030	Consultations with women’s groups on DLDD impacts and adaptation to be reflected in policies	National, regional
1.4. Provide leadership and negotiation training for women	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat	By 2025	Leadership training courses, workshops on negotiation	Global

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Deliverables/ outputs</i>	<i>Level of implementation</i>
	<u>Contributing:</u> Parties		skills, mentoring programmes	
1.5. Land prize (promote figures known for preserving land in each region, paying special attention to gender), promote the UNCCD Land Ambassadors	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat  <u>Contributing:</u> Parties	At every Conference of the Parties	Exhibitions, dialogues, podcasts, media interviews	National, regional and global
<b>Objective 2: To build the capacities of women and girls to access the resources they need to improve their livelihoods, manage land sustainably and become resilient to drought</b>				
2.1. Design and implement awareness-raising campaigns (on women's land rights and/or other GAP priorities for action)	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat  <u>Contributing:</u> Parties	By 2023	Media and public outreach campaigns	National, regional, global
2.2. Technical training to address the different capacity needs of women and men on agricultural practices, crops and technologies	<u>Leading:</u> Parties  <u>Contributing:</u> secretariat	By 2030	Technical training courses with gender-balanced participation, business case on gender-responsive technology for private sector, academic/vocational training with a focus on the agri-food sector  Workshops with women during technology design	National, regional
2.3. Strengthen advocacy and collaboration with private sector entities to promote the gender-responsive design of technologies	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat  <u>Contributing:</u> Parties	By 2025	Use the UNCCD World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies SLM gender-responsive tool to collect data and provide technical training to address the different capacity needs of women and men	National, global
2.4. Dissemination of adaptation practices used by and benefitting women to increase their resilience to drought	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat  <u>Contributing:</u> Parties, relevant organizations	By 2023	Collection of relevant adaptation practices Synthesis reports	National, regional, global

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Deliverables/ outputs</i>	<i>Level of implementation</i>
<b>Objective 3: To build the technical capacities of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stakeholders at all levels to design and implement gender responsive plans and programmes, including in land degradation neutrality interventions</b>				
3.1 Design and implement a capacity development strategy and plan for the UNCCD stakeholders on the implementation of the GAP priorities for action	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat  <u>Contributing:</u> Parties, relevant organizations	By 2023	Training package, including training modules, manuals, case studies, audio and video materials, training sessions and capacity development activities conducted	National, regional, global
3.2 Within existing platforms (UNCCD website, Data Centre, Knowledge Hub), set up and regularly update a space for data and knowledge on gender (including new gender-responsive programmes and practices that support the implementation of the Convention, best practices, expert interviews, etc.)	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat and the GM  <u>Contributing:</u> Parties, relevant organizations	By 2023	Best practices, expert database, information/data/updates from communities of practice, evidence from impact assessments  Country profiles	Global
3.3 Convene Gender Caucus meetings to guide, advise and address bottlenecks for gender-responsive programmes	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat	Annually	Annual meetings	Global
3.4 Develop further tools and guidelines for gender mainstreaming in LDN interventions	<u>Leading:</u> Secretariat and the GM	By 2025	Tools and guidelines	Global
<b>Objective 4: To develop a baseline on gender-related issues in land degradation and desertification and monitor, report and regularly review progress in the implementation and achievement of objectives</b>				
4.1 Develop evidence and policy-relevant research to collect data and information with a view to establishing a baseline on key gender metrics and to inform policy and decision-making processes	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat  <u>Contributing:</u> Parties, relevant organizations	By 2023	Global evidence-based research  Studies analysing sex-disaggregated data  Impact assessments	National, regional, global
4.2 Establish a follow-up mechanism for the implementation of the GAP to regularly review progress and identify bottlenecks, (including the first GAP progress evaluation at COP 17, further integration of gender matters into the UNCCD national reporting, and for occasional reports and studies on specific aspects of gender matters under the UNCCD)	<u>Leading:</u> secretariat  <u>Contributing:</u> Parties	COP 17	Report on GAP progress and recommendations for next steps  Data, reports and studies on specific gender aspects under the UNCCD	National, global

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Deliverables/ outputs</i>	<i>Level of implementation</i>
<b>Objective 5: To mobilize adequate resources to achieve these objectives</b>				
5.1 Promote earmarked travel funds as a means of supporting the equal participation of women and men in all national delegations at UNCCD sessions	<u>Leading:</u> Parties, secretariat	By 2025	UNCCD budget allocations Donor funds National funds	National, global
5.2 Mobilize domestic resources to support the implementation of the GAP and its priorities for action	<u>Leading:</u> Parties	By 2030	Voluntary contributions, technical and financial support for specific activities  Number of bilateral and multilateral donors expressing willingness to finance transformative projects and programmes supported through the UNCCD	National, global
5.3 Develop strategic partnerships with research, learning, training and finance institutions for joint programming and funding	<u>Leading:</u> Parties, secretariat, relevant organizations	By 2030	Research on new methods and innovation to support LDN programmes  Partnership agreements, Private sector support for project preparation in all relevant geographical areas, with particular focus on advancing gender equality	National, global

<sup>a</sup> The timeline of 2030 is proposed taking into account the SDGs deadline and the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework. It also recognizes that Parties may be at different levels of advancement with regards to the implementation of activities and measures that accelerate the achievements of the GAP objectives, thereby allowing more flexibility and better prioritization.

## VI. Conclusions and recommendations

50. Based on the progress made to fulfil the requests contained in the various decisions referenced in this note and in the implementation of the GAP, the following general conclusions are made:

(a) The data and trends from the study on the differentiated impacts of DLDD on women and men clearly demonstrate that the key drivers of women's higher risk and vulnerability are pre-existing gender inequalities which are socially constructed and embodied in the gendered division of labour, allocation of resources, care work and other discriminatory practices. Consequently, there is a need to acknowledge and address the root causes of this heightened risk and vulnerability;

(b) The secretariat and the GM have taken important steps towards addressing the gender-related issues that impact the implementation of the Convention, from reporting to capacity building, while strengthening data collection and use has been a key priority during the period under review. Successful initiatives such as the Gender Caucus should be taken to scale.

51. Parties may wish to consider this document with a view to possibly adopting a decision at COP 15. Elements of a draft decision for their consideration can be found in ICCD/COP(15)/21, which, following decision 32/COP.14, contains all draft decisions prepared for Parties for consideration at COP 15.