



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



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The concluding UNCCD COP15 news conference held at the Sofitel Abidjan Hotel Ivoire, MET 02 (Salle des Fêtes), can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3G2ybkf> and UNCCD's YouTube channel, <https://bit.ly/3G33o6O>

United Global Call to Act on Land Degradation and Drought Concludes Major UN Meeting in Côte d'Ivoire

- *UNCCD COP15 adopts 38 decisions, including on tenure, migration and gender, that highlight the role of land in addressing multiple crises*
 - *Robust monitoring and data to track progress against land restoration commitments*
- *New political and financial impetus to help nations deal with devastating impacts of drought and build resilience*
 - *US \$2.5 billion Abidjan Legacy Programme will help future-proof supply chains while tackling deforestation and climate change*
 - *Regional initiatives launched in support of the Africa-led Great Green Wall*
 - *Nearly 7,000 participants at two-week meeting included delegations from 196 countries and the European Union*
 - *Future UNCCD meetings to be held in Saudi Arabia, Mongolia, Uzbekistan*

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 May 2022 – A united global pledge to boost drought resilience and invest in land restoration for future prosperity today concluded the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

This two-week meeting on the future of land management drew nearly 7,000 participants, including Heads of State, ministers, delegates from the UNCCD's 196 Parties and the European Union, as well as members of the private sector, civil society, women, youth leaders and media.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of UNCCD COP15, Patrick Achi, Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, said: "Each generation faces this thorny question of how to meet the production needs of our societies [...] without destroying our forests and lands and thus condemning the future of those on whose behalf we endeavour."

He also drew attention to the US\$2.5 billion raised for the Abidjan Legacy Programme launched by Côte d'Ivoire President Alassane Ouattara at the Heads of State Summit on 9 May, which has already surpassed the US\$1.5 billion anticipated for it.

At a news conference, Alain-Richard Donwahi, COP15 President, highlighted that it was the first time Côte d'Ivoire hosted a COP for one of the three Rio Conventions, and emphasized his country's continued commitment to keep land issues high on the international agenda.

Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD Executive Secretary, said: "Meeting against the backdrop of multiple global challenges, including the worst-in-40-years drought in Eastern Africa, as well as food and economic crises fuelled by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts, countries have sent a united call about the importance of healthy and productive land for securing future prosperity for all."

Highlights among the new commitments:

- Accelerate the **restoration of one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030** by improving data gathering and monitoring to track progress against the achievement of land restoration commitments and establishing a new partnership model for large-scale integrated landscape investment programmes;
- Boost **drought resilience** by identifying the expansion of drylands, improving national policies and early warning, monitoring and assessment; learning and sharing knowledge; building partnerships and coordinating action; and mobilizing drought finance.
- Establish an **Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought** for 2022-2024 to look into possible options, including global policy instruments and regional policy frameworks, to support a shift from reactive to proactive drought management.
- Address forced **migration** and displacement driven by desertification and land degradation by creating social and economic opportunities that increase rural resilience and livelihood stability, and by mobilizing resources, including from the diaspora, for land restoration projects;
- Improve **women's** involvement in land management as important enablers for effective land restoration, by addressing commonly encountered land tenure challenges by people in vulnerable situations, and collecting gender-disaggregated data on the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought;
- Address **sand and dust storms and other escalating disaster risks** by designing and implementing plans and policies including early warning and risk assessment, and mitigating their human-made causes at source;
- Promote decent land-based jobs for youth and **land-based youth entrepreneurship** and strengthen youth participation in the UNCCD process; and

- Ensure greater **synergies among the three Rio Conventions**, including complementarities in the implementation of these treaties through nature-based solutions and target-setting at the national level.

In addition to the decisions, three declarations were issued during the COP, namely:

- The [Abidjan Call issued by the Heads of State and Government](#) attending the Summit hosted by Côte d'Ivoire President Alassane Ouattara on 9 May.
- [Abidjan Declaration on achieving gender equality for successful land restoration](#), which emerged from the Gender Caucus chaired by the First Lady Dominique Ouattara.
- [The COP15 “Land, Life and Legacy” Declaration](#), which responds to the findings of the UNCCD’s flagship report, [Global Land Outlook 2](#), a five-year study with 21 partner organizations, and with over 1,000 scientific references. Released 27 April, it reported up to 40% of all ice-free land is already degraded, with dire consequences for climate, biodiversity and livelihoods.

Reports launched during COP15 include:

- [“Drought in Numbers 2022,”](#) a compendium of drought-related facts and figures, including a 29% a rise in droughts since 2000 and a projection that three-quarters of the world’s population will be affected by drought by 2050 unless urgent action is taken.
- A special [Southern Africa thematic report](#) released as part of the Global Land Outlook series, which warned of rising pressures on land and land-based resources, exacerbated by insecure land tenure systems, pervasive poverty, and low rural literacy levels, raising risks for the most vulnerable among Africa’s population. It underlines the need to leverage strong links between the food, water, energy and environment sectors. A new technical guide that helps shape a tailor-made response to commonly encountered land tenure challenges via a range of national plans, legal frameworks, strategies, and action programmes addressing land degradation.
- The study on [Differentiated Impacts of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought on Women and Men](#) has revealed that women are twice more affected by these issues, and that drought and land degradation tend to increase the burden of unpaid care and domestic work shouldered by women and girls.
- [Sand and Dust Storms Compendium](#): Information and guidance on assessing and addressing the economic, environmental and health risks of these increasing phenomena.

Also launched:

- The [Business for Land initiative](#) aimed at bringing visibility to the commitments made by participating companies towards land degradation neutrality, both in supply chains and CSR activities.
- The [Sahel Sourcing Challenge](#) to enable communities growing the Great Green Wall to use technology to monitor progress, create jobs and commercialize their produce such as baobab juice, moringa oil and shea butter.
- [Droughtland](#), a new UNCCD public awareness campaign that aims to showcase solutions and rally global action on drought. The campaign will also be featured during [UN Desertification and Drought Day](#) (17 June), hosted this year by Spain.

UNCCD's COP15 is the first Conference of the Parties of the three Rio Conventions taking place in 2022, ahead of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP27 and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15.

Future meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD and its subsidiary bodies will be held in Saudi Arabia (COP16 in 2024), Mongolia (COP17 in 2026), and Uzbekistan (Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in 2023).

About the UNCCD

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the global vision and voice for land. We unite governments, scientists, policymakers, private sector and communities around a shared vision and global action to restore and manage the world's land for the sustainability of humanity and the planet. Much more than an international treaty signed by 197 parties, UNCCD is a multilateral commitment to mitigating today's impacts of land degradation and advancing tomorrow's land stewardship in order to provide food, water, shelter and economic opportunity to all people in an equitable and inclusive manner.

COP15 background documents and information: <https://www.unccd.int/cop15>

All COP15 decisions are available here: <https://www.unccd.int/cop15/official-documents>

Download **b-roll** on the drought in Eastern Africa (<https://bit.ly/3Pw6ULm>). Credit UNCCD.

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