



Speaker: UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa

Location: Recording

Event: Video to mark UNCCD Desertification and Drought Day

Length: 5 minutes

Colleagues;

Like all environmental disasters, drought and desertification are issues that have increased in frequency and severity throughout the world due to climate change. They, in turn, also directly *impact* climate change.

So, when we mark Desertification and Drought Day, we are addressing issues intricately tied to both UNCCD *and* UN Climate Change.

Our response, as discussed in Abidjan, must naturally be linked and we must determine how best to get from disaster to resilience — and do so rapidly.

A linked response means, for example, focusing on three key areas: mitigation, adaptation and finance.

With respect to **mitigation**, we need to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and do so urgently. While we know this cannot be achieved overnight, we must realize that we are pushing the boundaries of this planet.

Drought is but one consequence of this constant and unrelenting pressure.

We have statistics to show droughts are increasing in frequency and severity.

Droughts are up 29% since 2000, with 55 million people affected every year and some 70 countries regularly affected.¹

¹ This is directly from the UNCCD information sheet.



Those are important numbers. But numbers cannot measure the misery of thirst, the fear of a failed crop or waiting for rainclouds to appear on the horizon — but waiting in vain.

We need unified, concerted and ambitious action. Namely, we need nations to come up with stronger national climate action plans and ensure they're tabled *annually*. Five-year submission cycles simply weren't putting us on the right trajectory. We need to do more and do more *now*.

Nations also need to boost their **adaptation** efforts as well, and developing and implementing ambitious National Adaptation Plans must be at the top of the list...

... as well as making sure that support is provided to those who cannot do this alone.

Encouraging all nations to complete these vital plans is a major focus area as we work towards COP27 — and I look forward to UNCCD's continued participation in Egypt.

There, we will also continue working with Parties to define a global goal for adaptation.

This will allow us to identify the collective needs and solutions for the climate impacts already happening — with drought, of course, one of the most devastating impacts.

I look forward to working with UNCCD to ensure issues around drought, desertification, and resilience are reflected at COP27 and in the adaptation plans.

Last and *far* from least, we need **finance** — not only in climate action that supports, protects, and restores land, but that addresses drought.



Yes, we need direct climate financing in these areas, but we also need an overall shift in attitudes by both the government and non-government sectors.

Nations are already returning to a post-COVID “business-as-usual” economic focus — one based on traditional energy use.

We must send a stronger message that this moves us in the *wrong direction*.

It’s devoid of any realistic reading of what will drive future markets and it is a bad investment in humanity’s future.

Climate change is the biggest emergency we face — one tied to drought and virtually every major challenge humanity faces.

While the public and the private sectors have made *some* progress, if we look beyond specific climate investments, often those same investors are holding portfolios heavily dependent on traditional energy sources.

My message is that *all* finance, *all* investment — and for that matter all policies, programs and regulations by government — need to be considered through a lens of resilience and sustainability — full stop.

It’s the only way to build our future prosperity.

Colleagues,

I assure you that UN Climate Change will continue to do its part and collaborate with you to build a more sustainable and resilient future.

I very much appreciated working with you in Abidjan and your continued participation as we look to COP27 in Egypt this November.



Thank you.