

Decision 12/COP.15

Report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its nineteenth session

A. Update on the implementation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts

The Conference of the Parties,

Noting the cross-sectoral role of land and Sustainable Development Goal 15,

Welcoming with appreciation the support provided by the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and relevant partners to effectively assist countries in their voluntary land degradation neutrality target-setting processes and related implementation efforts, as well as knowledge-sharing, including through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub and capacity-building efforts;

Acknowledging with appreciation the financial resources mobilized to date in order to support Parties' work on voluntary land degradation neutrality target-setting and related implementation efforts, including numerous bilateral and multilateral initiatives and relevant financing windows, as well as the support provided by the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and technical partners to facilitate access to these financial resources,

Stressing the importance of voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts as a key contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to achieving increased coherence and greater synergies with other relevant ongoing processes,

Highlighting the importance of mainstreaming large-scale land restoration and science-based monitoring as implementation efforts in terms of realizing voluntary land degradation neutrality targets as well as increasing capacity-building support at both national and regional level, particularly relating to the development of national land degradation neutrality monitoring and decision-support systems that use the best available data, including access to high-resolution data on land degradation neutrality indicators,

Noting the need to strengthen the capacity of the Global Mechanism and to increase the resources available in order to meet the steady demand for voluntary land degradation neutrality target-setting or refinement and support the development of a pipeline of transformative projects and programmes to help country Parties access relevant financing sources and provide related capacity-building and knowledge-sharing support,

1. *Requests* the Global Mechanism and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, and in collaboration with relevant financial and technical partners in a position to do so, to:

(a) Continue supporting voluntary land degradation neutrality target-setting processes and encourage country Parties to review and refine their voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and promote their adoption at a high political level;

(b) Further develop training and capacity-building support at both national and regional level, particularly related to (i) land degradation neutrality assessment, data collection, monitoring and national reporting; and (ii) the development of national land degradation neutrality monitoring and decision-support systems that use the best available data, building on relevant existing platforms and initiatives such as Trends.Earth, the performance review and assessment of implementation system and the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative;

(c) Assist country Parties in developing the necessary tools to translate the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets into concrete actions, increasing efficiency in the deployment of existing financial resources, building greater synergy with relevant

processes, identifying innovative resources for implementation, and promoting the development of large-scale national, multi-country and subregional transformative projects and programmes thus ensuring a geographical balance;

(d) Provide further support to country Parties to improve and accelerate the preparation and development of gender-responsive, viable transformative projects and programmes that jointly address desertification/land degradation and drought and increase knowledge-sharing among countries and partners;

2. *Invites* developed country Parties, and all other Parties and partners in position to do so, to increase financial and technical resources specifically dedicated to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in order to bridge the current financing gap and scale up Convention implementation activities related to desertification/land degradation and drought;

B. Update on the operationalization of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund

Acknowledging the information contained in document ICCD/CRIC(19)/3,

Welcoming the update on activities related to the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund and *noting with appreciation* the progress made by the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund and its Technical Assistance Facility in mobilizing blended public and private resources that promote sustainable land use and land restoration,

Acknowledging the pivotal role that the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund could play in achieving the strategic objectives of the Convention and serving as a successful, replicable model of collaboration between the public and private sector,

Stressing the importance of the environmental and social standards developed and applied by the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund and highlighting the need to further facilitate this process to minimize risk and increase the positive impact of private sector investment on sustainable land management,

Highlighting the importance of monitoring the expected impacts of Land Degradation Neutrality Fund investments for other relevant environmental and social indicators, relevant to climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, food security, poverty eradication and gender,

1. *Encourages* the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund to facilitate a larger and more regionally and subregionally balanced project portfolio and an accelerated geographical expansion of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund to include more projects in dryland areas located in developing countries;

2. *Requests* the Global Mechanism to continue to engage with national focal points and facilitate information-sharing and awareness-raising on the operational modalities, requirements and achievements of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund;

3. *Also requests* the Global Mechanism to facilitate capacity-building for the public and private sector and other interested stakeholders on accessing the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund;

4. *Further requests* the Global Mechanism to support country Parties through virtual workshops and, subject to the availability of financial resources, in-person capacity building and training events, to access various innovative and private sources of financing, including, but not limited to, the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund;

5. *Requests* the Global Mechanism to collaborate with the Technical Assistance Facility of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund to provide technical pre-investment support to country project developers, in collaboration with partners, to ensure that projects are increasingly feeding into the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund project pipeline;

6. *Also requests* the Global Mechanism to report, during Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention sessions held in conjunction with sessions of the

Conference of the Parties, on the activities of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund and the application of social and environmental standards and indicators, as applicable;

C. Update on the implementation of the Drought Initiative and related implementation efforts

1. Drought Initiative

Noting with appreciation the work of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism in terms of the support provided to country Parties with regard to the implementation of the Drought Initiative and in particular the support provided for developing national drought plans,

Welcoming the information contained in document ICCD/CRIC(19)/5,

Also welcoming the upgrade and expansion of the Drought Toolbox and the e-learning courses provided via e-learning platforms,

Taking note of the need for Parties to enhance data availability to support and guide decision makers to improve their policies in order to better address desertification/land degradation and drought,

Also taking note of the importance of sharing best practices on mitigating the impacts of drought through the exchange of experiences, case studies, evidence and lessons learned among regions and Parties,

1. *Requests* the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and appropriate United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification institutions and bodies, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, to:

(a) Continue to review existing global and regional challenges associated with drought and to consider geographical balances in terms of the planning and implementation of regional and national drought projects, especially in the context of the ongoing Global Environment Facility-supported project titled Enabling Activities for Implementing Drought Decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

(b) Support country Parties in translating national drought plans or other policy instruments related to drought into concrete projects on the ground;

(c) Consider (i) the transboundary nature of drought; and (ii) improving communication and enhancing the engagement with regional and sub-regional institutions to address issues relating to drought and sand and dust storms;

(d) Support Parties by developing further regional and subregional projects to address the issues of drought and sand and dust storms, given the frequent interconnectedness of these two phenomena;

(e) Facilitate (i) the development of research programmes on drought, and sand and dust storms with the active participation of local and vulnerable communities; and (ii) the sharing of knowledge and information on data (high-resolution satellite data and indicators) in the context of the ongoing development of national drought plans;

(f) Continue to provide training and further strengthen capacity-building activities;

(g) Encourage the strengthening of the existing work, as well as the stepping up of international partnerships to this end; reinforce the work done under the Drought Initiative and policy instruments; and strengthen synergies among the three Rio conventions;

(h) Adopt an integrated approach, linking drought management with humanitarian and development efforts, notably with regard to early warning systems, preparedness, response, resilience-building and sustainable recovery;

(i) Ensure that drought issues are integrated into the land degradation neutrality implementation process;

2. *Urges* Parties to:

(a) Integrate national drought plans, or other policy instruments related to drought into overall national frameworks in order to improve drought indicators and help build the preparedness, response and resilience of land users and communities as they work towards a post-COVID-19 recovery;

(b) Consider gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of youth and children in the further implementation of the priority action areas identified in their national drought plans or other policy instruments related to drought;

2. Gender

Noting that desertification/land degradation and drought has disproportionate impacts on women and that the COVID-19 pandemic is further exacerbating inequalities, especially among women and other vulnerable groups,

Recognizing the importance of gender equality in combatting desertification/land degradation and drought and *emphasizing* that women and girls need to be included and participate in the development and implementation of policies, projects and programmes to address desertification/land degradation and drought,

Acknowledging that awareness-raising and capacity-building on gender and the full integration of gender into the Convention is a cross-cutting issue that involves, inter alia, gender-responsive decision-making, the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data, and the promotion of gender-responsive sustainable land management best practices,

Welcoming the efforts of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to enhance the gender-responsiveness of the Convention and its implementation, including the first Gender Caucus at the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and the success of the Gender Caucus in promoting gender issues in decisions as well as mainstreaming gender concerns into concept notes of land degradation neutrality transformative projects and programmes,

1. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to continue their efforts to:

(a) Effectively integrate gender equality into the structure and function of the Convention and its bodies;

(b) Assist Parties by providing guidance through virtual workshops and, subject to the availability of financial resources, in-person capacity-building on mainstreaming gender equality to address all aspects of desertification/land degradation and drought and enhance progress towards achieving voluntary national land degradation neutrality targets;

3. Land tenure

Acknowledging that national circumstances related to land tenure vary and are reflected in different cultural legislative and policy frameworks, and that such differences should be considered in all activities related to the implementation of decision 26/COP.14,

Welcoming the work undertaken by the secretariat and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the technical guide to integrate the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the implementation of the Convention and the achievement of land degradation neutrality,

1. *Urges* Parties to implement the recommendations contained in decision 26/COP.14 for improved land governance towards achieving land degradation neutrality and the objectives of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including fostering legal and political environments that promote women’s and vulnerable populations’ equitable access to and control over land and resources, including secure and non-discriminatory land tenure,

2. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to assist Parties at their request with the effective implementation of the technical guide and the voluntary guidelines mentioned above with the aim of mainstreaming and incentivising land tenure in decisions

made on investments as well as in the design and implementation of projects and programmes to (i) address desertification/land degradation and drought; and (ii) help achieve voluntary national land degradation neutrality targets, including by:

(a) Enhancing existing partnerships and exploring new ones, especially those working with vulnerable groups, to address the diversity of land tenure challenges, including policy and legal reviews;

(b) Exploring mechanisms for financial and technical assistance for planning and administrative infrastructure that enhance tenure security, especially for the vulnerable and marginalized;

(c) Increasing awareness-raising and training efforts, including through effective multi-stakeholder platforms;

(d) Aligning the national land degradation neutrality plans, projects and programmes with the Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security and social and environmental best practices as applicable;

(e) Facilitating international and regional knowledge exchanges, including technology transfer, data- and information-sharing on case studies and best practices;

3. *Also requests* the secretariat to report to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its twenty-first session on the progress made in implementing this decision.

*5th plenary meeting
19 May 2022*