



Summary of the 1st Meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG)

Date	: 29-30 November 2022
Venue	: UN Campus - Langer Eugen Meeting Room: 2312, Format: Hybrid Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1 53113 Bonn, Germany
Working languages	: English
Working hours	: Tuesday, 29 November 2022, 09:30-13:00, 14:00–17:00 (CET) Wednesday, 30 November 2022, 09:00-13:00, 14:00–17:00 (CET)

Item 1 Opening/Organisational Matters

1.1) Opening Remarks

The Executive Secretary Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw gave opening remarks, underlining the urgency and importance of addressing drought holistically, given the world has never been affected by dry spells as much as today. Therefore, the IWG is expected to provide further guidance and advice for the next COP 16 to move the global drought agenda.

1.2) Round of introduction from participants

1.3) IWG Group Photo

1.4) Election of the IWG Co-chairs

According to Decision 23/COP15 rules of procedures for the IWG – Membership and Co-chairs, Ms. Miriam Medel introduced the role of the co-chairs of the IWG and open the floor for the nomination of the co-chairs.

Mr. Alfred Prospere (Saint Lucia) was nominated to be one of the co-chairs by Chile.

Mr. Michael Brüntrup (Germany) was nominated to be one of the co-chairs by Belgium.

Both were elected by all participating members and accepted the election.

Item 2 Presentation of Background Document

2.1) Keynote: Presentation of Global Assessment Report by Ms. Loretta Hieber Girardet, from Chief Risk Knowledge, Monitoring and Capacity Development at the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).

The presentation considered the interlinkages of climate change and land degradation to be the leading factors of an increase in disaster events and high-frequency of low-intensity events, including drought.



man-made activities which increase drought and drought impact: soil and vegetation degradation, excessive water abstraction,

The latest Global Assessment Report (GAR) suggests an average of 60 drought events happening in the world per year, affecting the most vulnerable states and sectors of society the most. Half of the world's countries do not have adequate early warning systems, which are one of the most cost-effective elements of drought risk management to be implemented. To turn reactive remedies into proactive mechanisms, a few key recommendations need to be followed: invest in drought risk identification and mapping, ensure social accountability and early warning, as well as scaling up financing in economic, social and ecological resilience, that includes investments in nature-based solutions and holistic ecosystem restoration approaches.

UNDRR would like to collaborate with the IWG, outlining the possibility to submit a solution package to the UNFCCC processes and the Santiago Network.

Main Discussion points:

CSO members mentioned that developing countries, which are lacking resources, could raise financial funding problems. UNDRR pointed out that they have been accelerating financing, and mechanisms such as Santiago Network, helping with early warning for proactive actions, evaluation of countries' resilience, protection for people and assets, upgrade of infrastructure, etc. In addition, various international consortia were mentioned, able to assist with different approaches.

- 2.2) Mandate and objectives of the IWG by Mr. Rajeb Boulharouf, Chief of Staff, UNCCD
Mr. Rajeb Boulharouf emphasised that the UNCCD is the only legally binding instrument with a clear mandate to address drought issues. The mandate and objectives of the IWG include coming up with a baseline of agreements on what can be achieved, exploring options, and making recommendations. It is important to take full advantage of platforms when interacting with different parties and institutional entities, e.g., CRIC.

Main discussion points:

Questions concerning which options IWG members should work on in terms of assessment and evaluation were raised. After the discussions, members agreed that the ToR of IWG suggests members should analyse all options based on the highlighted reports from, for example, UNDRR/UNEP/the prior IWG group. The key of the IWG is to identify policy instruments. Much time was spent on gaining mutual understanding of what such instruments are (for us). CSO members suggested that above all, IWG members should access the documents contained in the first IWG report, and during the 2nd meeting, IWG members could start analysing these documents.

- 2.3) Presentation of the foundation document by Ms. Miriam Medel Garcia, Chief of Global Policy Advocacy and Regional Coordination, UNCCD
Ms. Miriam Medel Garcia gave an introduction to the integrated drought management programme, which was born from a high-level meeting coordinated by WMO and GWP in 2013. In 2017, the UNCCD established the drought initiative. At COP15 this year, the IWG



was renewed to come up with more concrete and tangible options and roadmaps for the consideration of Parties at COP16. Additionally, the launching of IDRA in 2022 is a political driver for addressing drought. To guide the IWG’s work, there will be a living document as a depository of materials.

Item 3 Agreement on Next Steps

3.1) Presentation by the Secretariat on the revised timeline

3.2) Participants discussed the time as well as the length of the following meetings, coming to an agreement on the months of the events, with the exact dates to be further determined. Meanwhile, the possibility of virtual meetings between in-person meetings is also open.

2023		
March (TBA)	2 nd in-person meeting	<i>Agreeing on concrete options at the global and regional level with a discussion on set of Criteria, based on a document on options prepared by the Secretariat in advance</i>
June (TBA)	3 rd in-person meeting	<i>Finalize report for CRIC and prepare for regional consultations in the front-end and back-end of CRIC</i>
9-13 October	4 th in-person meeting	<i>Immediate After CRIC in Samarkand, Uzbekistan</i>
2024:		
TBA	5 th in-person meeting	<i>TBA</i>
Mid-August (June)	<i>IWG report ready with COP documents</i>	
October/November	<i>Final report at COP6 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</i>	

Item 4 Working session: first review of global policy instruments

4.1) Presentation by the Secretariat

A list of legal modalities was presented and discussed:

- Protocol or Agreement linked to the parent agreement to focus on a specific aspect to enhance the implementation of the Convention
- Amendments or new annex to the Convention
- UNGA or UNEA resolutions outside the purview of the Convention, to negotiate a new Convention or legal instrument
- COP decision or political declaration
- Other options

Main discussion points:

- Members agreed that all existing/so far listed options are not binding but voluntary, as



UNCCD is not an implementing agency and protocol will bring all implementing agencies together.

- Members discussed the date for submitting the options, deciding 15 January as a deadline for submission of the options to the UNCCD. It was clarified that the deadline should not mean that later appearing options would not be taken into account – there should be some flexibility to take one or a few more options into consideration later than that.
- The goal of different options was debated. Members suggested that if there is difficulty in setting targets, the IWG could also focus more on technical issues. A global target (such as 1,5 degree in the UNFCCC or 30*30 in CBD) was considered to be a potentially important instrument under the UNCCD.

Item 5 Wrap up

5.1) Conclusions and final agreements on the way forward

- Members discussed once again the definition of thematic priorities and possible legal modalities (see 4.1). The final agreed-upon focus areas were: *protocol, guideline and target setting*; with the overall goal of effective drought management under the UNCCD as defined in the ToR.
- Practical timelines and workflows were repeated (see 3.2)
- Secretariat will prepare a detailed list of different options including pros and cons, feed by submissions of all IWG members before 15.01.2023. A summary will be shared with all IWG members on month later (15.02.2023).

5.2) Closure of the Meeting

- Ending Remarks by Ms. Andrea Meza, UNCCD Deputy Executive Secretary
- Ending Remarks by IWG Co-Chairs