



Convention to Combat Desertification

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Progress report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD

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Report by the Intergovernmental Working Group

Summary

Disastrous consequences from the lack of basic systems for drought preparedness challenge the capacities of our societies to evaluate and adequately prepare for avoidable risk. Accumulating cascades of unnecessarily destructive impacts underline the imperative for more concerted global policy and actions.

This progress report summarizes the progress made during the first eight months since the initiation of the second Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) (November 2022). Key achievements are:

(a) A set of eight (8) policy options to be considered for comprehensive and accelerated drought risk management under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), condensed out of 48 global-, regional- and national-level initial propositions, and to be further elaborated and evaluated/justified according to the Terms of Reference of the IWG; and

(b) A newly developed (draft) tool for the evaluation/justification, which combines a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis with key criteria and lead questions reflecting socio-ecological effectiveness, economic efficiency, equality, acceptability and compatibility (with the UNCCD and other frameworks on drought).

In total, three multi-day group meetings have taken place so far, which have been instrumental in the creation of numerous working documents, leading up to this report to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention as a key step towards the IWG report for the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) of the UNCCD.

Next steps will be to elaborate on the selected options first internally, then later with possible external support, and evaluate them to develop findings and recommendations for consideration by the Parties at the forthcoming COP 16.

* Unofficial copy for information purposes only.

All parties are invited to provide feedback on this progress report.

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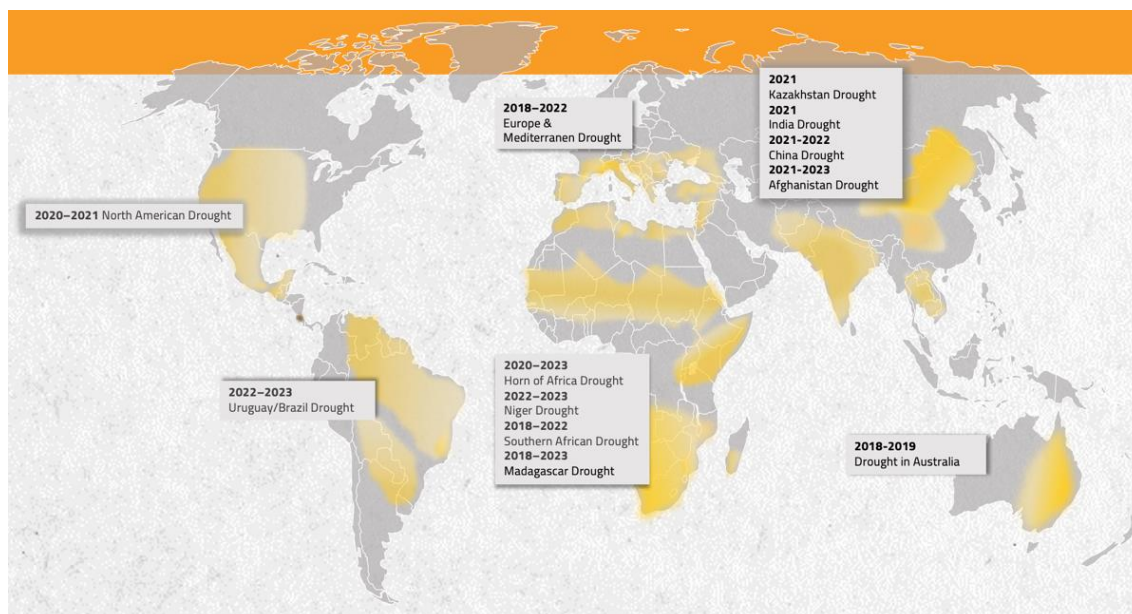
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I. Introduction

1. Droughts raise fundamental questions about the capacities of our societies to evaluate and adequately prepare for an immanent risk. Perhaps more than any other hazard, the accumulating cascades of drought impacts require more concerted global policy and actions.
2. Although we know that it is neither physically possible nor economically feasible to eliminate drought risk entirely, we also know that it is possible to prevent such hazards from becoming disasters that claim human lives and cause irreconcilable economic loss. Transformational change is needed rapidly and across sectors to avoid systemic failure.
3. Humans should avoid escalating drought risks by overexploiting the planet, clear-cutting vegetation cover, exposing soils through perennial agriculture and overgrazed grasslands, and overusing water on a massive scale. The result of such vast landscape changes combined with the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere significantly changes the earth's climate systems and leads to global warming (see fig. 1). We must stop driving a process whereby we are reducing soil fertility and biological diversity, and threatening food-security and livelihoods across the planet.
4. With the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as the sole legally binding international agreement on desertification and drought, we have a global policy mechanism that enables us to effectively address the task at hand. We must find solutions that match the size of the problem, which is global in nature, yet far from natural.
5. Resolution 72/220 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) called upon "Parties to the Convention to enhance and support the preparation of drought preparedness policies on, inter alia, early warning systems, vulnerability and risk assessment, as well as drought risk mitigation measures". The UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted decision 7/COP.13 to include mitigation of the effects of drought as a strategic objective in the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

Figure 1

Recent drought hotspots around the world (sources: Emergency Event Database, European Drought Observatory, National Geographic & Prevention-Web)



6. Decision 29/COP.13 was made to implement a drought initiative aimed at enhancing preparedness for droughts and reducing vulnerability and risk. Specifically, the decision invites the Parties to develop a comprehensive system that: (i) analyses drought risk; (ii) monitors the location and intensity of an upcoming drought; (iii) communicates alerts to authorities, media and vulnerable communities; and (iv) responds to drought warnings.

7. This was followed by decision 23/COP.14, which established an Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought (IWG), tasked with developing effective policies and measures to address drought within the UNCCD framework. This decision also acknowledged the progress achieved through the implementation of the Drought Initiative, which has provided support to Parties in creating plans for drought preparedness, regional advocacy and capacity-building.

8. Subsequently, decision 23/COP.15 agreed to the creation of a new IWG during the triennium 2022–2024 (see fig. 2), which is tasked with identifying and evaluating all *options* to effectively manage drought under the Convention, including supporting a shift from reactive to proactive drought management with the following Terms of Reference (ToRs):

(a) to review and analyse all the reports which came out of the first IWG, as well as other relevant documents, and the COP decisions related to drought;

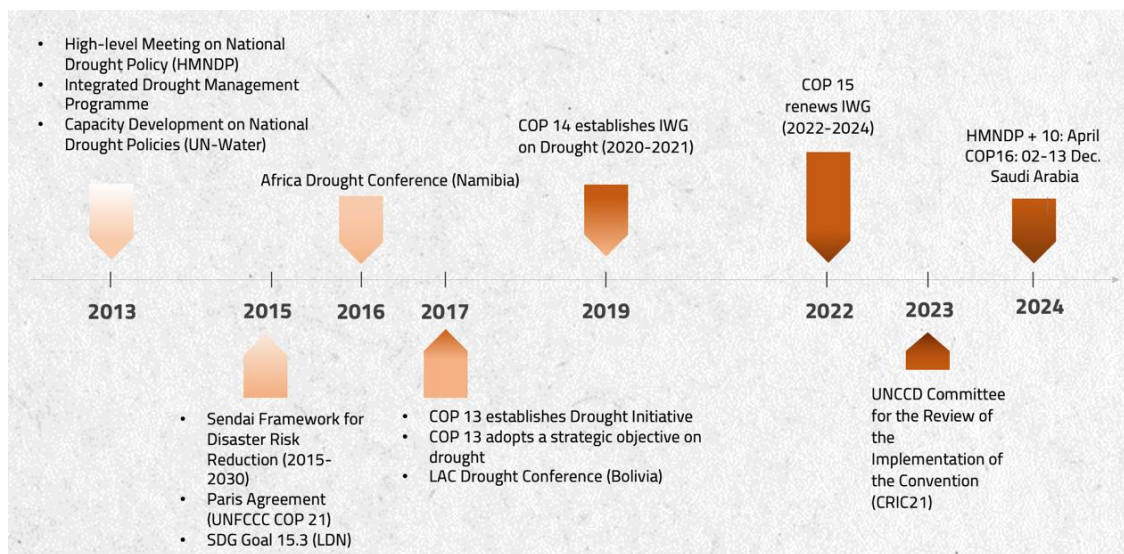
(b) to identify and evaluate all *options*, including global policy instruments and regional policy frameworks, linking, where relevant, to national plans, and, where appropriate, to effectively manage drought under the Convention, including supporting a shift from reactive to proactive drought management;

(c) to prepare justifications and outline possible elements, processes, institutional arrangements and mechanisms for the establishment of each *policy option*.

9. The COP decision also requests that the IWG on Drought prepare a final report including its findings for consideration by the COP at its sixteenth session (COP 16).

Figure 2

Key milestones of global drought negotiations, initiatives and policies



Abbreviations: COP: Conference of the Parties, IWG: Intergovernmental Working Group, LDN: Land Degradation Neutrality, SDG: Sustainable Development Goal, UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

10. The IWG comprises annex representatives, international organizations, independent experts and civil society organizations (CSOs). It is composed of 27 members, consisting of three representatives nominated by each of the regional groups. These include the five regional implementation annexes, the European Union and its member states as well as the group known as JUSCANZ (Japan, the US, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand). Additionally, the IWG includes two representatives from CSOs (as observers), two representatives from international organizations that work on drought, and two independent experts. The secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the COP, nominated these additional members, while the CSO observers were nominated by the CSO panel.

11. A kick-off event for the IWG took place in Bonn, Germany (November 2022) for initial consultations, leading to the group's request to the secretariat to help with the collection and preparation of a comprehensive list of *options*, as well as the development of a draft evaluation scheme that could be utilized to assess the various policy *options/tools*. According to the rules of procedure for the IWG as set by the decision 23/COP.15, Ms Miriam Medel introduced the role of the co-chairs of the IWG and opened 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.

12. During the second meeting of the group in Yerevan, Armenia (March 2023), all *options* were discussed, categories shortlisted, and the draft evaluation scheme further fine-tuned, leading to a third meeting in Madrid, Spain (June 2023) before the writing of this report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). This meeting was hosted by the Government of Spain, and focused on further reducing the list of *options*, finalizing a draft evaluation scheme and finding an agreement regarding the content of the IWG report to the twenty-first session of the CRIC (CRIC 21).

13. The following sections provide an overview of the identification and selection of policy *options* (section II) and the newly developed draft evaluation methodology (section III). The final part of this report (section IV) plots ways forward towards a report to the COP 16 in 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (December 2024).

II. Identification and selection of options

A. Building upon the work of the first Intergovernmental Working Group (2019–22)

14. During the first IWG Meeting in November 2022, the secretariat was tasked with collecting submissions of *options* by all members and of other official documents published by the UNCCD and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), particularly publications by the previous IWG. Furthermore, impulses were taken from the Global Assessment Report (GAR) and a keynote presentation by Ms Loretta Hieber Girardet, the Chief of the Risk Knowledge, Monitoring and Capacity Development Branch at the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), during the meeting.

List of key documents:

- UNCCD (2019) Drought tools assessment report. Bonn, Germany.¹
- UNCCD (2019) Options for additional arrangements for drought under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Bonn, Germany.²
- UNCCD (2021) IWG Task Group Report: Financing. Bonn, Germany.³
- UNCCD (2022) Foundation Document of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought (2022–2024).⁴
- UNCCD (2022) Final report of the intergovernmental working group on effective policy implementation measures for addressing drought under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.⁵
- UNDRR (2021) Global Assessment Report – Special Report on Drought.⁶
- UNEP (2020) Legal and institutional options for addressing drought under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Information note prepared by the Law Division of UNEP.⁷
- King, C., Salman, M., Tsegai, D. and Naqvi, M. (2022) A rapid review of effective financing for policy, implementation and partnerships addressing drought risks. Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.⁸

B. Submissions by Intergovernmental Working Group members

15. Including all submissions by current IWG members, a list with a total of 48 *options* was composed (see Annex). These *options* were categorized according to three scales – global, regional and national – as well as four overarching thematic blocks: Monitoring and Early Warning Systems, Vulnerability and Impact Assessment, Resources and Incentives, Policy and Governance. This first stock take of *options* was by no means exhaustive but was meant as a first ground-laying overview that could be further expanded to access the multitude of effective drought management policy *options* on various scales.

16. Furthermore, an IWG group request was directed toward the secretariat to prepare a first draft evaluation scheme that could be applied to evaluate the various pros and cons of each policy *option*. More on this in section III.

C. Selection of options for evaluation

17. Subsequently, during the Yerevan meeting, the decision was taken to reduce the number of *options* and to sort those which do not fit the criteria of being an *option* and/or are fully included in more comprehensive *options*. By doing so in a quick and non-conclusive manner, a total of 26 *options* remained, which were divided into four new categorizations, namely: (a) finance; (b) technical; (c) legally binding options; (d) non-legally binding options.

¹ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2019-07/Drought%20tools%20assessment%20report%20final%2020%20June%202019.pdf>.

² https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-08/ICCD_COP%2814%29_INF.3-1914121E.pdf.

³ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-09/IWG%20task%20group%20report%203%20Drought%20finance%20.pdf>.

⁴ www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-02/IWG-FOUNDATION%20DOCUMENT.pdf.

⁵ https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-03/ICCD_COP%2815%29_20-2202073E.pdf.

⁶ <https://www.undrr.org/publication/gar-special-report-drought-2021>.

⁷ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-02/UNEP%20report.pdf>.

⁸ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9971en/cb9971en.pdf>.

D. Policy options for further consideration

18. In a consecutive step, the four main categories were populated with two concrete *options* each. Figure 3 below gives an overview of the resulting eight *options* that are grouped into the four main categories. This was one of the central results of the third IWG meeting in Madrid, Spain.

19. The IWG members agreed to further consider the following *options*:

(a) **Finance:**

(i) Create **new financial mechanisms** for drought resilience (based on proposal 7 in the Annex);

(ii) Strengthen **existing financial mechanisms**, e.g. Global Environment Facility (GEF)/Global Mechanism (GM) (based on proposals 24, 26, 29 and 32 in the Annex);

(b) **Technical:**

(i) Define a **global target** for drought resilience and implement monitoring and reporting on this target at regular intervals (based on proposals 1, 2, 3 and 27 in the Annex);

(ii) Create a **global work programme** on proactive drought management with the aim of strengthening and facilitating the implementation of measures for addressing drought in an effective manner at all levels, along with enhancing drought preparedness, community and ecosystem resilience, and the adoption of a holistic and integrated approach (based on proposals 23 and 28 in the Annex);

(c) **Legally binding options:**

(i) Adopt a legally binding **Amendment** to the Convention (based on proposal 12 in the Annex);

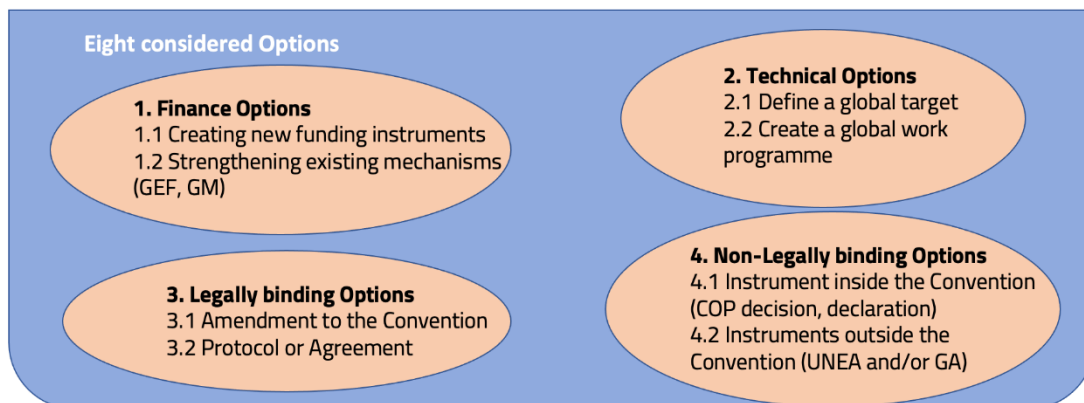
(ii) Adopt a **Protocol** under the auspices of the Convention (based on proposal 14 in the Annex);

(d) **Non-legally binding options:**

(i) Adopt a decision, political declaration or other kind of non-legally binding instrument **under** the Convention (based on proposals 15 and 17 in the Annex);

(ii) Adopt a decision, resolution or other kind of non-legally binding instrument **outside** the Convention, e.g. UNGA/United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) (based on proposals 19 and 21 in the Annex).

Figure 3
Eight considered options



Abbreviations: COP: Conference of the Parties, GA: General Assembly, GEF: Global Environment Facility, GM: Global Mechanism, UNEA: United Nations Environment Assembly.

20. In a next step, the eight consolidated policy *options* will be described more precisely and assessed in line with the IWG’s ToR: *justification, elements, process, institutional arrangement* and *evaluation*. Therefore, the selected *options* will include a precise inventory of individual content blocks, known as *elements*; the listing of necessary steps for their creation and implementation in a section called *process*; the required or potential *institutional arrangements*; and an *evaluation* of their pros and cons and *justifications* based on criteria jointly developed by the IWG and the secretariat (see fig. 4).

Figure 4
Option development matrix

	1. Finance Options 1.1 Creating new funding instruments 1.2 Strengthening existing mechanisms (GEF, GM)	2. Technical Options 2.1 Define a global target 2.2 Create a global work programme	3. Legally binding Options 3.1 Amendment to the Convention 3.2 Protocol or Agreement	4. Non-Legally binding Options 4.1 Instruments outside (UNEA/GA) the convention 4.2 Instrument inside the convention
Definition				
Elements				
Process				
Institutional Arrangement				
Mechanism				
Evaluation / Justification				

Abbreviations: GA: General Assembly, GEF: Global Environment Facility, GM: Global Mechanism, UNEA: United Nations Environment Assembly.

III. Evaluation methodology

21. The ToRs of the IWG do not prescribe a certain method to evaluate *options*. The challenge in defining an appropriate methodology is that the *options* are very different in terms of level, topics covered, depth, scope and type. This is particularly true for the *options* initially captured, but also for the consolidated *options* that have been selected for further assessment. In most cases, it is also unclear how they will ultimately appear. For instance, how much money will be available for the financial *options*, what will the binding and non-binding *options* look like and who will sign them, or what will the global target and work programme *options* contain? Certain contingencies can be anticipated but much will remain speculation and cannot be precisely defined.

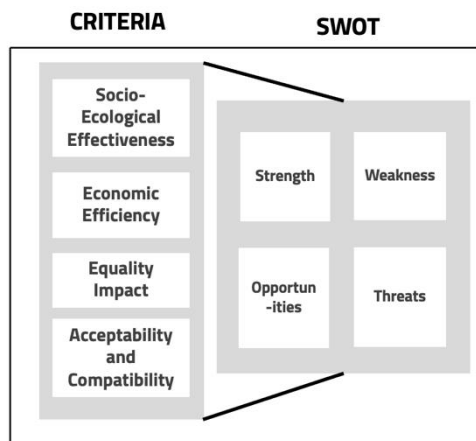
22. This is the background challenge against which the IWG discussed, refined and finally adopted the methodology below. It may be further fine-tuned between now and the end of the evaluation. The IWG started with scrutinising existing evaluation methods. In the second IWG meeting, a relatively large – though far from comprehensive – body of literature was consulted, including peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed publications, and previous IWG reports, such as the blue paper.⁹ One existing and practice-proven policy evaluation tool, the *Qualitative Screening of Management Tools* (QSMT), was proposed to be developed into a new, tailor-made Drought Policy Evaluation Scheme (DPES). The tool comprises questions and sub-questions under five broad criteria (e.g. socio-ecological effectiveness, economic efficiency, equality impacts), with a specific assessment (i.e. high, medium, low) conducted for each. By evaluating a range of policy instruments against predetermined criteria, the QSMT method elicits information concerning what knowledge and assumptions can be validated or refuted, and identifies information gaps, policy considerations, and the advantages/disadvantages of various policy instruments.

23. Initially this method was tested with several pilot *options* from the four categories identified in Yerevan. Given the high level of uncertainty due to the challenges mentioned above for all *options*, along with the lack of precise details in the definition and the necessary subjectivity of some answers, some modifications were made: i) to add and modify some criteria; ii) to abandon the attempts of a quantification or ranking for individual criteria (and, in consequence, for all *options*); and iii) to expand the scheme through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. Figure 5 provides an overview of the evaluation scheme for potential policy *options*.

24. A SWOT analysis will form the basis of the *options* evaluation. This system analyses the internal strengths and weaknesses of the *options* as they can be decided on by the COP and eventually implemented by the members, and identifies external opportunities and threats which may influence the implementation and impact through external factors.

⁹ <https://www.unccd.int/resources/reports/blue-paper-drought-risks-resilience-and-restoration>.

Figure 5
Evaluation scheme overview consisting of criteria and a SWOT analysis



25. In order to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of all *options* using the same criteria, the SWOT analysis will be used against the four adapted criteria of the QSMT: Socio-Ecological Effectiveness, Economic Efficiency, Equality Impact, Accessibility and Compatibility, and their subcategories. The IWG also adopted its lead questions for the associated subcategories. These lead questions will thus guide the SWOT analysis. A detailed presentation of each criterion can be found in Figure 6.

Figure 6
Overview of criteria, subcategories and lead questions

Criteria	Subcategories	Lead Questions
1. Socio-Ecological Effectiveness To what degree does the option/instrument meet the policy objectives?	Degree of impact	<i>What is the capacity of the option to meet the policy objectives?</i>
	Speediness	<i>How quickly will the option achieve its maximum capacity?</i>
	Flexibility	<i>Is the option flexible?</i>
	Jurisdictional comprehensiveness and political commitment	<i>Is the option comprehensive, ambitious, and able to activate political commitment?</i>
2. Economic Efficiency In achieving the projected level of effectiveness, is use of the option likely to result in benefits outweighing costs, or vice versa?	Costs	<i>What are the likely incremental cost outcomes? How affordable is this option?</i>
	Benefits	<i>What are the likely incremental benefits of the option?</i>
	Flexibility	<i>Does the option allow flexibility in decision-making on the part of the targeted sector/area or stakeholder group?</i>
3. Impact on Equality Would this option result in inequitable distribution of costs and benefits between social groups, sectors and regions?	Distribution	<i>What are the outcomes by community or group, country/region or sector?</i>
	Gender equality and age	<i>Is the option sensitive to gender equality and age considerations?</i>
	Social and employment	<i>Does the option result in a change in the benefits costs, or employment of one social group more than of other groups?</i>
	Ecological	<i>Does the option result in a positive change in ecosystem functions and ecosystem restoration capacities?</i>
4. Acceptability and Compatibility Would this option receive political and public support, and would it be compatible with existing or proposed measures in other jurisdictions?	Acceptability to stakeholders	<i>What is the expected buy-in from the public, community, stakeholders and governments?</i>
	Jurisdictional compatibility	<i>Is the option compatible with constitutional jurisdictions, established jurisdictional responsibilities, and global environmental goals/policies?</i>

26. To make best use of the developed evaluation tool, it is necessary to “put flesh to the options”, i.e. to formulate the options more precisely and with greater detail, being as close to a final description (legal texts, declaration texts, finance tools, global target or work programme) as possible. This must be achieved by in-depth analysis of available and eligible knowledge sources.

IV. Way forward

27. As a next step, the eight remaining options must be further elaborated, discussed and critically evaluated to allow recommendations to be formulated. Task groups of the IWG have been created to work on these steps, which will start work after this CRIC 21 report has been finalized and before the CRIC itself takes place. They are open to all IWG members.

While it was decided to limit external support in a first round of elaboration, further into the process, the IWG may be supported by external expertise if deemed necessary and/or useful. This could involve data-gathering, the preparation of more detailed option profiles, potential theory-of-change modelling and studying the experience of 'sister' conventions (the Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)). Where possible, robust scientific source materials must be identified and updated, helping to understand current leading knowledge on drought risk management in order to reach informed recommendations to allow the COP to make decisions for effective drought policies at its sixteenth session.

28. All parties are invited to provide feedback on this progress report.

Annex

List of submitted options

1. **Periodic monitoring** of drought risks, exposure and impacts on land, water ecosystems, people and economies – not only observing impending hazards but providing warnings of the need for proactive measures and impact assessments on a global scale.
2. **Enhanced monitoring** of level 3 drought indicators. The Conference of the Parties (COP) requests Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to implement monitoring and reporting of level 3 resilience indicators at regular intervals to the COP. Particular emphasis should be placed on the implementation and impact of national Drought Management Plans developed under UNCCD guidance. The exact selection of the indicators would be done at the seventeenth session of the COP (COP 17), based on recommendations by the Science-Policy Interface, and experiences during the first round of monitoring of levels 1 and 2.
3. Better coordination and use of global agencies, such as the World Meteorological Organization and World Food Programme, in order to share and **harmonize data and information** on drought risk with the aim of assessing the cost of action against inaction and drought mitigation vs disaster response.
4. **Technology Transfer.** Drought is related to climate change, overuse of land and overproduction in the land system. It is not possible to arrest land degradation without introducing new soil management technologies, new food production technologies, etc. Agroecology is one option to be promoted in order to address droughts. This requires technology transfer from North to South, South to North and South to South.
5. Effective use of **catalytic global financing** mechanisms to trigger action to redress the immediate human causes of drought exposure and vulnerability and to transform them through reorientation of capabilities and reestablishment of sustainable land management.
6. Technical assistance must be provided to Parties for the **development of drought finance strategies.** Drought finance requires a cross-cutting approach that draws on a number of related types of finance. As part of the support provided to Parties in developing national drought action plans, the UNCCD Global Mechanism (GM) should consider providing technical assistance, specifically on drought finance.
7. A catalytic fund for drought **finance innovations** must be established. New developments in fintech are happening continuously, with profound implications for credit, savings and insurance services in the developing world. A modestly sized challenge fund managed by the UNCCD GM could provide resources for Parties to identify and pilot fintech innovations from other sectors and scale promising drought finance innovations that have been tested in other countries.
8. **Adequate financing** mechanisms are required from developed countries. There should be seed funding for vulnerable countries to implement drought actions. It is vital that vulnerable countries and the targeted communities be given access to utilize such funds.
9. Methods through which **green recovery programmes** can support drought management must be identified. There is an opportunity to embed drought preparation and mitigation within green recovery programmes. To expand the level of funding available to national drought commissions, the UNCCD GM should review planned green recovery programmes to identify how drought activities may be included. There should be specific emphasis on land and watershed restoration, as well as drought management in the context of climate adaptation.
10. **Legally binding financial mechanisms.** As part of an amendment, new annex or protocol/agreement to the Convention, an existing financial mechanism (e.g. GM) must be modified or a new one created (e.g. multilateral drought resilience fund).
11. **Non-legally binding financial mechanisms.** As part of a COP decision, political declaration or global framework, an existing financial mechanism (e.g. GM) must be

modified or a new one created (e.g. in the form of voluntary contributions or a multilateral drought resilience fund).

12. **Adoption of a legally binding Amendment to the Convention.** Article 22 of the UNCCD Convention provides that the COP may adopt amendments to the Convention pursuant to Article 30 which provides that, “1. Any Party may propose amendments to the Convention. 2. Amendments to the Convention shall be adopted at an ordinary session of the Conference of the Parties. The text of any proposed amendment shall be communicated to the Parties by the Permanent Secretariat at least six months before the meeting at which it is proposed for adoption. The Permanent Secretariat shall also communicate proposed amendments to the signatories to the Convention.” Article 30 further provides that the amendments shall be adopted either by consensus or by a two thirds majority vote. Under Article 30, instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with respect to an amendment are to be communicated to the Depositary. The asterisk refers to *legal modalities and/or policy frameworks* and not *options* in the original sense of the IWG’s ToR. The differentiation between both is blended in this working document for the purposes of improved readability and comprehensiveness.

13. **Adoption of a legally binding annex under the Convention.** Article 31 of the UNCCD provides that, “Any additional annex to the Convention and any amendment to an annex shall be proposed and adopted in accordance with the procedure for amendment of the Convention set forth in article 30” unless it relates to the adoption of an additional regional implementation annex or an amendment to that annex. Thus, by using the same procedure for an amendment, it would be possible for the UNCCD COP to adopt an annex to the Convention that addresses drought. Also see Article 16 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Article 30 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

14. **Adoption of a legally binding Protocol or Agreement under the auspices of the Convention.** Protocols are seen as supplementary agreements to Conventions and intended to enhance their implementation. While it is linked to the parent agreement, it can focus on a specific aspect of that agreement in greater detail. The protocol would only be binding on those Parties who ratify or accede to it and would enter into force after an agreed number of Parties had ratified or acceded to it. A protocol would have its own governance structure and, under that governance structure, Parties would meet separately from the governance structure under the Convention.

15. **Adoption of (non-) legally binding decisions.** COPs of Multilateral Environmental Agreements can adopt decisions relative to implementation. Unless otherwise provided for by the provisions of a treaty, COP decisions can be both binding as well as non-binding on Parties. A decision is usually limited to the implementation of a Convention and cannot address questions that arise outside the mandate of the Convention. This is why Parties opt for a separate protocol or agreement should they wish to address a different subject matter or elaborate upon the provisions of a Convention. It is within the competence of the Parties to decide what falls within the mandate of a Convention. Decisions on implementation have also been adopted by the governing bodies of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

16. **Adoption of a non-legally binding instrument.** While the instrument does contain provisions for monitoring and reporting and promotes bilateral and multilateral cooperation, it is not a treaty under international law which creates binding obligations upon States that are Parties. Participating countries have only signed the instrument and there are no typical standard provisions in treaties concerning the method by which States would express their consent to be bound, such as acceptance, approval, accession or entry into force. A non-legally binding instrument does not require any procedure for its adoption.

17. **Adoption of a non-legally binding political declaration or decision.** It is possible for the COP of UNCCD to negotiate and adopt a political declaration that will be adopted in the form of a COP decision under the Convention. The High-Level Segment of the UNCCD COP has adopted declarations, many of which have focused on the implementation of the Convention. Those declarations have been welcomed or taken note of by COP decisions and included as an annex to the COP reports or decisions. Political declarations create visibility as they are often adopted by heads of state, governments and ministers. They are aspirational

in nature and usually contain broad provisions that address overarching policy concerns rather than specific areas or new areas for implementation.

18. **Non-legally binding global framework.** A global framework should be adopted by the United Nations inter-governmental bodies to address substantive matters under the Convention. This framework should not only be used to implement the Convention where governing bodies adopt it but also be used by other treaty bodies and processes. A governing body should decide to use the framework as a basis for imposing specific obligations upon Parties. The stated purpose of the framework is to galvanize action by governments and civil society to achieve the outcomes set out in the global framework's vision, mission, goals and targets with the framework being implemented primarily at the national level. However, it is envisaged that the decision of the COP that would adopt the framework could include obligations to Parties with respect to reporting, review and means of implementation.

19. **Legal instrument outside the UNCCD, initiated via the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).** Member States should adopt a resolution through the UNEA that sets in motion inter-governmental negotiations on a legal instrument under the UNEA. Thus, in the past, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council has adopted decisions that set in motion inter-governmental negotiations for the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

20. **Legal instruments outside the UNCCD initiated via the General Assembly.** Member States should seek a mandate from the General Assembly and have the Assembly adopt a resolution that will set in motion a process to negotiate a legal instrument. Thus, for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the General Assembly adopted resolution 45/212 of 21 December 1990 which established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to be supported by the UNEP and World Meteorological Organization in the negotiation of a Convention. The General Assembly also decided upon a similar process with resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification, i.e. the UNCCD, except that the secretariat was an ad hoc secretariat drawn from staff within the United Nations system.

21. Increased specificity of wording, targets, time frames, processes, and national responsibilities in an updated and **renewed global commitment** to improve proactive drought management and reduce drought impacts.

22. Continuing to **raise the profile** of drought with development partners. Given the massive economic and social impacts of drought, this level of support is shockingly insufficient. The UNCCD should continue to use its global platform to highlight the need for additional resources to address this critical challenge before it becomes a crisis.

23. Developing a **work programme** on drought resilience with the aim of strengthening and facilitating the implementation of measures for addressing drought in an effective manner at all levels, and enhancing drought preparedness, community and ecosystem resilience, and the adoption of a holistic and integrated approach.

24. **COP Guidance to the Global Environment Facility (GEF)** (COP decision on the collaboration with the GEF). The COP invites the GEF, subject to the availability of resources (in GEF-9 programming), to enhance efforts to enable Parties to the UNCCD to implement national drought plans according to the principles of Integrated Drought Management. It should do so by focalizing its activities under resources committed to the third Specific Objective of GEF-8 ("Address desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) issues, particularly in drylands") within the Land Degradation Focal Area (to be renamed the 'Land Degradation and Drought Focal Area') of the next GEF cycle, as part of a strengthened proactive drought management approach, in order to advocate for a strong increase in resource allocation and the full realization of the synergetic potential of complementary thematic activities, and by strengthening/mainstreaming the proactive drought management approach embedded within the Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program or, if considered appropriate, to create (in the GEF-9) a new integrated programme synergically addressing proactive drought prevention and management, taking into account key biodiversity and climate challenges linked to drought causes and consequences.

25. **Cross-compliance rules and mandate.** The COP requests Parties to develop and implement governance mechanisms which allow, support and assure that they take drought into account and contribute to drought resilience. The UNCCD will be mandated, subject to the availability of resources, to elaborate guidelines, provide capacity development, assist in implementation, and assess the effectiveness and efficiency of such a mechanism.

26. **COP guidance to the GM.** The COP requests the GM, subject to the availability of resources, to increase efforts to support Parties to the UNCCD in implementing national drought plans and, in particular, key finance-related tasks, building on the report (Incorporating a Drought Finance Strategy into National Drought Action Plans and Policies) requested in paragraph 5 of decision 23/COP.14, by providing technical knowledge and assistance to drought-vulnerable countries. More specifically, parties invite the GM to provide guidance for the development of national capacities and to identify at all levels the financing needs and opportunities for drought risk reduction and resilience-building activities in relation to those already existing, including partnerships with the private sector.

27. **Define a global target.** The COP requests Parties to the UNCCD to jointly define a global target for drought resilience, and to implement monitoring and reporting on this target to the COP at regular intervals. Particular emphasis should be placed on the implementation and impact of national drought management plans developed under UNCCD guidance. The exact indicators would be selected at COP 17 based on recommendations by the Science-Policy Interface and experiences during the first round of monitoring of levels 1 and 2.

28. The implementation of national drought plans by Parties to the UNCCD according to the principles of Integrated Drought Management, by focalizing resources on a strengthened proactive drought management approach.

29. **COP guidance to the GM.** The COP welcomes the various initiatives of the GM aiming to support affected countries in project design focused on DLDD, such as the establishment of the project preparation partnership for transformative land-based solutions which seeks to accelerate the preparation of investment-ready land-based solutions. The COP also invites the GM to scale up this partnership on projects that contribute to more proactive drought management in vulnerable countries:

(a) Welcomes the support of the GM to the Southern African Development Community Parties in the formulation of a strategy for the operationalization of the Great Green Wall, and greatly appreciates that the proposed first pillar of this strategy (“Water for All”) is focused on drought and water scarcity, reflecting the acute needs of this particular issue. As underscored in the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction’s Global Assessment Report on drought, this strategy rightfully identified drought events as the most common, costly and deadly natural disaster in southern Africa, which requires specific attention and bold actions;

(b) Requests the GM, subject to the availability of resources, to increase efforts to further support Parties to the UNCCD in the implementation of national drought plans submitted by Parties, in particular by enhancing their capacity to access finance through capacity-building, knowledge-sharing on project proposal drafting, and the training of stakeholders (including youth and women);

(c) Invites the GM to further assist countries in the formulation and refinement of financing proposals aiming to strengthen proactive drought management at global, regional and national level in order to engage with donors and the private sector, help co-design national, multi-country and regional projects addressing drought-related issues (i.e. early warning systems) and tap into innovative and blended financing opportunities;

(d) Encourages the GM to reach out to the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund, the GEF and other relevant sources of funding to identify opportunities to mainstream proactive drought management considerations into their project pipeline and achieve synergies with existing and emerging funding streams;

(e) Invites the GM to assess the outputs and outcomes achieved by the Drought Initiative and the limitations it encountered, and also invites the GM to consult with involved countries and key development partners on how to build on this initiative, if deemed relevant

(i.e. to identify what perspectives and ways forward, if any, could be proposed to the Drought Initiative).

30. **Regional Early Warning Systems** closely linked to national systems and transboundary systems, where relevant, particularly in those regions where countries share common water bodies or cross boundary. The implementation of regional/sub-regional programmes for cooperation, knowledge exchange and capacity-strengthening to improve assessment and monitoring, and more proactive earlier warnings/action triggers.

31. Better use of sub-regional fora for building **assessment capabilities** and connections to regional economic cooperation for decisions and joint actions, including transboundary resource and risk management.

32. Identification of **economic returns** from the use of both traditional and innovative financing instruments, such as insurance products, bonds, microfinance and drought funds. Encouraging sufficient availability and use of such instruments in a regional context.

33. Tailoring the UNCCD's **Drought Toolbox** to regional needs, and further advance by testing the effectiveness of interventions and enabling knowledge exchange and capacity-building. More good practice case studies should be presented to assist in designing regional/national drought policies.

34. Enhancement of regional-level capacity-building, networks, **capacity development** and exchange of existing knowledge related to global-level institutions.

35. **Regular monitoring** of drought risks, exposure and impacts on land, water, ecosystems, communities and economies (not only meteorological effects) and their improved use to trigger decisions by policy-makers. It is imperative to include local communities, civil society and other stakeholders to engage in information sharing and implementation.

36. Translation of drought vulnerability/impacts on people and ecosystems into financial and economic terms and national economic **accounting** to encourage decision-makers to take drought risks into account.

37. An updated **Drought Resilience, Adaptation and Management Policy framework** and national action plan development guidelines would be critical resources for countries developing drought action plans and policies. With the development of guidance on assessing the benefits of action and costs of inaction in dealing with drought, there is an opportunity to incorporate various resources into a comprehensive tool for national drought commissions.

38. Demonstration of **business cases and de-risking** for private actors and development banks to ensure sufficient national investments in drought preparedness (e.g. through national drought funds, government-supported insurance schemes, and access to regional and/or global drought emergency funds). A more detailed understanding of business cases for proactive drought management will help the UNCCD in its global advocacy with development partners. There is emerging evidence demonstrating the return on investment of addressing drought before it becomes a crisis. However, there is opportunity for much more work in this area. Identifying and quantifying the co-benefits of investments in assets conducive to drought resilience help make the case that investing in proactive drought management is good business.

39. Programmes for **livelihood diversification** can help vulnerable people to succeed in building their resilience to drought. Effective strategies, such as asset-building, off-farm employment, migration, mobility and household remittances are context-dependent and should be determined by the vulnerable people themselves (with or without external assistance). Where external support includes financial support, this may be accessed by vulnerable people through locally administered funds, such as revolving funds, savings cooperatives or local adaptation funds, as well as access to credit.

40. Recognizing drought as a relevant **water management** issue. Using natural hazards and disasters literature and learning from practice-proven examples. Using development literature that links global science to local decision-making in order to reduce water losses and increase water productivity, including water re-use for irrigation or industrial purposes.

Accelerating good practices to increase crop productivity and stop leakages from water distribution networks and green infrastructure, particularly natural water retention measures.

41. Making **hydro-literacy** a compulsory educational component in schools and higher-education, as well as in educational facilities for journalistic work, since effective hydrological systems are critical to functional ecological and societal systems, including the well-being of individuals.

42. Addressing **overconsumption**. This requires change in the overconsumption in certain countries requires national policy changes.

43. Effective implementation of **reforestation** targets to combat desertification, and the introduction of technologies to replenish ground water systems. The halting of global deforestation and introduction of new technologies to reduce timber usage.

44. Connections across various **scales of governance** to manage drought; the integration of drought management into planning, budget allocation and financing systems; the provision of guidance around increasing investments in water management; implementing monitoring systems, and any other action that can be driven and regulated from this level.

45. Where basin and catchment level governance systems face challenges due to **transboundary administrative arrangements** and weak institutional precedents for regulation, additional investments in institution-building and cooperation are often needed to ensure sufficient support to address these monitoring and governance issues in the most drought-affected regions.

46. Countries could lead a **regular survey** of local governments in drought-affected regions. This would enable local authorities to list which local programmes, associations and funds are operational at the community level in their constituencies to support livelihood diversification and asset-building.

47. **National action plans, drought policies and laws**. Many countries lack updated policies and laws to address droughts. It is important to encourage the development of national drought laws and policies. There should be national action plans produced by each country to be implemented within a specific timeline.

48. **Traditional knowledge and community participation**. Local communities often have traditional systems to deal with drought risks which can be scaled and replicated. These systems should be identified and promoted with the assistance of community participation.
