



13-17 NOVEMBER 2023
SAMARKAND, UZBEKISTAN

CRIC 21

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

[UNCCD.INT/CRIC21](https://unccd.int/cric21)

For immediate release

Media Advisory

Central Asia to host first-ever meeting of the UN treaty on desertification, land degradation & drought

**21st Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC21) meeting in
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 13-17 November 2023.**

Bonn/Samarkand, 09/11/2023 - The twenty-first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 21) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 13-17 November 2023.

CRIC21 will bring together an estimated 500 delegates from 196 countries and the European Union, civil society, and academia to reflect on progress in delivering the Convention's strategic objectives. It marks the first time UNCCD convenes one of its most significant meetings in Central Asia, since its establishment.

This meeting comes at a critical juncture, as recent data launched by UNCCD shows that the world is losing nearly 100 million hectares of healthy and productive land every year. If current trends continue, 1.5 billion hectares of land will need to be restored by 2030 to achieve land degradation neutrality around the globe. But, halting additional degradation and accelerating existing commitments alone could surpass the neutrality target.

UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw said: "Droughts, wildfires and heatwaves we have witnessed around the world are the symptoms of the deepening and interlinked climate and nature crises, with land at the heart of both. Since 2015, some 4 million square kilometres of healthy and productive lands have been lost—an area roughly the size of Central Asia. We must urgently stop further land degradation and restore at least 1 billion hectares to meet global land targets by 2030."

CRIC21 will be held at the **Silk Road Samarkand Congress Centre**. Parties will have the opportunity to review progress and provide recommendations towards achieving global targets to prevent and reverse land degradation, in line with the 2018-2030 UNCCD strategic and implementation frameworks.

Among the highlights of the CRIC21 programme:

- **Opening plenary on 13 November from 10:00-13:00** with introductory statements from the Chair of the CRIC, the UNCCD Executive Secretary and the representative of the Government of Uzbekistan.
- **UNCCD Gender Caucus on 14 and 16 November from 13:00-15:00** will convene international experts to discuss women's land rights as a prerequisite to the success of global land restoration and drought resilience efforts.
- A high-level political event on **Sand and Dust Storms** hosted by the government of Uzbekistan will be held **on 15 November from 10:00-13:00**. In recent years, sand and dust storms have increased in both frequency and severity in both Uzbekistan and surrounding countries.
- For the first time, **more than 30 side events** will be organized at CRIC21. These events provide the informal opportunity for parties and accredited observer organizations to exchange information and experiences on diverse issues related to the objectives of the Convention.

Press briefings will be held throughout CRIC21 between 13:00-15:00 local time, including:

- **13 November: Focus on Central Asia:** global and regional trends on desertification, land degradation and drought with UNCCD Chief Scientist, Dr Barron Orr, and Programme Officer, Science, Technology and Innovation Unit, Ms Olga Andreeva (TBC).
- **14 November: Her Land. Her Rights:** global and regional efforts to advance women's land rights and their engagement in land restoration and drought resilience efforts with UNCCD and regional experts (TBC).
- **15 November: Sand and Dust Storms:** the latest data on this growing phenomenon with UNCCD and regional experts, as well as the outcomes of the high-level event hosted by the Government of Uzbekistan.
- **17 November: Closing press conference:** an overview of the key outcomes of CRIC21 with Mr Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD Executive Secretary, Ms. Biljana Kilibarda, Chair of the CRIC, and Mr Aziz Abdukhakimov, Uzbek Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Accredited media representatives are invited to attend and report on CRIC21 and associated events. Field visits where journalists can see land restoration and drought resilience projects will take place immediately before and after CRIC21.

Daily highlights of CRIC21 will be provided by the IISD *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*: <https://enb.iisd.org/unccd-committee-review-implementation-convention-cric21>

Side events schedule is available here: <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2023-10/Side%20Events%20CRIC21.pdf>

Visual assets about CRIC21 and the UNCCD Data Dashboard are available here: <https://trello.com/b/zq0kxtkK/unccd-cric21-samarkand-uzb-2023>

Online registration for media representatives is available at the following link: www.unccd.int/cric-21-online-registration.

To register, please provide the following documents:

- One recent passport-sized photograph;
- A valid press card;
- A copy (picture and signature pages) of your passport (for foreign journalists) or national identity card (for local applicants);
- A letter of introduction from the bureau chief or company sponsoring your travel to the session. For freelance journalists, a letter is required from the media organization assigning you to cover the conference;
- A duly completed accreditation form.

Journalists who register online will be able to collect their accreditation at the Silk Road Samarkand Congress Center on presentation of a valid press card and an identity document.

For more information on the regulations governing visa applications and the introduction of reporting material into Uzbekistan, please consult the following link: <https://e-visa.gov.uz/main>

For inquiries about media accreditation or coverage of the event, please contact: press@unccd.int

A dedicated press and media working space will be available at the conference venue.

Additional information and media updates on the Convention and CRIC 21 will be available on the UNCCD website: <https://www.unccd.int/cric21>

About 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.