

**Chisinau DECLARATION on the outcomes  
of the Interregional Meeting on Drought and Land Degradation Neutrality  
CEE/NM/CA countries**

We, the representatives of 15 Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) – the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan – having met in Chisinau, on 22-24 April 2024, on the occasion of the Interregional Conference on Drought and Land Degradation Neutrality, hosted by the Republic of Moldova:

a) *Acknowledging* that in its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the UNCCD has proven to be an important mechanism of cooperation on such issues as desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). Though many important results have been achieved, further accelerated action is needed to reach the goals of the Convention.

b) *Reaffirming* our strengthened commitment to the implementation of the goals of the UNCCD and its 2018-2030 Strategic Framework,

c) *Also reaffirming* that the challenges posed by DLDD on ecosystems, economic and social development and poverty eradication require concerted action to address them,

d) *Stressing* the need to establish effective institutional arrangements and systematic methodology for engaging country Parties and concerned stakeholders in the translation and transmission of knowledge on land restoration and drought resilience – be it scientific, practical, traditional or local – as well as diagnosing potential constraints, responses, monitoring and assessments needs into a form that is usable and relevant for those affected by drought,

e) *Recognizing* that the global community faces a significant challenge – degradation of land resources at an unprecedented scale which is a global obstacle for sustainable development, conservation of biodiversity, mitigation and adaptation to climate change and that this poses a significant threat to food security, water availability, and ecosystem resilience, and has serious socio-economic implications,

f) *Highlighting* the importance of achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN) – an ambitious target that allows countries to track progress towards environmental sustainability and *calling for* all relevant actors to support LDN achievement, and actions for conserving healthy lands,

g) *Being aware* of the need to raise awareness and promote LDN, strengthen the countries' capacities in combating land degradation and drought through sharing knowledge and best practices on land-related issues and integrated drought, water and land management,

h) *Underlying* that there are strong links between the land-drought nexus and human decisions on land management and land use change which impacts availability of healthy lands and water resources and determines ecosystem and human resilience to drought,

- i) *Being greatly concerned* by the alarming effects of drought in the world<sup>1</sup> and other extreme weather events such as flooding, SDS and heat waves,
- j) *Restating* that making ecosystems and people resilient to drought is of utmost importance for the survival of humankind and is in the core of UNCCD's work,
- k) *Mindful* of the importance of the economics of drought preparedness on promoting mechanisms that facilitate, *inter alia*, the sharing of experiences, best practices on drought resilience - management and mitigation as well as the transfer of appropriate drought management related technology and promotion of indigenous knowledge and technologies on drought mitigation,
- l) *Resolving* that there is need to establish a set of rules (modus operandi) that provide guidance towards addressing a wide range of the negative impacts of drought across ecological, social, political and economic sectors as well as promoting wise stewardship of the land, its sustainable management and mitigating the degradation and loss of natural resources informed by, *inter alia*, the best available scientific information, experience acquired during the implementation of the Convention as well as recognized good practices and processes thereunder, outputs from other relevant intergovernmental processes and insights from the business and research communities and civil society,
- m) *Bearing in mind* the positive experience and outcomes of previous UNCCD events, particularly the workshop on drought in Istanbul in May 2023 and the UNCCD Scientific-Practical Conference in Dushanbe in July 2023,
- n) *Recalling* that this meeting is celebrated in observance of Desertification and Drought Day (17 June) and other international environmental days, such as World Wetlands Day (02 February); International Day of Forests (21 March), World Water Day (22 March), World Meteorological Day (23 March) and International Mother Earth Day (22 April), World Environment Day (05 June),

**HEREBY DECLARE THE FOLLOWING:**

1. We congratulate all Parties of the UNCCD on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention and reaffirm our strong commitment to addressing DLDD.
2. We underscore the importance of achieving LDN as a guiding framework for reversing land degradation trends while simultaneously promoting sustainable land management (SLM) practices and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation and biodiversity conservation and restoration. Adequate evidence and monitoring are essential to achieving LDN.
3. We welcome further support in setting, upscaling and achieving the voluntary LDN targets. The enhancement of LDN targets is essential for addressing land degradation and promoting SLM practices and approaches. Therefore, we highly appreciate the commencement of the LDN TSP2 Initiative.
4. We encourage developing national strategies on combatting DLDD based on a holistic and integrated approach, incorporating LDN in all relevant national policies and strategic documents, improving LDN legislative framework to better support SLM.

---

<sup>1</sup> The UNCCD Global Drought Snapshot (December, 2023) provides concrete data based on the report of the country Parties to the UNCCD: 1.84 billion people are drought stricken, out of which 4.7 per cent are exposed to severe or extreme drought.

5. We call for the creation of strong national, regional and interregional mechanisms for effective vertical and horizontal coordination of the institutions in planning and undertaking DLDD activities on national level.
6. We reaffirm the importance and look forward to strengthening cooperation on drought issues, that are becoming increasingly intensive and turning into disasters with negative impacts on ecosystems and social and economic life of our people.
7. We encourage the Parties and the Secretariat to continue paying attention to reducing drought risk & enhance drought resilience for cities, communities and ecosystems, and we look forward to welcome the results of the challenging work of the IWG on drought, tasked by the Parties to come up with optimal solutions to effectively manage drought under the Convention.
8. We acknowledge the need to establish/expand drought monitoring, early warning and decision support systems and provide timely information to consumers at all levels. We encourage the implementation of modern geographic information systems (GIS) and digital land mapping for land monitoring and integrated land use planning and support the application of drought-smart land management and agriculture practices.
9. We encourage development partners to avail drought-affected countries with appropriate technology and up-to-date methodologies necessary for developing and improving drought monitoring, seasonal forecasts, early warning and information delivery systems.
10. We underscore the need to develop local action plans for DLDD and drought management plans on national and regional levels, in close cooperation with local communities.
11. We commit ourselves to raise awareness and promote education and knowledge on drought resilience, LDN and the promotion of SLM practices.
12. We welcome the launch of Community of Learning and Practice on Drought Management for Central and Eastern Europe and Northern Mediterranean, open for countries of other regions to join, and call to active engagement in the framework of this platform to develop stronger cooperation on drought issues.
13. Considering the discussion and the Closing statement of the Annex V countries at CRIC 21, as well as discussing the actual global significance of the drought impact and the SDG target 15.3, the development of land-based solutions for sustainable land use, climate change adaptation and ecosystems restoration, that goes beyond just arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions at the global, regional and national levels, we propose to substantively consider the issue of expanding the UNCCD mandate and scope to all territories of the globe and include this topic in the UNCCD Protocol on Drought, which is under development and would be discussed at COP16.
14. Recognizing the overall interlinkage between DLDD and political conflicts, the Parties of the Interregional Meeting advocate for the speedy peaceful resolution of military conflicts at the global and regional levels, which will have a positive impact on the ecological balance and sustainability of ecosystems, on the achievement of LDN and the implementation of the goals of the UNCCD and other RIO Conventions.
15. We are pleased to see progress made in advancing gender equality within the implementation of the Convention and we are grateful that the Convention is committed to fully integrating women across all its actions and domains. We are pleased to see gender balance achievement in our meeting.

16. We salute the efforts of the Republic of Moldova in mainstreaming and advocating the need to achieve LDN in the country.
  17. We extend our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Moldova for hosting the Interregional Meeting on Drought and LDN.
  18. We are thankful to all technical and financial partners who enabled to organize this timely and meaningful meeting.
  19. We thank the IDMP, GWP, ICPDR, UNECE Water Convention, GIZ, FAO REU for the substantive contributions to the discussions at the interregional event on drought and LDN and we look forward for further strengthened collaboration with the UNCCD on the growing needs for exchange of experiences and success stories in the CEE, NM ad CA regions.
  20. We thank FAO and UNCCD secretariat for providing an opportunity to discuss DLDD issues as a multidimensional problem, its impacts, and ways of its sustainable management, with direct implications towards achieving LDN and drought resilience for the benefit of the implementation of the Convention and the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework strategic objectives.
  21. We commend the efforts of the UNCCD secretariat to support further regional and interregional cooperation to find effective solutions to overcome challenges in combatting DLDD with joint efforts.
-