



Ref.: COP16/2024/GEN

NOTE VERBALE

The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) presents its compliments to the Embassy and has the honour to inform that the **sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16), the twenty-second session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC22) and the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST16)** to the UNCCD will take place in **Riyadh**, at Al Imam Saud Ibn Faysal Rd, Hittin, **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** from **2 to 13 December 2024**. The secretariat of UNCCD has the honour to invite the Government of your country to participate in COP16 under the overarching theme “*Our land, our future*”.

Regional consultations of affected country Parties of the Convention’s regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern European country Parties in preparation to COP16 will be convened in two periods, one set of meetings will happen in the regions during September and October, and the second set of meetings will happen in Riyadh prior to the session **from 30 November to 1 December 2024, at the same venue**. For the regional consultation meetings, specific invitations and information will be sent to the different regions.

A **high-level segment¹** including a **Leaders Summit** will be organized at the beginning of the session on 2 and 3 December. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is working closely with the secretariat and numerous partners to deliver an ambitious **Riyadh Action Agenda** that will include thematic days to raise awareness and scale up transformative solutions. During the thematic days several side events and official high-level events will happen under different formats including High Level Interactive Dialogues, Ministerial Round Tables and Special Events. Specific information about the thematic days and the events will be uploaded at <https://www.unccd.int/cop16>.

The high-level interactive dialogues focusing on the following topics: (a) agri-food systems, (b) land governance and (c) science-innovation and technology will be organized from 5 to 9 December 2024. Ministerial dialogues on drought resilience and finance will be organized from 10 to 11 December 2024.

During the initial segment, from 2 to 6 December, in addition to the CST16 and CRIC22 sessions, the Committee of the Whole (COW) would initiate its work. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the civil society input in the deliberations of the COP, two half-days of open dialogue sessions have been planned on 5 and 9 December in the morning.

During the concluding segment, the COP will consider all decisions not previously adopted. It will decide inter alia on the date and venue of the twenty-third session of the CRIC taking into account decision 13/COP.13 on the terms of reference of the CRIC, its operations and its schedule of meetings, and any further decision on the matter taken during the current session.

The secretariat and the incoming presidency recognize the importance of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, and welcomes the inclusion of representatives of youth, women, and civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, private sector, academia, local governments, among others, as part of your delegation.

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All Embassies of Parties and NFP to UNCCD

¹ Information about the high-level segment will be included in document ICCD/COP(16)/INF.2 and made available on the UNCCD website



In order to assist delegations in preparing for the conference, a provisional agenda and relevant documents for the session are being made available on the UNCCD website² including the “Information for participants” (ICCD/COP(16)/INF.1) document.

It is requested that representatives of Parties to the Convention be provided with full powers to participate in the session, including the possibility to serve as officers of COP16 and its subsidiary bodies, and of any sessional committees, working groups or subsidiary bodies, established by the Conference.

The secretariat of the UNCCD would like to remind that, in accordance with Rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, the credentials of delegations shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or, in the case of a regional economic integration organization, by the competent authority of that organization. Parties are kindly requested to observe this requirement.

It is brought to the attention of States that are not Parties at the time of COP16 that, in accordance with article 22, paragraph 7 of the Convention and rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, anybody or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which is qualified in matters covered by the Convention and which has informed the Permanent Secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session of the Conference of the Parties as an observer may be so admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present at the session object.

Please also note that COP16 will be a paperless session. Accordingly, official pre-session documents for COP16/CRIC22/CST16 sessions will be made available on the UNCCD website and the UNCCD Conference app. Official documents prepared in session will also be posted on the website and the Conference app. Limited quantities may be printed on demand only.

The secretariat would be grateful if the Government of your country would kindly nominate the representative(s) who will attend COP16. Online registration will be available from 15 July 2024 on this link: <https://www.unccd.int/cop16/registration>. All participants are required to upload an official nomination letter confirming their capacity to attend the COP16 session. For more information on the online registration, please refer to the document “Information for participants” (ICCD/COP(16)/INF.1).

The secretariat would like to draw your attention that participants are responsible for getting their own visas, hotel reservations and any type of health or other insurance they may need. While the secretariat will assist with the issuance of Note Verbale, participants requiring visas must therefore obtain these from the Embassies or Consulates of Saudi-Arabia in their country before their departure to Riyadh.

The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Embassy, the assurances of its highest consideration.

[Signed and stamped]

Bonn, 16 July 2024

² Please check the following link: <https://www.unccd.int/cop16/official-documents>