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**Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention**

**Twenty-second session**

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Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda

**Securing of additional investments and relations with financial mechanisms**

**Report by the Global Mechanism on progress made in the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Convention and matters relating to Sustainable Development Goal 15.3**

**Progress made in the mobilization of resources for the  
implementation of the Convention and Sustainable  
Development Goal 15.3 matters**

**Report by the Global Mechanism**

*Summary*

At its fifteenth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) requested the Global Mechanism (GM) to report on the implementation of decision 3/COP.15 on the integration of Sustainable Development Goal 15 and related target 15.3 into the implementation of the Convention and land degradation neutrality, and of decision 13/COP.15 on the progress made in the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Convention at the sixteenth session of the COP (COP 16).

This document reports on progress made on the above elements and provides an overview of GM activities, challenges and successes in three additional areas: (i) delivering impact at scale through flagship initiatives; (ii) fostering innovation; (iii) emerging initiatives and foresight. The report presents conclusions with recommendations for the consideration of Parties at COP 16.



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## **I. Introduction: decisions made at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, guiding resource mobilization and the work of the Global Mechanism on Sustainable Development Goal 15.3**

1. At its fifteenth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) requested the Global Mechanism (GM) to report on the implementation of decision 3/COP.15 on the integration of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 and related target 15.3 into the implementation of the Convention and land degradation neutrality (LDN), and of decision 13/COP.15 on the progress made in the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Convention at the sixteenth session of the COP (COP 16). Decision 12/COP.15 encourages country Parties to review and refine their voluntary LDN targets and promote their adoption at a high political level.

2. Decision 13/COP.15 requests the GM to strengthen partnerships to accelerate the development of a geographically balanced project preparation pipeline, through a partnership model, to facilitate gender-responsive, large-scale integrated landscape investment programmes and flagship initiatives that support work on sustainable land management (SLM) and drought resilience. Decision 13/COP.15 also requests the GM to continue to support the countries in promoting a paradigm shift in the way drought is managed and forge specific partnerships to mobilize technical and financial support for transformative projects on drought prevention.

3. The GM has also been involved, in coordination with the secretariat, in the implementation of other decisions taken at COP 15, including, but not limited to, decision 6/COP.15 on promoting the greater participation and involvement of the private sector, as well as decisions 9/COP.15, 11/COP.15, 23/COP.15, 26/COP.15 and 27/COP.15.

4. This document reports on the main activities undertaken by the GM and successes achieved during the 2022–2023 biennium, along with an analysis of challenges and lessons learned, where applicable. It presents conclusions with recommendations for the consideration of Parties at COP 16.

## **II. Framework of Global Mechanism activities**

5. Parties have high expectations of and demand much from the GM in terms of mobilizing resources and providing technical support. Since COP 15, demand for support from Parties and other stakeholders has been increasing while the economic environment for resource mobilization remains challenging. LDN remains the organizing principle for resource mobilization activities at the UNCCD, but the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing geopolitical instability have left many economies fragile, with fears of recession, rising inflation and high debt levels limiting the ability of many to either contribute to desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) projects or make use of concessional financing opportunities. Despite this, considerable progress has been made and the GM acknowledges with appreciation the additional voluntary contributions received from the Republic of Korea through the Changwon Initiative and Peace Forest Initiative, as well as from Austria, Canada, China, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy and Spain. These contributions have allowed progress to be made in this work.

### **A. Sustainable Development Goal 15 and target 15.3 matters, including improvements in strategic objective 5 reporting**

6. Since decision 3/COP.12, UNCCD country Parties, UNCCD institutions, and over 20 institutional, technical and financing partners have been cooperating to achieve SDG target 15.3 through multiple relevant approaches, including: (i) setting LDN targets based on best available data on LDN indicators and related LDN baselines; (ii) advancing the financing and implementation of LDN through project preparation partnerships which deliver

transformative programmes; and (iii) gradually improving access to data, sound methodologies, and the required capacities for the effective monitoring and reporting of LDN. Significant progress has been made globally in terms of the voluntary LDN target - setting and national commitments for land restoration, conservation and sustainable management, however overall trends remain worrying.

7. As recently reported in document ICCD/CRIC(21)/2, and as a contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, during the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation Systems (PRAIS) 2022 exercise, country Parties were requested to provide information on: (i) their total area of degraded land; and (ii) the proportion of degraded land relative to their total land area (i.e. SDG indicator 15.3.1) in the baseline and reporting period. A total of 115 country Parties reported quantitative information on SDG indicator 15.3.1, with the data reported covering approximately 56 per cent of the total global land area.

8. Based on reported data, and as indicated by the UNCCD Data Dashboard,<sup>1</sup> land degradation is increasing at a steady rate, with 15.5 per cent of reported land already degraded (an increase of four per cent in four years). Between 2015 and 2019, at least 100 million hectares of healthy and productive land were degraded every year. This alone comes close to the total hectares of country restoration commitments set under the LDN target framework to date. The rate at which healthy and productive land continues to degrade will prevent country Parties from achieving SDG 15 and target 15.3 by 2030.

9. In addition, for the 2022 reporting cycle supported by the GM, country Parties reported on strategic objective 5 (SO 5) against five improved progress indicators (following decision 11/COP.14). Four of these indicators had quantitative components while one was exclusively qualitative in nature. The results were presented at the twenty-first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 21), held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in November 2023. Along with enhanced cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and other international partners, we will need to continue to improve SO 5 reporting guidance and provide capacity-building to ensure a more comprehensive overview and refined descriptions for default data.

10. In the context of LDN, the LDN Target Setting Programme<sup>2</sup> (LDN-TSP) has supported a total of 131 participating countries to date in setting voluntary LDN targets. As of 15 June 2024, 112 countries have successfully set and technically validated their voluntary LDN targets and associated measures, and 106 final national LDN reports are publicly available on the UNCCD website<sup>3</sup>. In total, 76 countries have officially adopted their LDN targets and delivered a high-level LDN note signed at the highest possible level by a minister, inter-ministerial body, cabinet council, or the Head of State, and 65 of these are publicly available on the UNCCD website.

11. The latest publicly available global assessment of land restoration commitments<sup>4</sup> indicated that this process has resulted in voluntary commitments by country Parties to restore over 450 million hectares of degraded land. A more recent internal assessment undertaken by the GM in 2024 in support of the needs assessment indicates that this figure may now be closer to 600 million hectares. According to the same global assessment, these voluntary commitments are complemented by an additional 250 million hectares currently covered by Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and some 90 million hectares included in the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity. In both cases, these figures are also expected to increase in the context of the ongoing update process for NDCs and NBSAPs, and for LDN targets under revision as part of the LDN TSP 2.0 (*see part V. A*).

12. As the custodian agency for SDG indicator 15.3.1, the UNCCD transmitted the reported country data, complemented by 52 additional estimates based on default data

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<sup>1</sup> <https://data.unccd.int/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unccd.int/actions/ldn-target-setting-programme>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unccd.int/our-work/country-profiles/voluntary-ldn-targets>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.pbl.nl/en/publications/goals-and-commitments-for-the-restoration-decade>.

sources, to the United Nations Statistics Division as a direct contribution to the Global SDG Indicator Database, the Secretary-General's 2023 Progress Report,<sup>5</sup> and the SDG Report 2023.

## **B. Needs Assessment of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**

13. Ambitious agendas have been established by country Parties to combat DLDD through frameworks and plans such as LDN, national drought plans (NDPs), and UNCCD 2022 Reporting. Further DLDD-related outcomes that country Parties expect to achieve have also been captured through policy frameworks, such as the NDCs. This represents a bold set of targets, measures and activities covering thematic areas, including agriculture, energy, water and infrastructure, which will effectively contribute to implementing the Convention. In decision 13/COP.15, the GM was asked to conduct an initial Financial Needs Assessment (FNA) to determine the resources required for full implementation of the Convention based on these existing DLDD-related plans and commitments.

14. ICCD/CRIC(22)/INF.1, entitled "UNCCD Financial Needs Assessment: Main Trends and Key Findings", provides further information on the key findings of the FNA while the full report will be released at COP 16. As part of the consultation process, the Needs Assessment methodology was made available for the review of the UNCCD national focal points (NFPs) in late 2023.

15. We recognize that this approach is potentially conservative compared to total needs. Current degradation trends suggest that 1.5 billion hectares will need to be sustainably managed or restored to achieve LDN, however country Parties plan to restore just over one billion hectares by 2030, with around 60 countries having prepared their NDPs. The amount of financing needed to achieve LDN and drought resilience is greater than the amount of financing needed to deliver on these current plans. Nevertheless, thousands of policy measures are proposed in current plans, and these actions will require the mobilization of increased and adequate amounts of resources.

16. Overall, the total required investments to implement current DLDD-related plans and their associated global land restoration commitments are estimated at USD 355 billion per year, while current investment flows in land are estimated at USD 77 billion per year. This results in an estimated financial gap of USD 278 billion per year to achieve current DLDD plans. Notwithstanding any increase in ambition related to the revision of targets and plans, current investments in DLDD-related processes at the global level must increase at least three and half times to close the estimated financing gap.

17. The GM has developed a Resource Mobilization Strategy (see part V. B) based on this Needs Assessment to support Parties in closing the financing gap and achieving the objectives of the Convention, as requested by decision 13/COP.15.

## **C. The Global Mechanism's approach – a platform business model**

18. The GM's previous business model and structure was not conducive to making a meaningful contribution to this ambitious agenda. As such, at COP 15, country Parties also reiterated the call for the GM to support resource mobilization and project preparation through partnerships. The Parties emphasized the importance of a partnership model to overcome the GM's structural weaknesses and expedite the development of balanced project pipelines, facilitating gender-responsive, large-scale landscape investments for SLM and drought resilience. Additionally, there was a push for intersectoral collaboration at various governance levels to prioritize addressing DLDD impacts on national development plans and relevant sectoral strategies.

19. The GM has successfully transitioned from a linear business model to a networked or platform business model across its workstreams, both incrementally and adaptively. A

<sup>5</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2023/secretary-general-sdg-report-2023--EN.pdf>.

platform business model, such as the Partnership for Project Preparation, generates value by enabling interactions between people, groups and users by leveraging network effects. This approach also helps address the capacity challenge in many country Parties. The partnership model is designed to help NFPs better understand the complexity of the financial architecture, and support access to grants, and concessional and private finance options. The GM has focused on facilitating strategic, investment and joint planning events between NFPs and stakeholders with direct access to funding opportunities, e.g. bringing national stakeholders from different ministries, notably the ministries of finance and planning, together with the finance focal points of vertical funds such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). We have benefited from the willingness of technical partners, including multilateral development banks, and bilateral and private funders, to showcase opportunities to access non-traditional financing sources and leverage climate or innovative financing models.

20. We have then collaborated with the most suitable technical partner to develop a pipeline of investable projects targeting the most appropriate funding sources. In addition to work around concept note development and project design, recognizing that the proposal development process can be long and sometimes arduous, the GM is now attempting to accelerate the pipeline and get more projects to the point of approval for financing and implementation. We now offer very practical needs-based support in the project development cycle with gender assessments and mainstreaming, feasibility assessments for specific in-demand programmes and projects, securing the required endorsement letters and supporting submissions to the targeted source of financing.

21. In terms of gender, it should be noted that by July 2024, at least seven of the projects approved for funding were provided with dedicated support to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment. This includes projects in Ethiopia, the Philippines, Rwanda, Togo and the Zambezi Watercourse (shared by eight countries). Furthermore, a project focusing on drought and gender in three countries in southern Africa was developed and approved with the African Development Bank and is expected to be launched during 2024. This project focuses on the identification of socio-economic challenges faced by women, and actions to promote the voice and agency of women, ultimately supporting women's empowerment, gender equality and the sustainability of results in land restoration projects. Further details on the GM's contribution to the implementation of the Gender Action Plan can be found in ICCD/COP(16)/17.

22. Overall, 96 countries have requested support to develop national and/or multicountry projects (approximately 103 concept notes in total) through the transformative projects and programmes workstream which is delivered through the Partnership for Project Preparation. As of July 2024, this portfolio includes: (a) 72 national projects (31 project concept notes have been developed, 10 are under development, and 31 are still to be developed); (b) 25 regional or multicountry projects (18 concept notes have been developed, 4 are under development, and 3 are still to be developed); and (c) 6 global projects (5 concept notes have been developed and 1 project is ongoing).

23. Excluding work done through the Great Green Wall Accelerator, this biennium and as of July 2024, the GM has supported the development of 29 concept notes through partnerships, including:

- (a) 1 national Greening Drylands Partnership pilot project in Ethiopia which was implemented and concluded in May 2024;
- (b) 18 projects approved for implementation (11 national and 7 regional);
- (c) 10 approved project concept notes (2 national, 4 regional and 4 global), with the full project documents currently under development;
- (d) 18 project concept notes or project documents currently under development which have not yet been approved (10 national, 6 regional and 2 global).

24. However, the transformative projects and programmes portfolio also includes 13 project ideas developed at an earlier date which are not active due to various issues, including the lack of a concrete or confirmed targeted source of funding and the limited engagement of countries and/or partners. These project ideas are considered dormant and continuous efforts

are being made to incorporate them into new projects with an identified targeted source of funding.

25. Overall, the total budget for 19 projects approved for implementation (a+b above) is approximately USD 946 million to date, comprised of USD 553 million from the targeted source of funding and USD 392 million from co-financing.

26. In addition, the total expected budget for the 10 project concept notes (c above), approved as of July 2024, is USD 1.85 billion, comprised of USD 300 million from the targeted source of financing and USD 1.555 billion from cofinancing. Therefore, the total amount mobilised if all of the 10 project concept notes are approved, i.e. 29 projects, is USD 2.793 billion, comprised of USD 854 million from targeted sources of funding and USD 1.939 billion from cofinancing.

27. We can conclude the partnership model has already created new momentum and is responding flexibly to increased demand for support in accessing a range of financing options. Further strengthening the partnership platform business model approach means continuing to convene stakeholders and expand the network of strategic, traditional and non-traditional partners to design transformative projects. There is scope under this model to design projects that synergistically contribute to all land-based targets of the three Rio conventions and generate benefits in terms of sustainable land and water management, biodiversity conservation, and climate mitigation and adaptation. Such a synergistic approach could have greater impact, allow access to complementary funding streams and align these funding streams with the UNCCD agenda around LDN and drought resilience. The same approach could be applied to other sectors, such as agriculture, energy and infrastructure.

28. Thus far, the GM has worked to collaborate with the operational focal points and national designated authorities of the GEF and GCF respectively, and Adaptation Fund with the GM pipeline of projects now blending streams of public and private funding on these issues. However, the landscape of climate, biodiversity and agriculture finance streams, among others, is evolving rapidly, including in relation to a potential new goal on global climate finance. The GM aims to stay informed and engaged with these developments in order to better serve Parties. A collaboration with, among others, the Italian G7 Presidency is anticipated as it sets up a Hub on Sustainable Use of Land, dedicated to promoting a collaborative and common approach to sustainable land use initiatives in Africa and the Mediterranean Basin, building on synergies with climate and biodiversity, and helping to build resilient, sustainable and productive agriculture.

29. While the partnership model is delivering welcome results, the GM is constantly reviewing its internal operational model to adapt and respond more effectively and evolve based on lessons learned. However, we operate with a lean team and while we have benefited from generous support from Canada, Germany through the Partnership for Project Preparation model, and the Republic of Korea under the Changwon Initiative, there would be additional impact if financing to support project preparation and resources to ensure long-term sustainability of the model were made available.

### **III. Impact at scale-flagships**

30. While supporting country Parties on an individual, flexible, demand-driven basis, the GM is placing increasing emphasis on working with ambitious and strategic multicountry, multisector programmes. With a lean GM team, these large-scale programmes have allowed us to allocate resources to secure the biggest impact, collectively serving the largest number of countries while leveraging complimentary funding. As these programmes are often aligned with long-term trends and sustainability goals, we aim to focus on value, longevity and adaptability in a changing landscape.

#### **A. Africa**

31. The Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) is an African-led effort to combat DLDD in the Sahel region and beyond. In its first 17 years, the GGWI restored 20 million hectares of

land, created 350,000 jobs, and generated USD 90 million. Since 2021, the GGW Accelerator, hosted by the GM, has supported implementing partners by overcoming practical challenges and strengthening the monitoring of the USD 19 billion pledged at the One Planet Summit. Funded by Ireland and Austria, the Accelerator maps available funding opportunities, connects financing with project needs and monitors project impact.

32. In June 2024, the launch of the [GGW Observatory](#) by the UNCCD, as part of the Accelerator, provided a platform for collating impact data and sharing best practices across 11 GGW countries. This platform contains tools for analysis, evidence for resource mobilization, and tracks additional commitments. UNCCD will continue to provide technical assistance.

33. Moving forward, the GM-based GGW Accelerator hopes to work with partners to help prepare a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy for the period 2026–2030. It aims to support collaboration through national coalitions integrating non-governmental stakeholders, and capacity-building for resource mobilization, notably guidance on how to write and apply for funding or readiness. We would continue to engage on monitoring of results and use of data. The Accelerator model, where the GM provides dedicated support and a convening platform to a specific group of countries delivering a flagship programme, has been effective and may be replicated in other regions, as needed.

34. To build the long-term sustainability of the GGWI and the viability of investments in the programme, and to anchor it within an evolving regional context, the GM aims to boost practical collaboration within the context of a greater Sahel region. The GM has also collaborated with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to support countries in the Horn of Africa and develop regional transboundary cooperation in the context of the Peace Forest Initiative, including a consultative workshop in May 2024 in partnership with IGAD and the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry.

35. Inspired by the Sahel GGWI and based on experience, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) launched its regional GGWI in 2016. The Southern African GGWI aims to create productive landscapes in the Southern Africa region that contribute to regional, socially inclusive economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. Through collaborative efforts by SADC Member States, the SADC Secretariat, the African Union Commission and partners, a draft regional strategy and implementation plan for the GGWI in the region was produced in 2018. The Southern Africa GGWI offers a unique opportunity for multi-sector coordination and scaling up of ongoing restoration mechanisms and other related commitments, such as the Miombo Initiative, transboundary river basin management, trans frontier conservation, regional agriculture and energy development among others.

36. Following the decision by COP 15 to support this initiative, the GM and the African Development Bank (AfDB) committed to the development of the Southern African GGW regional investment plan and have initiated a GEF Medium-Sized Project to carry out this work. This project will respond to key priorities (water, agriculture, energy, infrastructure, greening activities, etc.) and include an economic and social analysis and operational modalities. The Southern Africa GGWI will provide an intersectoral platform for planning and collaboration – to jointly mobilize existing financing and bring in new financing mechanisms and revenue streams – for its six investment pillars and cross cutting interventions.

37. The GM also supports other approved projects contributing to the Southern African GGWI ambitions, such as the Programme for Integrated Development and Adaptation to Climate Change (PIDACC) Portfolio which includes the PIDACC Zambezi Zone I, funded by the AfDB, the Zambezi Region Nature, People and Climate Investment Plan funded by the Climate Investment Funds, the Strengthening Zambezi River Basin Management towards Climate Resilience and Ecosystem Health funded by the GEF International Waters Focal Area and the Gender-transformative Resilience to Drought in Transition States in Southern Africa funded by the AfDB.

38. Overall, the GGWI is a transformative initiative in Africa which has made substantial progress and has the potential for significant impact on land restoration, livelihoods, and climate resilience in Africa. The GM's role in terms of convening multisector stakeholders



and framing and accelerating investments is valuable while the iconic nature of the GGW attracts political attention from policymakers and generates interest in DLDD issues among the public.

## **B. Latin America and the Caribbean**

39. Following the request for support articulated by UNCCD country Parties at a ministerial meeting held at COP 15, the GM is collaborating with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development<sup>6</sup> (CCAD) and other institutional, technical and financing partner agencies in the region to develop an initiative to help prevent migration in the Dry Corridor by boosting the resilience and livelihoods of local communities. The GM continues to collaborate with the CCAD and its partners to support the further development of the proposal and facilitate discussions with relevant bilateral and multilateral donors regarding potential funding for this transformative initiative.

40. This collaboration takes place within the framework of a memorandum of understanding between the UNCCD and CCAD, signed in 2023, and a letter of agreement concluded between the GM and CCAD in 2024, dedicated to supporting this initiative. Under the leadership of participating countries<sup>7</sup> and the CCAD, the scope of activities proposed under this initiative will be synergetic with relevant ongoing and upcoming initiatives in the Dry Corridor region, including the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Uses 2040 Strategy, the GCF Dry Corridor Project, the Dry Corridor Flagship Project under the United Nations Decade for Ecosystems Restoration, the upcoming GEF8 Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program for Mesoamerica, and relevant national projects funded by bilateral and multilateral donors (e.g. the GEF, GCF, Adaptation Fund, United States Agency for International Development, GIZ German development cooperation, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), etc.).

41. The GM is also collaborating with the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management<sup>8</sup> (PISLM) and other partner agencies in the Caribbean region to develop the regional Caribbean Small Islands Development States (CSIDs) programme. Following the leadership and vision of 12 participating country Parties<sup>9</sup>, the double mandate given to PISLM by its General Assembly and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the guidance provided by the GCF Secretariat, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda are now engaged in their capacities as GCF Direct Access Entities, with cooperation between PISLM and both partners under definition to complete the proposal formulation and submission process.

42. This proposal builds on and complements the GEF-funded “CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase1: Caribbean Small Island Developing States multicountry soil management initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food systems”<sup>10</sup>, implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and executed by PISLM and the upcoming CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase 2.

## **C. Asia: Pacific Islands and Central Asia**

43. The GM is also working more closely with the Pacific Island countries and regional organizations to explore joint working options.

44. At a first stakeholder workshop from 29 November to 1 December 2022, we focused on the available funding resources and potential project ideas. At a second workshop held from 31 May to 2 June 2023, countries identified their priority areas for a regional programme, and identified critical investment pillars and cross-cutting themes. Interestingly,

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sica.int/ccad/>.

<sup>7</sup> Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama.

<sup>8</sup> <https://pislmsids.org/>.

<sup>9</sup> Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10195>.

we discovered a similar exercise for the development of regional programmes was underway by climate change focal points under the co-chairmanship of the Cook Islands and Palau. The GM is now exploring partnering with the Regional Programmatic Approach for Climate Action, and participated in its stakeholder meeting from 8-11 April 2024 in order to build synergies.

45. The GM is also working with the Pacific Community to implement a pilot project under the Greening Drylands Partnership, entitled “Developing and Testing a Forest Management Model to Guide Research and Policy Direction for Effective Forestry Decision Making”. This project agreement is under negotiation with implementation expected to commence in the last quarter of 2024 with a duration of approximately two years. The project will help align the LDN, forestry and agriculture policy in the region.

46. Additionally, the GM is collaborating with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the GEF funded Blue and Green Islands Integrated Programme (BGIP). The GM is supporting technical experts on LDN and gender to help integrate LDN and gender principles into the programme. The GM is also coordinating with other implementing agencies in the region to develop synergies and offer support to programmes contributing to combating DLDD. The GM recently signed an agreement with the United Nations Environment Programme to support the development of "climate resilient and sustainable access to water and sanitation in Tuvalu" for submission to the Adaptation Fund.

47. In Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), we are working to promote transboundary cooperation on sustainable land, forest and water management via the Peace Forest Initiative. The first consultation workshop was co-organized with the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program and GIZ in Tashkent, Uzbekistan between 12–15 March 2024 with participation from the five Central Asian countries and numerous international development partners. The workshop identified three priority thematic areas for transboundary cooperation in the region, namely: (i) sand and dust storm source mitigation; (ii) Fergana Valley and high mountains; and (iii) the development of a regional environmental data platform building on existing databases and platforms to maximize their complementarity. The GM is now collaborating on the development of a regional transboundary collaboration programme that will also provide technical support to the land restoration programme in the lower Aral Sea basin.

#### **D. Eastern Europe: Caucasus**

48. Also through the Peace Forest Initiative, the GM has been collaborating with three countries in the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) to promote regional restoration cooperation. Two consultative workshops were organized in partnership with the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus from 13 to 15 February 2024 and 30 April to 2 May 2024 in Georgia. The workshops promoted dialogue and exchange on environmental cooperation and paved the way for a solid action plan, including a regional environment dashboard with a digital soil map, a regional vision paper on restoration promoting SLM and Nature-Based Solutions, and transboundary cooperation on the monitoring of migratory species.

### **IV. Fostering innovation**

49. For the UNCCD to stay ahead of emerging challenges and leverage new opportunities, new technologies, partnerships and approaches can be used to enhance our efficiency and effectiveness while the private sector and innovative financial instruments can be used to complement traditional sources of financing.

#### **A. Private Sector-Business4Land strategy**

50. The Business4Land (B4L) strategy is under development based on decision 6/COP.15, where Parties requested the UNCCD to “*Facilitate, in collaboration with partners, the development of the Business for Land initiative, bringing visibility to the*

*commitments made by participating companies towards the objectives of the Convention and ensuring that the initiative is self-sustained in the future”.*

51. The GM has placed major emphasis on this work during the biennium and followed a steep but rewarding learning curve. B4L is now starting to catalyse private sector action around four key objectives: (i) improving soil health; (ii) preserving land quality by implementing sustainable management practices; (iii) restoring or rehabilitating degraded land; and (iv) strengthening the resilience of drought-risk ecosystems and communities through mitigation, adaptation and the management of the effects of drought.

52. Our approach has been to encourage the private sector to either seize opportunities or manage material risks associated with DLDD, and organize its work around three B4L pillars, namely:

(a) Environmental, social and governance arrangements where we work towards mainstreaming land into corporate decision-making along the value chain. We have been closely collaborating with relevant financial disclosure frameworks and initiatives to create a level playing field that measures business impacts on land, focusing on corporate targets to achieve LDN;

(b) Financing LDN through sustainable financing solutions and philanthropic contributions;

(c) Advocacy to create a positive enabling environment to leverage the private sector's expertise, skills, and resources in order to further encourage commitments and efforts to combat DLDD. We have facilitated several advocacy events, online and offline consultations, workshops, and training sessions at national, regional and sectoral levels in collaboration with like-minded partners and anticipate it will lead to significant commitments by the private sector over time. Further details can be found in ICCD/COP(16)/13.

Details on how B4L Initiative participants can refer to both frameworks when submitting individual pledges to the B4L Initiative ESG pillar can be found online.<sup>1</sup>

## **B. Innovative finance: blended funds, credits, debts and insurance**

### **1. Blended funds**

53. The LDN Fund has now fully deployed its investment capital. The Fund was a first-of-its-kind impact investment fund investing in profit-generating sustainable land use and ecosystem restoration projects in emerging countries. The LDN Fund supported projects and programmes in 14 emerging countries within sustainable agriculture and forestry value chains, providing innovative solutions to address the critical issue of land degradation and climate change. Building on this experience, the Fund Manager, Mirova Natixis, will explore the launch of an additional Sustainable Land Management Fund of comparable size, with an accompanying technical assistance facility, to invest in commercially viable projects in sustainable agriculture and sustainable forestry. The Fund will provide long-term debt or equity financing for sustainable land use projects and companies to support the certified production of food and fibre, especially through regenerative agriculture and agroforestry.

54. The GM notes and is working to encourage the development of several similar funds embracing restoration practices or target-specific geographies, biomes and value chains. The GM welcomes this as a positive sign that the business case for SLM has been acknowledged, at least in the context of impact and climate investing, with the potential to grow the market further.

55. The GM has been exploring, with our partner Bankers without Borders, the design and establishment of a blended public-private Global Drought Fund. This private sector-led fund would support strategic objectives related to integrated drought risk reduction, and mobilize effective investment in sustainable drought resilience measures. The aim is to create a return-generating fund that invests in a range of drought resilience-related projects and/or companies capable of significant positive contributions to drought resilience. The fund design utilizes both concessional and commercial capital within a blended structure with the

goal of demonstrating the feasibility of a two-pronged approach to investment, capable of generating both impact and financial returns.

## **2. Credits**

56. To further deliver on the GM's mandate to offer innovative financing vehicles, the GM has been exploring carbon and resilience credits and their potential to better address land degradation and build drought resilience. At COP 16, the GM will release a discussion paper that synthesizes lessons learned, notably around tenure and the cost to smallholders, to inform guidance on the development of a "UNCCD-friendly" carbon model and, in turn, identify lessons from the carbon credits market to apply to the emerging resilience and biodiversity credits in order to enhance their future effectiveness and scalability.

57. Several pilot projects around climate finance and carbon credits have been tested since COP 15, including with HiveOnline which is rolling out its myCoop.online platform to both new and existing cooperatives, and training women smallholder farmers in regenerative agriculture techniques to improve land use practices, improve yields and sequester carbon. The aim is to provide women smallholder farmers with access to global financial and climate markets. The current project is focused on a scale-up in Kenya with the aim of rolling-out to more than 2,000 beneficiaries in the Kisumu County region.

## **3. Debt**

58. The GM has explored work on debt-for-nature swaps with partners, including the Nature Conservancy, and produced a number of publications, including a policy paper detailing the design of potential transactions. The GM will continue exploring interest from Parties to participate in such transactions which allow the mobilization of financial resources to combat DLDD through a key performance indicator-based transaction model.

## **4. Insurance**

59. With support from the International Drought Resilience Alliance, the GM has been working with partners and financial institutions to explore a new drought insurance model linked to SLM practices. This SLM Linked Index Insurance approach has a two-fold purpose: to (i) increase drought resilience (ex-ante); and (ii) provide shock protection in the event of extreme drought (ex-post).

60. The parametric insurance component is designed to provide immediate financial support in the wake of extreme droughts. In parallel, the resilience component, focused on sustainable land and water management practices, aims to mitigate the impact of such droughts independently from the return period. By enhancing the ecological and community resilience to drought, this approach not only decreases the likelihood of triggering expensive insurance payouts but also contributes to lowering premium costs. Essentially, the resilience measures act as a preventive strategy, reducing the overall risk profile and, therefore, the financial burden on both the insurance system and the communities it serves. This innovative, dual strategy exemplifies a holistic approach to drought risk financing, emphasizing the importance of prevention and preparedness alongside more effective response mechanisms. In the coming biennium, the GM hopes to test the model in collaboration with partners and continue to expand our engagement with that part of the insurance industry, focusing on smallholders and agricultural risk.

## **C. Technology transfer**

61. At COP 15, the GM presented the UNCCD Model Framework for Technology Transfer while, in the last biennium, we collaborated with the GGW Accelerator and DeserTech, the innovation centre in Israel's Negev desert. DeserTech deploys an Innovation Ecosystem model<sup>11</sup> which, in line with the UNCCD Model Framework, emphasizes

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<sup>11</sup> <https://publications.iadb.org/en/innovation-ecosystem-management-methodology>.

collaboration between innovative startups and organizations able to contribute as an enabler to innovation (including knowledge, capacity-building, and finance).

62. In the pilot project, DeserTech and the GM brought together entrepreneurs and innovators from 11 GGW countries to engage in a Needs Assessment, which included capacity-building on evaluating innovations and technologies in line with expressed needs. During in-person workshops, the innovators from the GGW countries connected with those from the Negev region and, in joint writing workshops, developed project proposals that were published on the DeserTech Marketplace.<sup>12</sup> Participating entrepreneurs presented these proposals to potential private sector investors with interest in the GGW, with several projects receiving full or partial funding. The GM is currently exploring follow-up projects, using a similar collaborative model for different regions based on the lessons learned, which includes the early involvement of financing institutions in the Innovation Ecosystem.

63. Further background to technology transfer in the UNCCD context, including lessons learned from the DeserTech pilot project can be found in ICCD/COP(16)/CST/5 and in the lessons learned report on the UNCCD website.

#### **D. Peace Forest Initiative**

64. With generous support from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Peace Forest Initiative (PFI)<sup>13</sup> promotes transboundary cooperation on land restoration in fragile and conflict-affected locations. The GM plays an honest broker role among stakeholders to advance countries' efforts to promote transboundary cooperation in the restoration of land, soil, forest and water resources. It should be noted that each collaboration must proceed cautiously and be especially sensitive to the realities on the ground and adapt to needs in real time. At the global level, the GM has collaborated with the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to scope and develop an environment dashboard aiming to support informed and data-driven decision-making for planning, implementation, monitoring and cooperation in transboundary settings.

65. The GM is also collaborating with Berlin-based Adelphi Consultants on a technical report exploring the nexus between land, peace and security to provide science-based evidence and information for the operation of the PFI. Additionally, the GM has been finalizing the operational guidelines of the PFI to serve as a basis of information for stakeholders, experts and practitioners. Information on the regional and context-specific activities of the PFI was included in the regional flagship section of this report.

### **V. Looking ahead: emerging trends and foresight**

66. The GM aims to discern emerging trends, anticipate potential shifts and respond proactively. With foresight we can think long-term, act strategically and respond to change.

#### **A. Dynamic National Environment - Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme 2.0**

67. Following the guidance of country Parties at COP 15, the GM and the secretariat of the UNCCD, in collaboration with relevant partners, continued to support voluntary LDN target setting in a few additional, actively engaged countries that requested support, bringing the total number of participating countries to 131 as of June 2024. Building upon the elements previously reported in documents ICCD/CRIC(20)/5 and ICCD/CRIC(21)/8, and taking into account the mandate received by country Parties at COP 15, the GM and the secretariat of the UNCCD, in collaboration with relevant partners<sup>14</sup>, officially launched the second phase

<sup>12</sup> <https://en.desertech.org.il/great-green-wall>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.unccd.int/our-work/flagship-initiatives/peace-forest-initiative>.

<sup>14</sup> The Changwon Initiative of the Republic of Korea, Global Environment Facility, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Global Affairs Canada, and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

of the LDN TSP (LDN TSP 2.0) on 12 May 2023.<sup>15</sup> Before the launch, the GM delivered four online information sessions for UNCCD staff (held on 12 December 2022), staff of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UNFCCC (held on 22 February 2023), relevant technical partners (held on 24 April 2023), and UNCCD NFPs and science and technology correspondents (held on 19 May 2023).

68. After evaluating the applications of over 30 countries against the selection criteria, the following 18 countries were selected for participation in the LDN TSP 2.0 and the related GEF Enabling Activity project, “*Integrating LDN into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments*”: Argentina, Benin, Central African Republic, Georgia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Republic of Moldova, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Saint Lucia and Türkiye. A formal notification<sup>16</sup> was issued in this regard on 3 July 2023.

69. Moving forward under the LDN TSP 2.0, the GM aims to assist countries in refining their national LDN targets, transitioning from commitments to actionable initiatives and specific deadlines, taking into account other ongoing processes related to the other Rio conventions. The approach emphasizes strengthening land governance and spatial mapping, and monitoring interventions to counter land degradation, with a technical focus on supporting effective national decision-making processes to make LDN targets and measures more specific, time-bound, policy-coherent, quantitative, spatially explicit, gender-responsive, and adequately integrated into land use planning frameworks.<sup>17</sup>

70. To provide technical guidance to participating countries, supplementary guidelines on strengthening land restoration targets were developed and shared with them ahead of the capacity-building workshop held from 20 to 22 February 2024 in Qatar on the sidelines of Expo 2023 Doha. The workshop gathered the UNCCD’s NFPs, lead country consultants and representatives from key international organizations. National LDN TSP 2.0 processes were initiated by the respective country Parties immediately after the workshop. By June 2024, most countries had already held relevant national stakeholder consultations adapted to country-tailored processes which were flexible and responsive to specific national challenges and opportunities, in collaboration with an increased number of engaged technical partners (e.g. the UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Forum on Forests, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, and the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus).

71. To enhance the enabling environment, and in response to a weakness highlighted in the evaluation of the first phase of the LDN TSP, the GM is also ensuring that the revised targets of the 18 pilot countries of the TSP 2.0 are gender-responsive by engaging gender experts to support the process through a partnership with United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

72. During COP 16, side events and the CRIC 22 plenary session will provide opportunities for participating countries and partners to present their initial progress and lessons learned so far. Critical takeaways include the challenge of finding sufficiently qualified local expertise, combined with the need for a bespoke approach that fits the evolving needs and changing realities of countries. One size does not fill all. In the refined LDN TSP 2.0, decisions linked to integrated land use planning comprise multiple departments and levels of government, and they proceed at different speeds. Real-time decision-support tools for countries and communities are needed for the roll-out phase and over the longer term.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/notifications/call-requests-support-assist-countries-strengthening-ldn-targets>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/notifications/18-countries-selected-support-strengthen-ldn-targets-and-integrated-land>.

<sup>17</sup> In coordination with GEFID10909 project on “Integrating LDN into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments” approved on 7 June 2022. Project implementation agreement signed with IUCN in May 2024. Project activities expected to be initiated during Q3–Q4 of 2024 in collaboration with Conservation International, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ).

73. The final outcomes of the LDN TSP 2.0 national processes are expected to be presented by the 18 participating countries at a dedicated thematic plenary session being considered for CRIC 23. Options for the potential scaling up of the number of countries engaged in this process and the possible modalities of support are under discussion with several interested financial and technical partners. The GM is also developing a waiting list of interested countries which could be part of this scaling up process.

## **B. Resource mobilization strategy**

74. Discussed in part II.B of this report, the UNCCD Needs Assessment found that current funding levels are insufficient, with a substantial financing gap of USD 278 billion per year to be closed to implement DLDD plans and global land restoration commitments. The Needs Assessment should be read in conjunction with an accompanying solutions-oriented resource mobilization strategy (see ICCD/CRIC(22)/INF.1).

75. Rather than prepare a purely strategic document, the GM has chosen to offer practical tools for country Parties to address their financial needs with:

(a) Step-by-step guidance for governments in designing and implementing national resource mobilization strategies, reflecting the benefits and costs of suitable land-related investments and financial solutions that are feasible, effective, and cost-efficient at the country level;

(b) A wide range of financing sources and instruments as well as illustrations of their practical application to support DLDD-related investments. Guiding private investment through public finance tools will be essential in most countries. This includes using green taxes, issuing sustainability bonds, payments for ecosystem services, and repurposing harmful subsidies to make them fiscally responsible and nature-positive;

(c) Recommendations to strengthen the enabling environment for land-based investments at the country level. This includes legal, regulatory and institutional conditions around land governance; financial and economic policies related to the investment climate (including financial, fiscal and economic incentives); and communications and stakeholder engagement to build public awareness and political support.

76. The final resource mobilization approach should be adapted to regional, national or local circumstances and opportunities. The secretariat and GM can offer advice to Parties and provide more practical support, subject to the availability of human and financial resources. However, for effective resource mobilization, fundraising activities are most successful if they are owned and implemented by Parties. We anticipate that the demand for financing will increase with additional stresses related to DLDD and more detailed plans and more ambitious LDN targets. The resource mobilization approach cannot remain static. Resource mobilization activities must keep evolving in near real-time, ensuring a flexible and diversified funding base, and taking advantage of best-in-class innovations as they emerge, including with the engagement of the private sector.

77. However, several issues have emerged around the capacity of country Parties to effectively deliver on the resource mobilization agenda in terms of access to finance and project design. Capacity-building is especially critical for NFPs to understand the complexity of financial architecture, and then access the broad range of grants, and concessional and private finance options available. There are additional efforts to be made in terms of upskilling NFPs in comprehensive financing gap assessments to identify and prioritize funding needs – for land degradation and drought investments – and making the business case for private sector investment as the rationale is somewhat different. For effective project design, there are also skills and knowledge gaps in behavioural change communications, integrated land use planning and use of Geographic Information Systems technology.

## **C. Emerging initiatives and issues**

78. Recognizing that there can be a significant time lapse between the development of a project concept and the securing of financing, the GM works with partners and engaged

Parties to scope out emerging thematic issues and present these to development partners as potential future investment vehicles. While flagship programmes tend to focus on the shared experience of a specific geographical area, these thematic flagship programmes cut across UNCCD annexes and will support Parties on a shared challenge wherever they are located.

### **1. Sand and dust storms**

79. Guided by relevant COP decisions, building on the advancement of global policy development and knowledge products on sand and dust storms (SDS), including the SDS Compendium and the SDS Toolbox, the GM has been collaborating with partners to develop a global implementation initiative on SDS, aiming to support affected countries in SDS-related policy and plans to mitigate SDS impact, including anthropogenic SDS source management. It is hoped that several large-scale projects will emerge in areas where this is a shared concern, for example in Central Asia. These initiatives, particularly the roll-out of the Compendium, would fit well within the newly approved Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025–2034), recently proclaimed by the General Assembly. Additional information can be found in the document ICCD/COP(16)/16.

### **2. Rangelands**

80. Rangelands cover more than 54 per cent of the Earth's land surface and are mostly drylands, therefore a Global Land Outlook thematic report was produced to assess the current status and is serving as a pre-feasibility study for potential future investment. As a result, and in preparation for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026 and COP 17 in Mongolia, a number of projects and programmes are being explored on rangelands issues. A scoping workshop in October 2023 identified the focus areas for any flagship initiative. A global project proposal is under development in partnership with WWF as well as additional projects with other partners to upscale successful interventions to create a balanced geographic project pipeline.

81. The GM is collaborating, through an inclusive consultation process, on the development of a voluntary, private sector-driven global rangeland standard (GRS). The GRS will focus on promoting healthy rangeland ecosystems, accelerating restoration, and supporting livestock industries and communities dependent on rangelands by providing high-level principles and by adhering to the “One Health” approach.<sup>18</sup>

### **3. Land tenure and gender**

82. The GM actively supports gender and land tenure mainstreaming as the two issues are closely related. Thanks to support from Canada, the GM has so far been able to encourage gender mainstreaming in our full project pipeline. We have recently developed a checklist to guide project developers in integrating tenure considerations, which are a rate-limiting step for private investment, into land-based transformative programmes. This checklist helps identify key tenure issues and design appropriate interventions, ensuring gender- and tenure-responsive project designs that mitigate risks and adhere to environmental and social safeguards, as well as international guidelines such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure. More work is planned to ensure uptake by the GM and its network of partner organizations.

### **4. Freshwater Challenge**

83. Existing programmes in which the GM is involved (GGW Southern Africa, Caucasus, Pacific) have highlighted that healthy freshwater ecosystems are crucial in combatting land degradation and drought, especially in dryland communities. However, in terms of project pipeline, our current approach is somewhat disjointed from a global perspective. To address this, the GM has joined the Freshwater Challenge (FWC), a country-led initiative aiming to restore 300,000 km of rivers and 350 million hectares by 2030. As it stands, 45 countries<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health#tab=tab_1).

<sup>19</sup> Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia,



and the European Union have joined the FWC. It will require joint support from all sectors involved in water-related activities to achieve its ambitious restoration and conservation goals. To ensure policy coherence and alignment, the LDN Working Groups implementing the LDN TSP 2.0 have been informed about the FWC and encouraged to integrate it into their targets, promoting synergistic approaches and avoiding duplication of efforts.

## 5. Emerging issues

84. Various emerging trends and issues are already affecting UNCCD implementation and will have an outsized impact going forward. These trends and issues should remain on the radar of Parties and the GM in the coming biennium and may evolve into a flagship programme as the opportunity arises:

- (a) Market mechanisms (debt, credits, guarantees);
- (b) A global goal on climate (and biodiversity) finance;
- (c) Climate security, conflict and migration;
- (d) Regenerative agriculture, especially subsidy and incentive reform for the management of agricultural lands and agricultural production;

(e) Trade. According to the World Trade Organization, soil appears in only two per cent, i.e. 250 of all global trade policy reviews, whereas the mention of desertification appears in merely 0.2 per cent, i.e. 23 of all trade policy reviews. The inclusion of LDN principles in bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements and domestic regulations, elevating them to the same level as existing provisions on climate change and biodiversity, would deliver new opportunities. Of note is the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

## VI. Conclusions and recommendations

*The context for resource mobilization is complicated post-COVID and in a period of economic downturn and geopolitical instability.*

85. **The LDN TSP continues to provide a solid foundation for establishing national land degradation baselines, using best available data from multiple sources, setting voluntary national LDN targets and related measures, and defining clear priorities and action required for country Parties to continue advancing towards achieving LDN. With a total of 131 participating countries to date, this process has reached a plateau. Nevertheless, the GM continues to respond to ad-hoc requests for support in collaboration with key partners.**

86. **The GM continues to work closely with all 18 countries participating in the LDN TSP 2.0 and its partners to ensure that this innovative country-led process yields valuable experiences and lessons, and builds synergies. Capacity-building remains crucial for better project and programme design and real-time decision-making, in issues ranging from Geographic Information Systems to behavioural science, to ensure an improved understanding of financing options and better access to the right financial decision-makers. This is an intense and customised process, and current UNCCD capacity constraints mean that the success of any potential scale-up will rely not only on the interest of financial partners but also on the active engagement of technical partners.**

87. **Tracking of financial flows and investment needs, including a gender-sensitive Marker, can be further pursued. A good practice guide for tracking financial flows is under development, including an improved section on investment needs; an enhanced and user-friendly reporting template on SO 5 is under development; improved financial**

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Germany, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, Tajikistan, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

data sources have been identified and made available to the country Parties; and a marker is under development to report on financial flows for gender equality.

88. The Needs Assessment demonstrated that there is a need to increase the amount of investment in UNCCD implementation (at least 3.5 times). Developed country Parties are also encouraged to report on their financial needs and share lessons learned on closing the financing gap. Bolder and more ambitious targets for LDN and drought would give a higher but even more realistic expression of need.

89. The GM partnership-based platform business model is working well, with notable successes including the significant growth of the pipeline and gender mainstreaming. The platform is allowing the GM to respond better and more flexibly to increasing demand for land and drought-related programming.

90. Flagship and emerging thematic initiatives are a useful vehicle to support a larger number of Parties and ensure a bigger impact at scale, however they require the investment of time and resources. There is potential to expand support further to the flagships and those thematic areas linked to UNCCD implementation, e.g. climate, biodiversity, freshwater, land tenure and rangelands/agriculture. However, the lean GM team would need additional resources and capacity to expand support further.

91. With the declaration of the Decade to Combat SDS, a global SDS implementation initiative that includes support capacity building and the development of SDS related policy and plans.

92. The economic system is volatile, and we must show flexibility and innovation to ensure a solid grasp of emerging trends and allow first-mover advantage. The GM has proven adept at nurturing innovation with various projects successfully delivering a proof of concept or approach while proving attractive to the private sector. This is an area of future growth potential, especially if linked to work on value chains or finance under B4L or trade.

93. Accordingly, Parties may wish to consider the proposed draft decision text, as contained in document ICCD/CRIC(22)/8, at COP 16.

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