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## Convention to Combat Desertification

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### Conference of the Parties Committee on Science and Technology

#### Sixteenth session

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 3–12 December 2024

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Procedural matters: Programme of work for the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology**

### **Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology**

#### **Note by the secretariat**

##### *Summary*

By its decision 33/COP.15, paragraph 5, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat to circulate in all official languages, at least six weeks prior to the sixteenth session of the COP, one document for each governing body (the COP, Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, Committee on Science and Technology) with all respective draft decisions prepared for Parties' consideration and further adoption, and to ensure that the draft decisions are clearly written and properly formatted.

Accordingly, document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 includes all substantive draft decisions proposed by the secretariat that will serve as a starting point for discussion and further negotiation in the Committee on Science and Technology contact group.



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## 1. Science-policy recommendations on sustainable land use systems

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decisions 23/COP.11, 19/COP.12 and 18/COP.15,

*Also recalling* decisions 3/COP.13, 18/COP.13, 16/COP.14, and 16/COP.15,

*Further recalling* the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, its vision for a future that minimizes and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels, and strives to achieve a land degradation-neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, within the scope of the Convention and, in particular, strategic objective 1 to improve the condition of affected ecosystems, combat desertification/land degradation, promote sustainable land management and contribute to land degradation neutrality,

*Acknowledging* the work conducted by the Science-Policy Interface in implementing its work programme for the triennium 2022–2024,

*Recalling* article 2 of the Convention stating that achieving the objective of the Convention will involve long-term integrated strategies that focus, inter alia, on the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions, in particular at the community level,

*Acknowledging* that the scientific conceptual framework for land degradation neutrality<sup>1</sup> provides guidance for planning, financing, implementing and monitoring land degradation neutrality,

*Recognizing* that creating an enabling environment for land degradation neutrality is fundamental to realizing the potential contribution of land degradation neutrality to enhancing the well-being and livelihoods of people affected by desertification/land degradation and drought,

*Also recognizing* the importance of the effective implementation of integrated land use planning for (i) establishing the full integration of a neutrality framework to counterbalance assessed losses with equal or greater gains; and (ii) applying the land degradation neutrality response hierarchy to measures to avoid, reduce and/or reverse land degradation,

*Having considered* document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/2 and the conclusions contained therein,

1. *Recommends* that Parties refine current approaches for land degradation neutrality planning and implementation by incorporating the sustainable land use systems approach to focus efforts on transformative projects that enhance land productivity and maintain equitable livelihoods while ensuring the long-term effective provision of ecosystem services and community well-being, addressing land degradation proactively through sustainable land management practices and strategic restoration/rehabilitation to achieve land degradation neutrality targets;
2. *Encourages* Parties to integrate collective planning for sustainable land use systems into existing national and local land management systems, and to refine these systems, where necessary, to deliver multiple objectives efficiently at multiple scales;
3. *Stresses* the need for Parties to ensure the sustainability of policy initiatives through the institutionalization of sustainable land use systems planning and implementation processes in order to provide confidence to investors and ensure the longevity of interventions;

<sup>1</sup> [Decision 18/COP.13](#).

4. *Recommends* that Parties embed the sustainable land use systems approach into land use planning and land management;
5. *Also recommends* that Parties base land use planning and land management on an understanding of the land potential of land types in the target region, and the key processes and drivers of the social-ecological system in which the land is situated;
6. *Further recommends* that Parties build technical capacity to assess land potential, track the state and trend of individual land use systems and identify key areas for intervention at local scale;
7. *Encourages* Parties to create an enabling environment for sustainable land use systems by:
  - (a) Fostering multistakeholder partnerships by encouraging collaborations between government, private sector and community stakeholders to develop and implement comprehensive land use and land management plans prioritizing sustainable land use and incorporating local and Indigenous knowledge;
  - (b) Implementing participatory governance in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the outcome of sustainable land use systems policies in order to increase the security of land access, support social and environmental justice and ensure the engagement of all legitimate tenure rights holders and land users in cooperative land use planning and land management;
  - (c) Increasing multi-sectoral coordination at all levels to ensure synergies and the harmonization of agricultural, environmental, economic and developmental policies, integrating sustainable land use systems principles and approaches wherever relevant, and thus avoiding contradictory efforts;
  - (d) Creating incentives that encourage long-term investments in transdisciplinary research, collaborative monitoring and the provision of data and tools to support the development and implementation of sustainable land use systems, and investment in on-ground demonstrations of sustainable land use systems;
  - (e) Identifying and supporting community leaders who will adaptively sustain the sustainable land use systems into the future;
  - (f) Facilitating transformative multi-stakeholder learning to cope with uncertainty, barriers and change; and
  - (g) Sharing local experience and knowledge to support upscaling and national land degradation neutrality.

## 2. Science-policy recommendations on aridity trends, projections and impacts

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decisions 18/COP.15 and 17/COP.15,

*Also recalling* articles 1, 2 and 10 of the Convention, which reference combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought in affected areas and on their populations, where “affected areas” means arid, semi-arid and/or dry sub-humid areas affected or threatened by desertification,

*Mindful of* the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems<sup>2</sup> message that large-scale aridity trends may contribute to expanding drylands and expanding affected populations in some regions,

*Acknowledging* the work conducted by the Science-Policy Interface in implementing its work programme for the triennium 2022–2024,

*Recognizing* the need to enhance the responsiveness and applicability of the science-policy guidance of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at the national level,

*Having* considered document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/3 and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein,

1. *Invites* the World Meteorological Organization, the Global Water Partnership and other technical and scientific partners, working within their respective mandates, to integrate aridity information into existing drought monitoring and early warning systems, with the aim of developing a comprehensive monitoring approach that would:

(a) Enhance local, regional and global monitoring and evaluation for land and water sectors;

(b) Explore the establishment of a standardized approach for robust aridity assessments which identify critical ecological and socio-economic thresholds, enabling timely responses to critical water stress conditions;

(c) Foster collaboration through the systematic sharing of interoperable data and best practices;

(d) Explore how to leverage advanced technologies such as robust artificial intelligence models that draw upon diverse data sources for predictive analysis;

2. *Also invites* the Integrated Drought Management Programme, its cooperating partners and other technical and scientific partners, acting within their respective mandates, to facilitate the development of global-to-local hierarchical standards and guidelines for assessing the socio-economic and environmental impacts of increasing aridity due to climate change and other factors that would:

(a) Facilitate consistent cross-regional monitoring and analysis to promote adaptive responses to climatic, environmental, and socioeconomic changes;

(b) Enable effective adaptation strategies that promote resilience among vulnerable communities, particularly in shared river basins and watersheds; and

(c) Promote community-led monitoring and ensure inclusivity in assessing and addressing aridity impacts by integrating local and Indigenous knowledge into the process;

3. *Requests* the secretariat to collaborate with relevant constituted bodies under the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>.

relevant organizations, acting within their respective mandates, subject to the availability of resources, to produce a supplement to the National Adaptation Plan technical guidelines that consolidates aridity adaptation and drought planning and response into a unified strategy that can be integrated into the process to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement;

4. *Calls upon* Parties to develop and implement comprehensive and integrative sustainable land and water management approaches and technologies to combat desertification and land degradation and thereby enhance resilience to drought and aridity;

5. *Requests* financial and technical partners to support Parties in their efforts to incorporate the analysis of aridity trends and the assessment of aridity impacts into environmental policy development, integrated land use planning processes, land degradation neutrality target setting and the development of transformative projects and programmes;

6. *Invites* the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies, acting within its mandate, to identify and validate the sustainable land and water management best practices that have effectively taken aridity trends, projections and impacts into account in order to support knowledge sharing and the broader adoption of successful integrative approaches;

7. *Requests* the secretariat to work with the secretariats of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Convention on Biological Diversity to integrate the assessing and addressing of aridity risks and impacts into cross-sectoral governance activities, with the aim of:

(a) Harnessing and maximizing the synergies among relevant multi-lateral agreements, goals and targets, including land degradation neutrality, which is integral to Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Global Goal on Adaptation, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

(b) Harmonizing action on land;

(c) Quantitatively aligning assessment and monitoring, where possible; and

(d) Reducing transaction costs;

8. *Also requests* the secretariat to present a report on the implementation of this decision at the seventeenth session of the Committee for Science and Technology.

### 3. Science-policy recommendations emanating from the Science-Policy Interface analysis of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decisions 23/COP.11, 19/COP.12 and 18/COP.15,

*Also recalling* decisions 19/COP.13, 22/COP.13, 20/COP.14 and 20/COP.15,

*Further recalling* the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, its vision for a future that minimizes and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels, and strives to achieve a land degradation neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, within the scope of the Convention and, in particular, strategic objective 1 to improve the condition of affected ecosystems, combat desertification/land degradation, promote sustainable land management and contribute to land degradation neutrality, and strategic objective 3 to mitigate, adapt to, and manage the effects of drought in order to enhance resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems,

*Noting with appreciation* the work conducted by the Science-Policy Interface in implementing the coordination activities included in its work programme for the triennium 2022–2024,

*Welcoming* the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment reports “Climate Change 2022: Impact Adaptation and Vulnerability” and “Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change”,

*Mindful of* Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change decisions IPCC-LV-3 and IPCC-LVI-3,

*Recognizing* the contribution of the Science-Policy Interface to all six of its coordination activities with other scientific mechanisms and *welcoming* the positive and productive collaboration of the partner organizations involved in each,

*Also recognizing* the service of both current and former Science-Policy Interface members to the Intergovernmental Working Group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the Convention,

*Further recognizing* the contribution of the Science-Policy Interface to the quality assurance and the scientific review of the second edition of the Global Land Outlook and the Global Land Outlook working papers,

*Having considered* document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/4 and the conclusions contained therein,

1. *Encourages* Parties to enhance land use efficiency and restoration, and optimize synergies, especially on less productive, degraded or marginal lands, while also considering the promotion of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
2. *Recommends* that Parties adopt integrated landscape approaches to minimize trade-offs between different ecosystem services and biodiversity, and between socio-economic objectives, including climate change mitigation and adaptation;
3. *Encourages* Parties to increase efforts to promote sustainable land management, especially on agricultural land, and to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, with an emphasis on agroecology and other approaches aligned with sustainable land management and land degradation neutrality;
4. *Recommends* that Parties strengthen integrated land management strategies to reduce losses from climate hazards in landscapes where degradation has increased vulnerability;

5. *Also recommends* that Parties redirect subsidies and other financing mechanisms, including private sector investments, towards initiatives that better support sustainable land management to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation;
6. *Further recommends* that Parties strengthen institutional and governance frameworks to prioritize policies for integrated land use planning and management aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and land degradation neutrality;
7. *Encourages* Parties and *invites* scientific and technical partners and civil society organizations working at local, national and regional levels to collaborate on the development of transdisciplinary communities of learning and practice on the nexus of land, climate and drought to focus on the inclusion of traditionally underrepresented knowledge and practitioner groups.



## 4. Knowledge sharing, technology transfer and innovation

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decisions 23/COP.11, 19/COP.12, 19/COP.13, 19/COP.14 and 19/COP.15 on the mandate and working modalities of the Science-Policy Interface,

*Also recalling* decisions 20/COP.12, 20/COP.13, 19/COP.14 and 19/COP.15 on knowledge sharing tools as well as decision 20/COP.15 on knowledge and technology transfer,

*Further recalling* decisions 9/COP.15, 11/COP.15, 15/COP.15, 20/COP.15 and 24/COP.15 on the collaboration between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies,

*Noting with appreciation* the support provided by Parties to the activities of the Science-Policy Interface,

*Acknowledging* the achievement of gender parity across the membership of the Science Policy Interface and *noting* the development of a gender policy and implementation plan,

*Noting* the work done by the secretariat on developing tools for knowledge and technology transfer, inter alia, the knowledge hubs developed by the Global Mechanism for the Great Green Wall, and by the G20 Global Land Initiative, the further development of the Drought Toolbox and the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox, the Model Framework for Technology Transfer and the pilots conducted with DeserTech for the Great Green Wall, as well as the Communities of Learning and Practice on Drought Management established in collaboration with the Global Water Partnership and the International Drought Resilience Alliance IDRA,

*Also noting* three guidance reports developed by United Nations University in support of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification:

- (a) The contribution of land and water management approaches to sustainable land management and achieving land degradation neutrality;
- (b) Promoting synergies between land degradation neutrality and climate change adaptation: A supplement to the National Adaptation Plan technical guidelines; and
- (c) Harmony in action for land restoration: Linking social protection, financial inclusion and disaster risk finance,

*Acknowledging* the continuing efforts by the secretariat and the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies in promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of sustainable land management best practices, and in developing tools relevant to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stakeholders,

*Welcoming* the various projects implemented by the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies in collaboration with United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stakeholders globally,

*Also welcoming* the continued collaboration between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies aimed at implementing the renewed World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies strategy (WOCAT 2020+) in line with the knowledge needs of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stakeholders and the development of the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies Multi-Donor Basket Fund,

*Having considered* documents ICCD/COP(16)/CST/5 and ICCD/COP(16)/15 and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein,

1. *Encourages* the Science-Policy Interface to continue to foster partnerships with scientific bodies and institutions, international organizations, civil society organizations and

other relevant stakeholders, and invite the representatives of these entities to its meetings as external observers when feasible, with a view to strengthening collaboration;

2. *Invites* the Committee on Science and Technology and current and past Science-Policy Interface members to continue to increase awareness of the work of the Science-Policy Interface;

3. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to continue exploring options for knowledge and technology transfer with relevant partners in the academic and private sector;

4. *Encourages* Parties to implement projects on knowledge and technology transfer with the aim of fostering innovation and facilitating access to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how;

5. *Also encourages* the organizations and practitioners implementing agroecology, climate-smart agriculture, conservation agriculture, forest landscape restoration, integrated agriculture, regenerative agriculture and rewilding projects to continue to work towards ensuring that the core criteria and principles behind sustainable land management and land degradation neutrality are addressed in practice, and that any identified gaps are met with appropriate supplementary actions;

6. *Invites* the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to, as and where appropriate, coordinate and integrate land degradation neutrality climate planning and practices into climate change adaptation planning and implementation, guided by the report “Promoting synergies between land degradation neutrality and climate change adaptation: A supplement to the National Adaptation Plan technical guidelines”;

7. *Encourages* Parties to realize the synergies between land restoration, social protection, financial inclusion and disaster risk finance by designing coherent, context-appropriate policy instruments and transformative projects and programmes that facilitate land restoration outcomes which improve and protect human well-being and ensure that the environmental, economic and social co-benefits are more equitable and available to all;

8. *Requests* the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to continue the collaboration with the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies, facilitating an exchange of knowledge on sustainable land management between United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stakeholders globally;

9. *Encourages* Parties and *invites* other stakeholders to continue to submit cases of relevant best practices in order to increase the knowledge base on sustainable land management;

10. *Invites* developed country Parties and other countries in a position to do so to support the activities of the Science-Policy Interface;

11. *Also invites* developed country Parties and other countries in a position to do so to support the implementation of the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies strategy (WOCAT 2020+) through the Multi-donor Basket Fund;

12. *Requests* the secretariat to report at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology on the implementation of this decision.

## 5. Future functioning of the Science-Policy Interface

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decisions 23/COP.11, 19/COP.13, 19/COP.14, 19/COP.15 and 21/COP.15,

*Commending* the Science-Policy Interface for its achievements, which have significantly improved the consideration of science-based information at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and increased the visibility of the priorities of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification within and beyond the Convention stakeholders,

*Recognizing* the need to enhance the responsiveness and applicability of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification science-policy guidance at the national level,

*Also recognizing* the importance of further engaging global, regional and national scientific institutions and networks in science-policy work contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

*Welcoming with appreciation* the findings and recommendations of the external assessment of the Science-Policy Interface and the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification relevant to the review of the Science-Policy Interface,

*Having reviewed* document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/6,

1. *Decides* to establish a standing Science-Policy Interface of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to ensure the delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice to support the implementation of the Convention, building on the mandate outlined in decisions 23/COP.11 and 19/COP.13, and refined in decisions 19/COP.14 and 19/COP.15;
2. *Also decides* that the 2025–2026 work programme of the Science-Policy Interface will focus on:
  - (a) Supporting the development of the third edition of the Global Land Outlook;
  - (b) Pursuing coordination activities with other intergovernmental science-policy bodies;
  - (c) As a test phase, providing rapid response information following requests from the Bureaux of the Conference of the Parties, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee for Science and Technology as well as the secretariat and the Global Mechanism; and
  - (d) Supporting the secretariat in ensuring that all United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification communications products are based on sound science;
3. *Further decides* that, starting at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties in 2026, the future work programmes of the Science-Policy Interface will be fixed for a duration of two intersessional periods (usually four years), and:
  - (a) Focus on the delivery of Global Land Outlook products or similar high-profile, science-based flagship reports and *requests* the secretariat to continue to ensure that these products are supported by a comprehensive and innovative communications strategy;
  - (b) Include coordination activities with other intergovernmental science-policy bodies, particularly the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and with relevant scientific institutions and networks;
  - (c) Also include the provision of rapid response information according to modalities that will be decided at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties on the basis of the test phase in 2025–2026; and
  - (d) Further include supporting the secretariat in ensuring that all United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification communications products are based on sound science;

4. *Requests* the Bureau of the Committee for Science and Technology, with the support of the secretariat, to develop and submit for the consideration of the Committee for Science and Technology at its seventeenth session:

(a) The procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Science-Policy Interface for its work programme, including thematic assessments forming the basis of Global Land Outlook products or similar flagship reports as well as the procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests for rapid response information products;

(b) The procedures for the preparation of flagship reports, including report outline scoping, thematic assessment of scientific as well local and Indigenous knowledge, independent scientific review, and the preparation and approval by the Committee on Science and Technology of summaries for policymakers; and

(c) The procedures for the development of rapid response information products; and *also requests* the secretariat to provide estimates of the financial implications associated with implementing these procedures;

5. *Further requests* the secretariat to include in the agenda of each intersessional meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention an item for the consideration of priorities for science-policy guidance, with the aim of enabling Parties to provide initiatives to and feedback on the work of the Science-Policy Interface, with particular attention to contributing to the content of each flagship report;

6. *Calls upon* the regional groups and regional implementation annexes to support and strengthen existing or newly established regional scientific networks/institutions, and *requests* the secretariat to support their interaction with the Science-Policy Interface for the provision of scientific advice stemming from its work;

7. *Encourages* Parties to ensure desertification/land degradation and drought issues are integrated into existing or newly established national science-policy committees, and to promote their interaction with the regional scientific networks described in paragraph 5 above;

8. *Requests* the secretariat to identify and organize opportunities for information-sharing and exchanges on the work of the Science-Policy Interface among the members of the Science-Policy Interface, Parties, the scientific community and/or other key stakeholders, which may include informal regional and sub-regional intersessional dialogues, online briefings, social media posts, and side events on suitable occasions;

9. *Decides* to renew the Science-Policy Interface membership to comprise thirty members and five observers, taking into account gender, regional and disciplinary balance, which will consist of the following:

(a) Five members of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology;

(b) Fifteen independent scientists, some of whom may serve as representatives of scientific institutions instead of as individuals, selected through an open call;

(c) Five independent early career scientists selected from the same open call;

(d) One independent scientist nominated from the same open call by each of the five United Nations regional groups; and

(e) Five observers: four representing the United Nations system organizations and other international organizations selected from an open call, and one representing civil society organizations nominated by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification civil society organizations panel;

10. *Also decides* that, from the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties onwards, all Science-Policy Interface members and observers will be nominated for four years, with the exception of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee on Science and Technology whose election should be performed in line with the Conference of the Parties rules of procedure (decision 1/COP.1) and its amendments (decision 25/COP.10 OP 2 replacing rule 31 of the rules of procedure);

11. *Further decides* that the Science-Policy Interface will be co-chaired by the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology and by an independent scientist elected by the independent scientists serving on the Science-Policy Interface one year prior to the end of the four-year membership term, thus allowing the incoming co-Chair to “shadow” the outgoing co-Chair, thereby ensuring continuity in leadership for the next four-year term;
12. *Requests* the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, with the support of the secretariat, to update the terms of reference for members and observers of the Science-Policy Interface, taking into account the objectives and mandate of the Science-Policy Interface, the purpose, scope and organization of its substantive work, the modalities for the nomination and selection of its members and observers, the organization of its meetings, and any other provisions that may be needed for the effective functioning of the Science-Policy Interface in order to fulfil its mandate under the governance of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology;
13. *Also requests* the secretariat to continue mobilizing voluntary contributions, partnership arrangements and in-kind contributions to support the work of the Science-Policy Interface, and to consider how this resource mobilization could be further enhanced for the future four-year work programmes of the Science-Policy Interface;
14. *Encourages* Parties, international and financial organizations, private sector entities, scientific institutions and funds, and civil society organizations in a position to do so to consider contributing financially to enable the Science-Policy Interface to carry out its work in an optimal, effective manner;
15. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a feasibility study to identify ways of ensuring adequate technical support for the Science-Policy Interface, including the possible use of external technical support unit(s) provided by partners, similarly to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and to report the findings of the study to the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology;
16. *Decides* that the twenty-first session of the Committee on Science and Technology should focus on, inter alia, the review of the procedures and work conducted by the Science-Policy Interface, including its overall achievements since the last review completed at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties;
17. *Requests* the secretariat to present a report on the implementation of this decision at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology.

## 6. Work programme for the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2025–2026

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decisions 23/COP.11 and 19/COP.12,

*Also recalling* decision .../COP.16<sup>3</sup> on improving the efficiency of the Science-Policy Interface,

*Further recalling* decision 19/COP.13 on improving the efficiency of the Science-Policy Interface and decisions 22/COP.13 and 20/COP.15 on cooperation with other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies,

*Noting with appreciation* the work conducted by the Science-Policy Interface in addressing its objectives and implementing the coordination activities included in its work programme for the triennium 2022–2024,

*Having considered* documents ICCD/COP(16)/CST/6 and ICCD/COP(16)/CST/7,

1. *Adopts* the Science-Policy Interface work programme for the biennium 2025–2026, as contained in the annex to this decision;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Present a synthesis report on the third edition of the Global Land Outlook at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology;

(b) Present a list and, where relevant and appropriate, links to rapid response assessments and information products, including, when appropriate, a concise set of policy-oriented recommendations, at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology;

(c) Present a synthesis report of the Science-Policy Interface coordination activities, including, when appropriate, a summary of key messages relevant to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification drawn from the assessment reports approved in the processes of other intergovernmental science bodies during the 2025–2026 biennium, at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology.

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<sup>3</sup> The final decision reference will be inserted in the report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixteenth session, Part II.

## Annex

## Work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2025–2026

Table 1  
**Objectives and deliverables of the Science-Policy Interface work programme 2025–2026**

<i>Objective/Deliverable</i>	<i>Activities</i>
1. Contribute to the third edition of the Global Land Outlook (GLO 3).	The Science-Policy Interface will, inter alia: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Assume a primary role in the quality assurance of GLO 3;</li> <li>(b) Serve on its steering committee;</li> <li>(c) Contribute to the development of GLO procedures;</li> <li>(d) Assist in the GLO costing analysis;</li> <li>(e) Collaborate on GLO communications planning;</li> <li>(f) Contribute, as appropriate, to the GLO 3 as authors;</li> <li>(g) Serve as the GLO 3 review editor; and</li> <li>(h) Contribute to GLO 3 communications and promotion.</li> </ol>
2. Produce rapid response information products in response to requests resulting from the work of the Bureaux of the Conference of the Parties, Committee on Science and Technology and Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention as well as the secretariat and the Global Mechanism.	The Science-Policy Interface will, inter alia: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Contribute to the design of procedures for rapid response assessments and the development of information products, including quality assurance;</li> <li>(b) Pilot the development of rapid response information products; and</li> <li>(c) Contribute to communications and promotion.</li> </ol>

Table 2  
**Coordination activities of the Science-Policy Interface work programme 2025–2026**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Sub-activities</i>
1. Cooperate with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) within the framework of its rolling work programme up to 2030 and in accordance with the procedures established in the Memorandum of Cooperation with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).	<p>The Science-Policy Interface (SPI) will follow up on developments relevant to the UNCCD regarding the IPBES rolling work programme up to 2030, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) A thematic assessment of the interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food, and health (nexus assessment);</li> <li>(b) A thematic assessment of the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and the determinants of transformative change and options for achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity (transformative change assessment); and</li> <li>(c) A methodological assessment of integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and ecological connectivity (spatial planning assessment).</li> </ol> <p>The SPI will summarize the key messages relevant to the UNCCD in the nexus and transformative change assessment reports. The SPI will also contribute to the scientific review of the spatial planning assessment if a draft of this report becomes available in time for the SPI to complete the review.</p>

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Sub-activities</i>
2. Cooperate with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) within the framework of its agenda, particularly regarding its seventh assessment cycle (AR7).	The SPI will follow up on developments regarding the IPCC seventh assessment cycle working group assessment reports and special reports. If drafts of AR7 reports relevant to the UNCCD become available in time during the biennium 2025–2026, the SPI will consider contributing to their scientific review.
3. Cooperate with the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) within the framework of its work programme.	The SPI will cooperate with the ITPS on topics to be jointly agreed by the SPI and the ITPS.  The SPI should explore with the ITPS potential participation in future symposia relevant to the UNCCD, including the Global Symposium on Soil Sealing and Urban Soils and the Global Symposium on Soil Compaction and Physical Degradation.
4. Cooperate with the International Resource Panel of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-IRP) within the framework of its mission.	The SPI will cooperate with the UNEP-IRP on topics to be jointly agreed by the SPI and the UNEP-IRP, within the framework of its mission to provide independent, coherent and authoritative scientific assessments of policy relevance on the sustainable use of natural resources and, in particular, their environmental impacts over the full life cycle, and to contribute to a better understanding of how to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.
5. Cooperate with the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII) of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, which aims to achieve globally comparable monitoring of land governance by 2030.	The SPI will provide inputs to GLII and UNCCD efforts to ensure harmonization of land governance indicators and land degradation indicators, as relevant to both GLII and the UNCCD.
6. Cooperate with the Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP), a joint initiative of the World Meteorological Organization and the Global Water Partnership, on scientific issues related to drought.	The SPI will collaborate with the IDMP, on topics to be jointly agreed by the SPI and the IDMP, on efforts to support governments and other stakeholders at all levels with implementing integrated drought management, by providing technical and management guidance and by sharing scientific knowledge and best practices.

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## 7. Programme of work for the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology

The Conference of the Parties,

*Recalling* articles 23 and 24 of the Convention,

*Also recalling* decisions 13/COP.8 and 21/COP.11 on reshaping the operations of the Committee on Science and Technology,

*Further recalling* decision 19/COP.12 on improving the efficiency of the Committee on Science and Technology, particularly paragraph 4 on the organization of its future sessions,

*Recalling* decision XX/COP.16<sup>4</sup> on improving the efficiency of the Science-Policy Interface,

*Bearing in mind* the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in particular the implementation framework for the Committee on Science and Technology,

*Having reviewed* the proposed work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2025–2026, as contained in the annex to decision XX/COP.16,<sup>5</sup>

1. *Decides* that the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology should focus, inter alia, on the objectives and coordination activities identified in the work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2025–2026;
2. *Also decides* that the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology should be organized in such a way as to facilitate a thematic dialogue between the Parties and the Science-Policy Interface regarding the policy implications of the scientific outputs and to enable the formulation of concise policy-relevant recommendations;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to circulate a provisional annotated agenda and appropriate documentation, including a set of clear and concise recommendations and a separate document with draft decisions for consideration by Parties in all six official languages of the United Nations, at least six weeks prior to the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology.

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<sup>4</sup> The final decision reference will be inserted in the report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixteenth session, Part II.

<sup>5</sup> The final decision reference will be inserted in the report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixteenth session, Part II.