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Convention to Combat Desertification

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Agenda item 4
Policy frameworks and thematic issues, including new emerging issues: grassland and rangeland

Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Land tenure

Draft decision submitted by the Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions 16/COP.14, 26/COP.14 and 27/COP.15, which stress the importance of land tenure security within the framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Also recalling targets on responsible land governance, secure land tenure and access to natural resources, specifically for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, contained in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted by the fifteenth session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Recognizing that tenure insecurity remains a significant development challenge for many countries and requires policy and operational frameworks that mobilize stakeholders and finance, create enduring partnerships, and harness synergies that support a more sustainable, equitable and virtuous cycle of land governance, use and management,

Also recognizing that tenure security empowers land users to be agents of change by incentivizing their adoption of and investment in long-term sustainable land and water management, drought resilience-building, and restoration practices, and supports smallholder farmers, pastoralists and other rural groups in accessing knowledge and technologies, extension services, credit and markets,

Noting that responsible and inclusive land governance and improved land tenure security are among the key enabling factors to leverage synergies and cooperation to support the implementation of the Rio conventions, within their respective mandates and, as relevant, with a view to accelerating progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals,

Taking note of the findings and recommendations of the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which highlighted the importance of women's economic empowerment and equal land use rights as critical enablers for land degradation neutrality and gender equality,

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Also taking note of the findings and recommendations of the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which highlighted the importance of integrating decisions by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification into national implementation,

Further taking note that the Gender Action Plan of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification highlights the strengthening of women's land rights and access to natural resources as a priority for action,

Welcoming the work of the Global Mechanism in developing the business case for responsible and sustainable public and private investments in land tenure, and the checklist to guide the integration of land tenure into projects and programmes, where appropriate,

Acknowledging that additional work needs to be carried out, either within policy or programming efforts, to integrate land tenure into the implementation of the Convention, such as land degradation neutrality target-setting efforts, and land degradation neutrality transformative projects and programmes, where appropriate,

1. *Encourages* Parties to continue integrating land tenure security in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the implementation of the Convention;

2. *Invites* Parties to integrate land tenure into their plans and activities to combat desertification, land degradation and drought with the aim of proactively collecting data on legitimate land tenure rights in priority areas of voluntary land degradation neutrality;

3. *Also invites* Parties to consider nominating a focal point for land tenure to coordinate the integration of land tenure into their plans and activities, where applicable, subject to national legislation and the availability of financial resources of the secretariat, and without prejudice to existing focal point frameworks within the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

4. *Encourages* Parties to promote inclusive and participatory national-level dialogues, including partnering with civil society organizations and relevant actors, to enhance the implementation of decisions 26/COP.14 and 27/COP.15, building on all forms of available knowledge, with the aim of improving the livelihoods of people in vulnerable situations, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, those living in rural areas, women, youth and people with disabilities;

5. *Calls upon* the secretariat and Parties to use the lessons learned from past consultations to refine the methodology to design future national consultations, as requested, that, whenever possible, (i) build on existing multi-stakeholder formats, (ii) include a series of dialogues at different levels from local to national, and (iii) discuss the concept of legitimate land tenure rights, including customary rights, in the respective national context, and in accordance with national legal frameworks;

6. *Urges* Parties to explore ways and means to effectively integrate land tenure information into their capacity development efforts and data analytic tools for evidence-based decision-making to support land degradation neutrality implementation through integrated land-use planning;

7. *Invites* the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality initiative, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Committee on World Food Security and other relevant stakeholders to support these efforts from Parties by providing relevant data, tools, approaches and capacity development for evidence-based decision-making support, including, where appropriate, innovative digital approaches to map legitimate land tenure rights, including customary rights consistent with national legal frameworks, and upon request for support from Parties;

8. *Also invites* developed country Parties and other Parties, relevant United Nations entities, international financial organizations, and private sector institutions to support (i) the design and implementation of land tenure administration systems to improve responsible governance of tenure, taking into account the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, and (ii) the delivery of requested national consultations for integrating land tenure into land degradation neutrality;

9. *Reiterates the request* to the secretariat and the Global Mechanism. pursuant to decision 27/COP.15, and subject to the availability of resources, to continue their efforts to support Parties that wish to integrate land tenure considerations into the implementation of the Convention and land degradation neutrality initiatives, and specifically to:

(a) Use the lessons learned from the first phase of national consultations to organize and deliver further consultations to assist Parties with the ways and means to integrate land tenure into land degradation neutrality and related targets, plans, projects and programmes;

(b) Build on the business case and implement the tenure checklist to identify financing opportunities and sustainable public and private investments to strengthen land governance and land tenure within the context of activities to combat desertification, land degradation and drought, in collaboration with relevant partners and financing institutions, in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, and social and environmental safeguards, with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth, and communicate these financing opportunities to Parties;

(c) Communicate the business case, the checklist and these financing opportunities to parties, with the aim of, inter alia, providing specific guidance to requesting Parties on how to use these documents when updating their national land degradation neutrality plans, considering land tenure issues and following a do-no harm approach that safeguards people's legitimate land tenure rights, consistent with national legal frameworks;

(d) Conduct awareness-raising actions on responsible land governance for combating desertification, land degradation and drought, and engage with Parties, other relevant United Nations organizations, civil society organizations, and other key partners, taking into account cultural circumstances, where appropriate, to reach stakeholders from global to local level with the aim of improving the livelihoods of people in vulnerable situations, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, those living in rural areas, women, youth and people with disabilities;

(e) Explore existing global indicators and data sets relevant to land governance, including data on Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women's land rights and, when appropriate, engage with relevant partners and institutions to pilot options to include potential indicators in future United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification reporting processes, with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and ensuring the widest reach among different national contexts;

(f) Make available relevant documents on land tenure and desertification, land degradation and drought in a land tenure toolbox on the website of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to provide easy access for stakeholders to, inter alia, decisions by the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the technical guide on the integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the mapping of financing institutions, the business case, the tenure checklist, policy briefs and other relevant documents;

10. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism and invites the implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility to carry out awareness-raising actions on their existing accountability and grievance mechanisms related to land tenure to have the widest reach among all stakeholders concerned by their activities in order to combat desertification, land degradation and drought and achieve land degradation neutrality, and *invites* Parties to consider establishing and/or strengthening their respective mechanisms within the national and subnational jurisdictions for their national activities to combat desertification, land degradation and drought as appropriate;

11. *Also requests* the secretariat to:

(a) Present a report on the implementation efforts relevant to this decision at the twenty-third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;

(b) Present a report on policy issues relevant to this decision to the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth session.