

Decision 4/COP.16

Improving the procedures for the communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions 22/COP.11, 7/COP.13, 15/COP.13, 11/COP.14 and 11/COP.15,

Having reviewed documents [ICCD/CRIC\(21\)/11](#), [ICCD/CRIC\(22\)/6](#) and [ICCD/COP\(16\)/2](#),

Noting with appreciation the vision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations of a UN 2.0,¹ empowered by cutting-edge skills in data, digital, innovation, foresight and behavioural science,

Welcoming the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.3.1 (Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area) in the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to help measure progress towards achieving Target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as the ongoing work under the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2018–2030 to facilitate the exchange and interoperability of data on restoration targets and associated interventions,

Also welcoming the increase in funding made available by the Global Environment Facility for the forthcoming 2026 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification reporting process under the enabling activities of the Global Environment Facility,

Noting with appreciation the coordination efforts made by the secretariat to achieve better synchronization between United Nations agencies involved in the reporting process of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Parties that receive funding from the enabling activities of the Global Environment Facility,

Acknowledging with appreciation the support provided by technical partners² to national reporting under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification through the provision of a growing array of data and analytical tools that can support (i) land degradation and drought monitoring; as well as (ii) decision-making to achieve land degradation neutrality,

1. *Requests* the secretariat to continue working with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations under the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2018–2030 to facilitate data exchange, tool interoperability and joint capacity-building on the monitoring of and reporting on land and ecosystem degradation and restoration;

2. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, to enhance the functionality of the performance review and assessment of implementation system for the upcoming 2026 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification reporting process, taking into

¹ See https://www.un.org/two-zero/sites/default/files/2023-09/UN-2.0_Policy-Brief_EN.pdf.

² Technical partners include, inter alia: Centre for Development and Environment – University of Bern, Conservation International, Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, European Space Agency, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Flagship initiative, International Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals, International Soil Reference and Information Centre, Joint Research Center of the European Commission, Open Geospatial Consortium, OpenGeoHub Foundation, School of Geography and Environmental Sciences of University of Southampton, United Nations Environment Programme, University of Maryland, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies, World Resources Institute.

consideration the conclusions and recommendations made by Parties in document [ICCD/CRIC\(21\)/11](#);

3. *Invites* Conservation International to continue enhancing Trends.Earth by (i) addressing the critical technical issues raised during the 2022 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification reporting process as a priority; and (ii) conducting a formal requirements analysis for enhancements to make the software sustainable for future United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification reporting processes;

4. *Decides* that the following indicators will be optional in reporting:

(a) “Trends in the proportion of population exposed to land degradation, disaggregated by sex”;

(b) “Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type” and its metric “Average proportion of Terrestrial Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas”;

(c) “International and domestic private resources”;

(d) “Technology transfer”; and

(e) “Future resources for activities related to the implementation of the Convention”;

5. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, subject to available financial resources, to assess the feasibility of a digital transformation initiative to align the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification with the vision for a UN 2.0, while exploring practical ways to reduce costs using digital solutions;

6. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, and in collaboration with data providers, financial and technical partners and the Earth Observation community, including the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Flagship initiative, to:

(a) Ensure that default data are accurate, complete, consistent, scientifically reviewed, documented and, where feasible and optimal, based on continuously available high-resolution data products for the land surface, especially for small island developing States and developing countries without adequate data;

(b) Follow international standards, where applicable, for data-sharing and application interoperability;

7. *Further requests* the secretariat to allocate sufficient time for the preparation of national reports by country Parties, as well as for the quality assurance of the reports;

8. *Requests* the secretariat to (i) continue exploring different reporting frameworks and systems to identify possibilities to ease the current data collection and verification tasks of Parties; and (ii) further develop capacity-building for national reporting;

9. *Decides* to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention, within the scope and mandate of the Convention, to:

(a) Identify key elements for a post-2030 strategic framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, building on lessons learned, as contained, inter alia, in the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group to Oversee the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework Midterm Evaluation Process, and its follow-up;

(b) Conduct a thorough analysis of current indicators for national reporting on the strategic objectives of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification with a view to making them more responsive for a post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention, while ensuring that future methodologies are feasible, simple to understand and within the capacities of Parties;

10. *Also decides* that the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention will take into consideration the following:

(a) The text of the Convention;

(b) The 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

(c) The midterm review of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the outcomes of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought;

(d) The role of a multi-year strategy which provides an effective framework to guide the implementation of the Convention at national level;

(e) The relevant aspects of Sustainable Development Goal 15 and its target 15.3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(f) Relevant decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties;

(g) Developments under the Rio conventions;

(h) The limitations of Parties in terms of their ability to increase financial resources provided to the Convention;

(i) The work of the Science-Policy Interface;

11. *Requests* the secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureaux of the Committee on Science and Technology and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, to prepare the terms of reference and mandate of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention, approved by the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, no later than four months after the end of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, with the aim of producing a post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention;

12. *Decides* that the terms of reference of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention should ensure adequate participation of regional representatives, supported by technical experts, taking into account geographical and gender balance;

13. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare: (i) a preliminary scoping paper for the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention to inform its work, (ii) terms of reference for the first meeting of the Bureaux of the Committee on Science and Technology and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, for their approval;

14. *Also requests* the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention to:

(a) Present an interim report for consultation to Parties, intergovernmental organizations and regional groups at the twenty-third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention; and

(b) Present a final report to Parties for their consideration and action at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties;

15. *Invites* developed country Parties and other Parties, relevant United Nations entities, international financial organizations, private sector institutions and global alliances, such as the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Flagship initiative, to provide financial and non-financial resources for data collection and the preparation of national reports;

16. *Endorses* the timeline for the 2026 Convention reporting process, as contained in document [ICCD/CRIC\(22\)/7](#), while cognizant that the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention will monitor progress made throughout the 2026 Convention reporting process to decide on adjustments, if needed;

17. *Urges* eligible Parties that have yet to initiate the process of accessing enabling funds for the 2026 Convention reporting process to do so at their earliest convenience to allow national-level activities to align with the tentative timeline for reporting, as contained in document [ICCD/CRIC\(22\)/7](#);

18. *Also urges* Parties to consult subregional and regional institutions to identify those suitable to assist in either facilitating access to enabling funds from the Global Environment Facility and/or becoming a partner in capacity-building for reporting, and notify the secretariat accordingly;

19. *Encourages* Parties to assess well in advance their approach for engaging national stakeholders, including civil society organizations, to respond to the multidisciplinary nature of Convention reporting as a way of using enabling funding made available by the Global Environment Facility;

20. *Requests* the secretariat to present a report on the implementation of this decision at the twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, in line with its terms of reference, as contained in the annex of decision 13/COP.13.

8th plenary meeting

13 December 2024