

Media Advisory

UN meeting to review global progress on desertification, land degradation and drought

**23rd Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC23) to convene in
Panama City, 1-5 December 2025**

Bonn/Panama City, 4 November 2025 – Representatives of 196 countries and the European Union will meet in Panama from 1-5 December 2025 to review their efforts against desertification, land degradation and drought under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) — one of the three Rio Conventions, alongside biodiversity and climate.

The 23rd session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 23) to the UNCCD will convene some 500 delegates from governments, civil society, and academia to assess progress in advancing the Convention's objectives.

A signatory to UNCCD since 1996, Panama has committed to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality by 2030, identified 31 critical hotspots, and is advancing reforestation and Dry Corridor adaptation programmes — underlining its role as regional host. In 2023, the country faced its driest year on record, when water shortages disrupted traffic through the Panama Canal and highlighted how local drought can trigger global consequences.

Juan Carlos Navarro, Minister of Environment of Panama, stated: “Never before has a country hosted, in the same year, the three major United Nations environmental conventions—on climate action, biodiversity, desertification, and sustainable land management. With this, Panama reaffirms its commitment to conserving nature and advancing sustainable development, while once again calling for the integrated management of these three pillars in order to confront the planetary crisis and build a resilient future for our communities.”

UNCCD Executive Secretary Yasmine Fouad said: “Severe droughts and the loss of fertile land are already straining food and energy production, uprooting rural communities, and threatening the livelihoods of millions. Nowhere is this more evident than in Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that is experiencing severe land degradation, affecting at least 20 per cent of its total area. By hosting CRIC23, Panama is placing itself at the center of collective response — from its national Nature Pledge to the regional Dry Corridor Initiative — and helping to build the momentum for the urgent need for drought resilience and land restoration worldwide.”

This CRIC will place particular emphasis on gender, highlighting best practices and bottlenecks in engaging women—including Indigenous women—who are among the hardest hit by land degradation and drought, yet remain at the forefront of sustaining families and food systems.

Recent UNCCD data underline the urgency: the world is losing nearly 100 million hectares of healthy land annually, and over 70 per cent of land has become drier over the past three decades, eroding the

planet's ability to support a growing population. Meeting global land restoration targets will require USD 1 billion per day until 2030—still only a fraction of what is currently spent on harmful subsidies and unsustainable investments.

CRIC23 will be held at the Panama Convention Center, Panama City. Parties will: review progress and provide recommendations towards drought resilience and 2030 global targets on land; discuss the post-2030 strategic framework; engage with key stakeholders including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and see the launch of the Panama Nature Pledge and other key reports.

Press Briefings: 12:00–13:00 (local time)

- **1 December: Opening press conference**

Opening of CRIC23 with focus on the key expectations for the meeting and the launch of the Panama Nature Pledge on land, climate and biodiversity.

Speakers: UNCCD Executive Secretary Yasmine Fouad and Minister of Environment of Panama Juan Carlos Navarro.

- **2 December: Launch of Brief on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

A new brief highlighting land and drought impacts and action in SIDS around the world, as the planet continues to warm.

Speakers: UNCCD and representatives from the Caribbean and the Pacific.

- **4 December: Launch of report on the Economics of Rangelands**

Presentation of a landmark report on rangelands — vital for food security and climate stability but rapidly degrading despite covering 56 per cent of global land.

Speakers: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), UNCCD Chief Scientist Barron Orr, and regional experts.

December will also see the launch of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), a milestone in the lead up to COP17 in Mongolia in August 2026.

- **5 December – Closing Press Release (World Soil Day)**

Issued following the CRIC23 closing plenary and coinciding with World Soil Day. It will provide an overview of CRIC23 outcomes and their significance in the lead-up to UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia (August 2026)

3 December – Press Trip:

Journalists are invited to join a field visit organized by the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) to farms in the Capira mountains showcasing sustainable land management practices. The tour will highlight:

- **Agroforestry** – integrating trees and crops

- **Silvopastoral systems** – combining trees, improved pastures, and good agricultural practices
- **Family farming** – producing food sustainably

The visit will also include the Coffee Processing Plant of the Association of Coffee Growers of the Ciri and Trinidad Rivers (ACACPA), with opportunities to interview farmers, Ministry of Environment staff, and ACP representatives.

These initiatives demonstrate how environmental economic incentives support sustainable land management, improve rural livelihoods, and advance Land Degradation Neutrality goals.

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Notes

Accredited media representatives are invited to attend and report on CRIC23 and associated events.

Daily highlights of CRIC23 will be provided by the IISD *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*

Side events schedule is available here: <https://www.unccd.int/cric23/side-events>

Visual assets about CRIC23 and the [UNCCD Data Dashboard](#) are available here:
<https://trello.com/b/zq0kxtkK/unccd-cric23-panama-2025>

Online registration for representatives from the media will be available from 15 September 2025 here:
<https://indico.un.org/e/unccd-cric23> (click on “Media Registration”).

To register, please provide the following documents:

- One recent passport-sized photograph;
- A valid press card;
- A copy (picture and signature pages) of the national passport (for foreign journalists) or national identity card (for local applicants);
- A letter of introduction on an official letterhead from the bureau chief, media house or publisher.
- Freelance journalists must submit a letter from the media organization assigning them to cover the conference.

After this date, on-site registration will take place at the Accreditation and Registration Centre at the Panama Convention Center (*Calle General Juan D. Perón, Amador, Panama City*) during official registration hours.

Journalists who register online will be able to collect their accreditation at the Panama Convention Center on presentation of a valid press card and an identity document.

For more information on the regulations governing visa applications and the introduction of reporting material into Panama please consult: <https://es.tourismpanama.com/planea-tus-vacaciones/requisitos-de-viaje/>

For inquiries about media accreditation or coverage of the event, please contact: press@unccd.int

A dedicated press and media working space will be available at the conference venue.

Additional information and media updates on the Convention and CRIC 23 will be available on the UNCCD website: <https://www.unccd.int/cric23>

About UNCCD

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the global vision and voice for land. We unite governments, scientists, policymakers, private sector and communities around a shared vision and global action to restore and manage the world's land for the sustainability of humanity and the planet. Much more than an international treaty signed by 197 Parties, UNCCD is a multilateral commitment to mitigating today's impacts of land degradation and advancing tomorrow's land stewardship in order to provide food, water, shelter and economic opportunity to all people in an equitable and inclusive manner.