



Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

**Report of the twenty-third session of the Committee for the
Review of the Implementation of the Convention, held in
Panama City, Panama, from 1 – 5 December 2025**

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Annex

Documents before the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
at its twenty-third session 19

I. Opening of the session

A. Opening statements

1. On 1 December 2025, the Chair of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), Ms. Philippine Dutailly (France), opened the twenty-third session of the Committee and made a statement.
2. The Deputy Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Dr. Osama Ibrahim Faqeeha, delivered a statement on behalf of the Presidency of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
3. The Chairman of the Office and the Executive Secretary of the COP 17 National Committee of Mongolia, H.E. Mr. Batmunkh Dondovdorj, delivered a statement on behalf of the Host Country of COP 17.
4. The Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Ms. Yasmine Fouad, delivered a statement.
5. The Minister of Environment of Panama, H.E. Mr. Juan Carlos Navarro, delivered a statement on behalf of the host country of the twenty-third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 23).

B. General statements

6. Statements were also made by the representatives of Burkina Faso (on behalf of the African Group), Bhutan (on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group), Paraguay (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries), Spain (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV)) and Azerbaijan (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V)).
7. A statement was made by a representative of the European Union and its Member States.
8. A further statement was made by a representative of Turkmenistan (on behalf of the UNCCD Central Asia–Russia interregional group).
9. Further statements were made by the representatives of Armenia, Brazil, Azerbaijan, Peru, the Syrian Arab Republic, Guyana, Egypt, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Dominican Republic, the Cook Islands and Iraq.
10. A statement was made by a representative of the United Nations Environment Programme.
11. A further statement was made by Ms. Maria Esther De León Camacho from the Forest Stewardship Council Indigenous Peoples Foundation, on behalf of civil society organizations (CSOs).

C. Meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes

12. Meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes in preparation for CRIC 23 were held on 30 November 2025.

II. Procedural matters

A. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

13. An intervention was made by the representative of the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation stated that it was forced to object the inclusion in the agenda of items 4 “Interim report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework”

and 5 “Consideration of priorities for science-policy guidance” since the membership of the Russian representative in the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention is being blocked for political reasons.

14. At its first meeting, on 1 December 2025, the Committee adopted its provisional agenda and tentative schedule of work as contained in document ICCD/CRIC(23)/1, except for agenda items 4 and 5.

15. The agenda reads as follows:

1. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda and schedule of work;
 - (b) Appointment of the Rapporteur of the Committee.
2. Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional levels:
 - (a) Update on the implementation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts;
 - (b) Policy frameworks and thematic topics: sand and dust storms, land tenure;
 - (c) Development and promotion of activities for targeted capacity-building to further the implementation of the Convention.
3. Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties.
4. Special segment: Gender Caucus.
5. Adoption of the report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to the Conference of the Parties.

B. Appointment of a Rapporteur of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

16. At the first meeting, on 1 December 2025, the Committee appointed Mr. Charles Lange (Kenya) as Rapporteur of its twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions.

C. Informal consultations

17. Informal consultations took place regularly during the session under the guidance of the two appointed Co-Facilitators of the CRIC contact group on matters relating to the Committee: Mr. Khalid Cherki (Morocco) and Ms. Anastasiia Gotgelf (Germany).

D. Attendance

18. The representatives of the following 117 Parties to the UNCCD attended the twenty-third session of the Committee:

Algeria	Bahamas	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Antigua and Barbuda	Bangladesh	Botswana
Argentina	Barbados	Brazil
Armenia	Belgium	Burkina Faso
Australia	Belize	Burundi
Austria	Benin	Cambodia
Azerbaijan	Bhutan	Cameroon

Canada	Kenya	Russian Federation
Chile	Kuwait	Saint Kitts and Nevis
China	Lesotho	Saint Lucia
Colombia	Liberia	Samoa
Cook Islands	Libya	Sao Tome and Principe
Côte d'Ivoire	Lithuania	Saudi Arabia
Cuba	Luxembourg	Senegal
Cyprus	Madagascar	Serbia
Denmark	Malaysia	Seychelles
Djibouti	Maldives	Sierra Leone
Dominican Republic	Mauritius	Somalia
Ecuador	Mexico	South Africa
Egypt	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Spain
Eswatini	Mongolia	Sri Lanka
European Union	Montenegro	Sudan
Fiji	Morocco	Switzerland
France	Namibia	Syrian Arab Republic
Gabon	Nepal	Thailand
Georgia	Nigeria	Togo
Germany	Oman	Türkiye
Ghana	Pakistan	Turkmenistan
Grenada	Palau	Tuvalu
Guatemala	Panama	Uganda
Guyana	Papua New Guinea	Ukraine
Haiti	Paraguay	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Hungary	Peru	United States of America
India	Philippines	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Indonesia	Poland	Viet Nam
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Portugal	Yemen
Iraq	Qatar	Zambia
Ireland	Republic of Korea	Zimbabwe
Italy	Republic of Moldova	
Japan		

19. The following United Nations organizations, offices and specialized agencies were also represented:

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Global Environment Facility

International Fund for Agricultural Development

International Labour Organization

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

United Nations Volunteers

20. The session was also attended by the following 12 intergovernmental organizations and 46 civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations:

Intergovernmental organizations

African Union

Arab Organization for Agricultural
Development

CGIAR System Organization

Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y
Desarrollo

Development Bank of Latin America and the
Caribbean

Global Water Partnership

Inter-American Institute for Global Change
Research

International Livestock Research Institute

International Organization for Migration

IUCN - International Union for Conservation of
Nature

Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel

Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land
Management

Civil society organizations

Action pour le Respect et la Protection de l'Environnement	Fundación CAUCE Cultura Ambiental Causa Ecologista
Ajemalebu Self Help	Fundación Cuenca Sana, Agua Limpia
Ardha Jabesa Foundation	Fundación MAPA
Asociación para la Investigación y el Desarrollo Integral	Fundación para la Conservación de los Recursos Naturales, Natura
Association des Femmes Peules Autochtones du Tchad (AFPAT)	Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento Indígena
Bari Wesna - Asociación Intercultural	Fundación Wetlands International
Binghamton University's Ellyn Uram Kaschak Institute for Social Justice for Women and Girls	Future Leaders Network
BirdLife International	Green Mongolia Hub
Both ENDS	Indigo Development and Change NPC
Caribbean Youth Environment Network	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry/World Agroforestry Centre
Centre for Sustainable Development	International Foundation for African Children
ChildFund Alliance	Isha Foundation
Chisomo Youth Organisation	Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania
Conservation Biology Institute	People of Good Heart Initiative
Creative Commons	Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH
DesertNet International	Rural Development Institute
DMUN Foundation	Stockholm Environment Institute
ECB Sustainable Youth Foundation	The Borders Institute
ENDA Tiers Monde	The Nature Conservancy
FSC Indigenous Foundation	University of Bern
Fundación Agreste	University of Cambridge
Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Environment and Natural Resources Foundation)	University of Regina
Fundación Barranquilla+20	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development e.V.

E. Documentation

21. The documentation submitted for the consideration of the Committee is listed in the annex to this report.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

22. **The conclusions and recommendations included in this report are a summary compilation of the ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by participants in the twenty-third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to further the implementation of the Convention and the UNCCD 2018 – 2030 Strategic Framework. This report lists potential action that could be undertaken by Parties and other stakeholders, including the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention, after consideration and appropriate decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention.**

A. Update on the implementation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts

23. Some Parties acknowledged with appreciation the support provided by the secretariat, the Global Mechanism (GM) and their partners in Parties' voluntary land degradation neutrality (LDN) target-setting efforts, and reaffirmed their strong commitment to achieving LDN targets. They emphasized that voluntary LDN target-setting has become a critical national tool for guiding land restoration, improving resilience and integrating land management into broader sustainable development and climate priorities. They also highlighted that revised LDN targets now inform national planning frameworks, agricultural policies, biodiversity, climate, and water and wetlands strategies, and long-term sustainable development visions.

24. Some Parties reported substantial progress in revising, updating and implementing LDN targets, noting that improved national coordination and technical support from partners has enabled more accurate baseline assessments, monitoring and reporting. Other Parties acknowledged delays due to institutional fragmentation, limited interministerial cooperation and insufficient technical capacity, unpredictable financing, and political instability, stressing the need for enhanced national technical capacities, coordination mechanisms, and predictable financing.

25. Some Parties stressed that limited national capacities continue to hinder LDN implementation, citing shortages of trained technical staff, challenges in geospatial analysis, and difficulties in applying global methodologies to national contexts. They encouraged the secretariat, the GM and their partners to expand capacity-building, including targeted hands-on training, regional workshops, and sustained technical backstopping throughout reporting and implementation cycles.

26. Some Parties emphasized persistent challenges related to national data gaps, particularly in land productivity, soil organic carbon, drought vulnerability and high-resolution data, particularly for least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States (SIDS) and hyperarid areas. Parties also underscored the need for improved and adequate national data, updated methodologies, and technical support from the secretariat, the GM and the scientific partners to ensure consistent and credible monitoring across LDN indicators.

27. Some Parties highlighted that drought is increasingly hindering progress toward achieving LDN, noting that rising aridity, land degradation, and climate-induced shocks undermine land restoration efforts. They called for stronger integration of drought risk reduction, early warning systems and drought-resilient land management practices into LDN planning and implementation.

28. Some Parties called for the designation of an international day for rangelands at COP 17 to highlight their vital role in biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, pastoral livelihoods and food security.

29. Some Parties called for enhanced regional cooperation and knowledge exchange, particularly among countries sharing similar ecosystems, climatic conditions, and land restoration challenges. They welcomed efforts to develop and strengthen regional implementation and collaboration hubs capable of supporting LDN and drought monitoring, project development, and technical capacity-building tailored to regional contexts. Some Parties also called for the creation of a UNCCD SIDS caucus.

30. Some Parties emphasized the need to mobilize significantly more resources and investments for LDN from all sources, noting that insufficient, unpredictable and highly fragmented funding remains the biggest barrier to implementation. They stressed that restoration activities often struggle to attract stable financing and called for more inclusive, accessible and flexible funding instruments for developing countries, especially for LDCs and SIDS, and close collaboration with ministries of finance and planning. Furthermore, some Parties invited all Parties to develop resource mobilization strategies, including for

mobilizing domestic financial resources, based, among other things, on the elimination or repurposing of harmful subsidies that contribute to desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD).

31. Some Parties recognized the central role of the GM in supporting resource mobilization and encouraged the GM to continue strengthening and exploring partnerships with multilateral development banks, philanthropic foundations and private investors. They welcomed the GM's efforts to help countries align LDN investments with those made under climate, biodiversity and sustainable development financing windows.

32. Some Parties emphasized the importance of expanding access to global climate and biodiversity finance for combating DLDD, especially through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund and emerging blended finance mechanisms. They called for simplified procedures, increased readiness support, and allocations for land restoration and sustainable land management (SLM) under future replenishment cycles.

33. Some Parties commended the reforms proposed for the ninth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-9). They expressed their support for the maintenance of full flexibility in the use of System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocations and supported the revision of the STAR formula to include drought vulnerability in the land degradation component. Some Parties encouraged the GM and the GEF to further inform eligible countries of these opportunities. They acknowledged the added value of the newly integrated programme on drought and drylands proposed for GEF-9. They invited all concerned actors to optimize the synergies, coordination and complementarity with other global flagship programmes related to drought.

34. Some Parties welcomed the GM's engagement with the private sector and innovative financing institutions, including blended finance structures, insurance and carbon markets. They emphasized that clear incentives and risk mitigation instruments need to be introduced for private sector investment. Some Parties also mentioned that blended finance models tailored for SIDS are required. Some Parties recommended that a Caribbean drought project should be prioritized under GEF-9 funding. Some Parties also called for directing private sector resources to the community-based organizations that lead to the economic independence of communities and countries.

35. Some Parties encouraged the GM to support capacity-building in designing bankable projects with a return on investments, noting that the development of investment frameworks has been instrumental for prioritizing restoration projects and attracting co-financing. They requested additional assistance for feasibility studies, financial needs assessments at the national level for achieving LDN and drought resilience, financial structuring, and integrating LDN into national budgetary and investment planning.

36. Some Parties welcomed the contributions of GEF Enabling Activities, which have supported baseline assessments, improved monitoring systems, and facilitated national LDN target-setting processes. They encouraged continued and expanded GEF support to scale up Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme 2.0 activities in additional countries, accelerate implementation and bridge the gap between planning and transformative action on the ground. They also recommended the GEF Secretariat to consider a more programmatic approach to UNCCD enabling activities under GEF-9 that includes support for the revision and updating of LDN targets.

37. Some Parties stressed that improved and transparent tracking of LDN-related financial flows is essential for transparency and accountability. They requested the Secretariat and the GM to refine reporting templates to enable more reliable reporting on public and private financing and to support Parties in developing national systems to track and categorize LDN investments.

38. Some Parties underscored that successful LDN implementation depends on inclusive and participatory approaches, emphasizing the critical roles of Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, local communities, women, youth, and CSOs. They called for enhanced community-level engagement, dedicated support for locally-led restoration initiatives, and better integration of community-generated data into national LDN monitoring frameworks.

39. Some Parties reaffirmed that achieving LDN will require sustained political commitment and leadership, scaling up restoration investments, and deepening partnerships at all levels. They stressed that LDN is essential not only for combating land degradation, but also for strengthening climate resilience, safeguarding livelihoods, conserving biodiversity, supporting food security and advancing integrated, long-term sustainable development.

40. Some Parties stressed the importance of agroecology, agroforestry and ecosystem-based approaches to achieving the LDN targets on degraded agricultural lands. They emphasized that the major co-benefits of these approaches in terms of land and ecosystem restoration, socioeconomic impacts, and improved food security have the potential to significantly contribute to the delivery of the mandates of all the Rio conventions.

41. CSOs expressed their wish for Parties to integrate CSOs, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities into national LDN coordination mechanisms and working groups, and to promote their participation across the entire policy cycle.

B. Policy frameworks and thematic topics: sand and dust storms

42. Some Parties commended the UNCCD secretariat and the GM for their work on sand and dust storms (SDS), in particular the secretariat's active engagement in the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms and its contribution to the draft action plan for the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms. They also welcomed continued cooperation on the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox (SDS Toolbox), including the new memorandum of understanding with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and encouraged the wide dissemination of the SDS Toolbox.

43. Some Parties stressed the severe impacts of SDS on food security, human and public health, ecosystems, animals, economies and essential services such as infrastructure, noting that cities – particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states – are hit the hardest. They underscored that SDS threaten the well-being and livelihoods of millions of people and ecosystems worldwide.

44. Some Parties welcomed strengthened action to combat SDS, while underscoring the need to maintain the UNCCD's core priorities of DLDD.

45. Some Parties emphasized that SDS is a dynamic, cross-sectoral and transboundary challenge and stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation from global to local level and exchanging expertise and technologies, bringing together innovative approaches and Indigenous knowledge to address the transboundary impacts of SDS.

46. Some Parties noted that the capacity development programme under the UNCCD–FAO workplan should be fully funded and tailored to: (1) strengthen national modelling and forecasting capacities; (2) build community preparedness and health-sector response; and (3) support source-area management.

47. Some Parties emphasized the importance of improving their understanding and management of SDS through robust ground-based observations, harmonized analytics and hotspot maps, and accessible real-time monitoring and early-warning systems that are adapted to national, subnational and local contexts.

48. To better address local-scale sand and dust hazards, some Parties suggested expanding the SDS Toolbox and related guidance to include: (a) localized exposure and health-risk modules; (b) community-level preparedness and adaptation options; (c) integration of urban, peri-urban and agricultural vulnerability assessments; and (d) data products tailored to the needs of local operational agencies.

49. Some Parties noted that the development of the Global Initiative for Sand and Dust Storms (GISDS) represents a promising contribution to the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms draft action plan and suggested that the Global Mechanism align the work of the GISDS with its core mandate under decision 27/COP.16.

50. Some Parties further noted that the GISDS should be designed and implemented in close consultation with affected countries and relevant subregional organizations, delivering

practical outputs such as: (1) regional SDS summits; (2) interoperable early warning and good-practice networks; and (3) clear linkages to drought and disaster risk reduction planning and management.

51. Some Parties stressed that the GISDS should be further targeted to all geographies to ensure data and monitoring is complete and applicable for all Parties.

52. Some Parties stressed that the GISDS should include mechanisms to mobilize finance and catalyse public–private investment in source control and land restoration.

53. Some Parties highlighted the importance of integrated proactive, locally led and nature-based source mitigation and resilience approaches, including addressing DLDD and improving anticipatory action as well as ensuring the involvement of all relevant stakeholders at all levels in preparation and implementation processes.

54. Some Parties underscored the importance of gender-responsive and gender-transformative policies and actions to address SDS and suggested building on the recommendations from the Gender Caucus session on SDS.

55. Some Parties expressed the need to intensify ambition in terms of financial and technical support – coordinated among Parties, partner organizations and donors – for initiatives that strengthen monitoring systems, improve data provision, build national capacities and establish innovative financing mechanisms to enable effective field interventions in affected countries, including at regional and interregional levels.

56. Some Parties underlined the need to strengthen synergies between efforts to combat SDS and national action plans under the Sustainable Development Goals, LDN, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement, the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, among other relevant agreements. Some Parties also encouraged closer collaboration between and among agencies through multisectoral dialogues.

57. CSOs, and some Parties, reaffirmed the need for inclusive approaches that meaningfully involve Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups, especially in data collection.

C. Policy frameworks and thematic topics: land tenure

58. Some Parties welcomed the progress made by the secretariat and the GM since COP 16 in advancing responsible and inclusive land governance and strengthening land tenure security, including through the development of the Land Tenure Toolbox, the continuation of the joint initiative of the UNCCD and FAO on integrating tenure security into land restoration initiatives, and the preparation of the Compendium of Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms.

59. Some Parties also welcomed the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Caucus and the Local Communities Caucus and underscored the legitimate land tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples.

60. Some Parties reaffirmed that responsible and inclusive land governance and strengthened land tenure security for local communities, Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups, including ensuring their access to and use of land and natural resources, are key enabling factors for the implementation of the UNCCD, including the achievement of voluntary LDN targets. They further noted that such measures contribute to the objectives of the other Rio conventions and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

61. Some Parties noted that effective land and land-resource tenure systems are often complex and stressed the importance of ensuring that such complexity is fully reflected in responsible and inclusive land governance regimes.

62. Some Parties expressed the need for stronger support from the Secretariat, the GM and other relevant organizations, specifically in: (1) strengthening land governance systems at national and local levels; (2) improving women’s and youths’ access to land and property

ownership; and (3) enhancing technical capacities to effectively implement land policies. They also emphasized the importance of (4) facilitating national consultations on land tenure through technical and financial assistance; (5) strengthening the capacities of land institutions to collect, analyse and use data; and (6) finalizing and disseminating the Compendium of Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms.

63. Some Parties drew attention to the need to increase financial resources dedicated to land governance within broader efforts to combat desertification, and to facilitate access to climate and development financing that explicitly integrates land tenure security, including improved access to finance for women.

64. Some Parties stressed the importance of the secretariat and the GM continuing their work to explore global indicators and datasets relevant to land governance, with a view to their potential inclusion in future UNCCD reporting processes.

65. Some Parties welcomed the secretariat's efforts to explore financial opportunities to support additional national consultations on responsible and inclusive land governance and strengthened land tenure security. They requested the secretariat to prepare a document summarizing the lessons learned from the first phase of the national consultations and make it available to all interested stakeholders.

66. Some Parties emphasized the need to align tenure policies with LDN targets, climate adaptation plans and biodiversity conservation frameworks in order to enhance effectiveness through more synergistic planning and implementation across the Rio conventions.

67. Some Parties stressed the importance of strengthening regional cooperation to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and technologies, reduce the transboundary impacts of sand and dust storms and ensure the engagement of CSOs and the private sector in both the Global Initiative for Sand and Dust Storms and the UNCCD–FAO land tenure initiative, with a view to enhancing their implementation. They also underscored the value of supporting regional platforms for knowledge exchange, including initiatives such as the Global Land Forum.

68. Some Parties emphasized the importance of full, inclusive and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, people of African descent, women, and other vulnerable groups in the implementation of the Convention and in all phases of LDN processes and other restoration initiatives.

69. One Party underscored the need to ensure the safety of environmental defenders.

70. CSOs re-echoed several messages expressed by Parties and highlighted the importance of benefit-sharing rights, as well as the need to ensure that the Land Tenure Toolbox is effectively used to strengthen national land governance systems. They also underscored the importance of strengthening monitoring, accountability, and redress mechanisms, ensuring that these are culturally appropriate, accessible, and aligned with international standards, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular Article 26, and further conveyed their wish that the secretariat and Parties involve CSOs in the development, piloting and dissemination of land tenure tools and maintain continuous collaboration with civil society to advance equitable, inclusive and sustainable tenure systems.

D. Development and promotion of activities for targeted capacity-building to further the implementation of the Convention

71. Some Parties recognized capacity-building as an essential enabler of transformative change and a prerequisite for achieving land degradation neutrality, drought resilience, SLM, and effective national reporting.

72. Some Parties commended the UNCCD secretariat and the GM for their continued efforts to strengthen capacity-building as a core pillar of the Convention and welcomed the report [ICCD/CRIC\(23\)/6](#) highlighting progress, gaps and opportunities.

73. Some Parties underscored that despite notable achievements, capacity-building continues to face enduring structural challenges, including fragmented institutional arrangements, limited coordination, inadequate staffing, and persistent shortfalls in predictable, long-term and consistent financing.

74. Some Parties reiterated that these barriers prevent the scaling up of capacity-building efforts and hinder the transition from short-term training to sustained institutional strengthening.

75. Some Parties reaffirmed the importance of adopting a more coherent and forward-looking capacity-building strategy aligned with the forthcoming post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention. Some Parties stressed that both frameworks must evolve together to avoid misalignment and to ensure that capacity-building responds to emerging global environmental, socioeconomic and geopolitical challenges.

76. Some Parties suggested that the development of the capacity-building strategy must remain an ongoing effort, with some long-term building blocks and key priorities that could be designed as dynamic adaptive processes, allowing for an easy integration into and possible alignment with the post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention.

77. Some Parties emphasized the need for capacity-building approaches that are inclusive, context-specific and rooted in national and regional realities. They highlighted that different regions – such as LDCs, SIDS, mountainous countries, hyperarid zones, and communities with limited in-country expertise – require tailored support, including hands-on training, mentoring schemes and locally relevant technical backstopping.

78. Some Parties reiterated that institutional consolidation within the secretariat is critical for improving coordination and impact. While some Parties supported the establishment of a dedicated, well-resourced capacity-building unit, other Parties invited the secretariat to present more resource-efficient alternatives, including an inter-unit task force, to harmonize activities without creating new structures.

79. Some Parties underlined that decentralized delivery mechanisms are essential for ensuring that capacity-building reaches local implementers and vulnerable communities.

80. Some Parties called for strengthening regional hubs and centres of excellence by building on existing institutions and initiatives where possible.

81. Some Parties underlined the need for a clear mandate in the future capacity-building strategy for the work of regional hubs and the importance of this strategy as a precondition for considering new requirements for reporting on capacity-building actions.

82. For some Parties, digital transformation emerged as a shared priority. Some Parties called for expanded access to data, cloud computing, geospatial analysis, artificial intelligence, and early warning systems. Other Parties stressed that digital tools must be accompanied by long-term support, improved digital literacy, and infrastructure investment to avoid widening technological inequalities between regions. Some Parties also expressed the need for more accessible scientific outputs, including simplified and translated materials from the Science-Policy Interface and the Global Land Outlook.

83. Some Parties stressed that monitoring and evaluation systems must evolve beyond activity tracking toward assessing long-term impact, including institutional change and behavioural shifts. Some Parties highlighted the importance of strengthening national capacities for performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) reporting and harmonizing methodologies, particularly for LDCs, SIDS and regions with limited data availability.

84. Some Parties acknowledged the training for journalists provided by the secretariat to some Regional Implementation Annexes and requested that the secretariat organize those trainings for other Regional Implementation Annexes.

85. Some Parties emphasized the need for increased synergies among the three Rio conventions. Some Parties recommended coordinated training modules, joint financing opportunities, and strengthened use of existing mechanisms under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

(UNFCCC) and other multilateral initiatives. Some Parties encouraged the secretariat to expand collaboration through the Joint Liaison Group and related programmes.

86. Some Parties stressed that the lack of predictable, adequate and accessible financing remains the greatest barrier to scaling up capacity-building. Some Parties called for enhanced partnerships with multilateral development banks, the Global Environment Facility, donors and the private sector, as well as the creation of dedicated financing windows for regional hubs, national fellowships, data systems, and community-level capacity programmes.

87. CSOs encouraged the Parties to prioritize long-term institutional capacity for CSOs, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities; enhance coordination with the Rio conventions and other global frameworks for greater coherence, efficiency and joint action; expand digital literacy through localized training; support community-led capacity-building; and invest in public awareness to drive behavioural change and engagement in restoration and drought resilience.

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

88. Some Parties welcomed the evolution of the PRAIS platform and reporting tools as important steps toward enhancing data-driven, transparent and accessible reporting, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and enabling subnational and policy-relevant analysis.

89. Some Parties appreciated the support of data and technical partners and called for continued flexibility and adaptability in methodologies to reflect diverse ecological contexts and national realities.

90. Some Parties emphasized persistent gaps in default datasets – especially for LDCs, SIDS, hyperarid zones, countries with mountainous terrain and communities with limited in-country expertise – and called for high-resolution, continuous and regularly updated data and improved coverage.

91. Some Parties stressed the need for structured, inclusive and context-specific capacity-building, including hands-on regional training, technical backstopping, and the establishment of regional support centres. They highlighted the need for training and support activities to be synchronized and aligned with the reporting process and the introduction of new tools or methodologies. While the hybrid model of e-learning, in-person workshops, and on-demand technical backstopping was welcomed, some Parties emphasized that e-learning alone is insufficient and underscored the need for in-person workshops.

92. Some Parties called for enhanced regional and international cooperation, including South–South cooperation, and strengthened knowledge exchange. The Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management was recognized as a pilot regional centre for reporting, and additional, regionally tailored assistance for SIDS was requested, coordinated by the secretariat and advisors like the Apacheta Foundation.

93. Some Parties expressed appreciation for the technical support provided by the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) in documenting, validating and promoting SLM good practices, and highlighted the value of integrating WOCAT's tools with PRAIS. Some Parties called for continued and expanded assistance from WOCAT, including dedicated training, localized guidance and technical support to enhance the quality and policy relevance of SLM reporting through PRAIS.

94. One Party envisioned the evolution of the PRAIS reporting platform into a governance platform that enables greater integration across sectors and links land degradation with water security, drought management, and biodiversity.

95. Some Parties highlighted the importance of open data standards, interoperability and the integration of open-source tools and requested the creation of a single user-friendly portal for all UNCCD reporting resources additional national indicators and tools. Some Parties

also emphasized Creative Commons licensing to facilitate cross-convention reporting and maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of national reporting efforts.

96. Some Parties urged that reporting frameworks be simpler and more narrative-driven and allow for self-defined indicators and community-generated data, including on the storytelling and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities with free, prior and informed consent.

97. Some Parties highlighted the need that monitoring and reporting systems must remain compatible with the operational and institutional realities and capacities of developing countries.

98. Some Parties emphasized the need to include civil society, women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in national reporting processes and called for simplified formats and practical capacity-building for local actors.

99. Some Parties stressed the need for sustainable, adequate and predictable financial support, especially for LDCs and SIDS, narrowing the digital divide, and ensuring that improvements to PRAIS do not create additional burdens for developing countries with limited technical capacity.

100. Some Parties welcomed further integration with the CBD and the UNFCCC and encouraged collaboration with the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Flagship initiative. They highlighted the potential for harmonized methodologies, strengthened cooperation through a decentralized capacity-building model, and the development of joint regional centres with the CBD.

101. Some Parties specifically encouraged the secretariat to consider expanding the scope of the regional centres pilot approach to include broader UNCCD capacity building efforts.

102. Some Parties called for adaptive improvements to the strategic objective 5 (SO 5) reporting template, coordination with regional organizations and financial institutions, and enhanced tracking of public and private financing. Some Parties requested more credible, comparable and transparent financial data to better support SO 5 reporting.

103. One Party requested that the secretariat incorporate previously unrecorded financial contributions into the data dashboard and send reminders one week before reporting deadlines to ensure holistic data collection.

104. One Party requested the secretariat, the GM and other actors to consider linguistic diversity and provide assistance in the official languages of the United Nations to support effective participation in capacity-building.

105. Some Parties highlighted the positive impact of the GEF Enabling Activity umbrella projects and the involvement of implementing agencies such as the United Nations Environment Programme and FAO. They also appreciated the United Nations Development Programme, WOCAT and Conservation International for developing, through GEF support, data and capacity for national-level monitoring, reporting, planning and implementation of LDN interventions. One Party called for the expansion of GEF support and the strengthening of similar cooperation.

106. CSO expressed the wish for their formal integration and invitation to participate in national LDN reporting structures as well as the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and youth and the reflection of their inputs in official national submissions; practical capacity-building for local actors; the co-development of simplified reporting formats tailored to local realities, while aligned with national requirements; the integration of community-based data; and mandatory reporting of SLM best practices.

F. Special segment: Gender Caucus

107. Some Parties commended the UNCCD secretariat for its efforts to advance gender equality in the implementation of the Convention and welcomed the convening of the Gender Caucus at CRIC 23. They highlighted the Gender Caucus as an important multi-stakeholder platform for promoting gender-responsive action, which, together with the UNCCD Gender

Action Plan and its Roadmap, provides a coherent framework for strengthening women's empowerment and ensuring the effective integration of gender considerations across all UNCCD activities.

108. Some Parties noted the need to reinforce institutional gender expertise and welcomed the expansion of capacity-building programmes, including the newly established Women Delegates Fund, which supports women's effective participation in Convention processes.

109. Some Parties reiterated that women, particularly those from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, play a central role in sustainable land management, food security, the stewardship of natural resources, and combating SDS, drawing on both traditional ecological knowledge and modern practices. Despite these essential contributions, women remain among the most affected by DLDD, facing limited access to quality land, persistent tenure insecurity, heightened vulnerability to DLDD, and a disproportionate burden in restoring degraded ecosystems.

110. Some Parties reaffirmed that gender equality, along with secure land tenure, land rights, and resource access rights, including for women of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, is essential for effectively combating DLDD and SDS and achieving land degradation neutrality.

111. Some Parties emphasized the need to ensure equal representation of women of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at all levels of decision-making – local, national, regional and global – as well as in natural resource governance, including management committees, restoration planning, and monitoring and evaluation processes.

112. Some Parties emphasized the importance of integrating traditional knowledge systems with scientific research and of fostering collaboration between Indigenous knowledge holders with free, prior and informed consent and scientific institutions to develop resilient, locally appropriate solutions, particularly for drought early-warning systems and resilience planning.

113. Some Parties highlighted the need to make financing more accessible for gender-responsive programmes and projects at all levels, particularly by ensuring direct support to grassroots and Indigenous women's organizations for community-led protection and restoration initiatives.

114. Some Parties stressed that achieving gender-equal results and the empowerment of women and Indigenous Peoples requires strengthened capacities at all levels and expanded access to productive resources, land, credit, training and technology. They called on technical partners to enhance regional cooperation to facilitate the exchange of solutions and help close persistent gaps in access to resources and opportunities.

115. Some Parties underlined the need for strengthened awareness-raising campaigns targeting women, Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable groups, in line with Article 19 of the Convention on capacity-building, education and public awareness.

116. Some Parties underscored the need for more comprehensive monitoring frameworks to tackle the gender data gap, including gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data and indicators on non-economic loss and damage, as well as stronger capacities to integrate gender considerations into spatial planning, early-warning systems, and drought risk assessments. They emphasized that such frameworks should meaningfully reflect the differentiated vulnerabilities of women and men to DLDD, including SDS, paying special attention to intersectionality.

117. Some Parties requested that the secretariat and the GM identify the bottlenecks and challenges Parties face in collecting gender-disaggregated data and support them in determining appropriate tools, capacity-building measures, and technology transfer options to strengthen national reporting and implementation.

118. Some Parties stressed the need to strengthen gender analysis in the 2026 UNCCD national reports. In this context, it was noted that the fourth version of the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS 4) should be regarded as a governance infrastructure that can help enhance the capacities of Indigenous and rural women and support more inclusive reporting processes.

119. Some Parties requested that the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention take into account the gender-related suggestions made at CRIC 23 when developing the future strategic framework and its indicators. They recalled item 4.1 of the Gender Action Plan Roadmap, which calls for evidence-based, policy-relevant research to establish baseline data on key gender metrics and inform decision-making.

120. One Party emphasized that the implementation of the provisions of the Gender Action Plan should be undertaken in accordance with national laws and priorities and with full respect for religious and ethical values and the cultural traditions of peoples, including Indigenous Peoples. It was underscored that, in this context, the term ‘gender’ is to be understood as referring to men and women having equal rights, freedom and opportunities.

121. Some Parties highlighted the benefits of strengthening collaboration and coordination with the other Rio conventions and relevant organizations, particularly the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Women and Girl Education Fund of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to advance gender-responsive synergies and support the development of effective and meaningful gender-specific indicators, working with WOCAT as the reference database of the UNCCD.

122. Some Parties reiterated their commitment to gender-responsive and transformative approaches for the implementation of the Convention, paying special attention to intersectionality.

123. One Party emphasized the need to ensure the protection of women as environmental and land defenders.

124. CSOs highlighted the persistent gap between gender commitments and their implementation. They noted the importance of upholding the Sacred Lands Indigenous Peoples Declaration and of ensuring the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples across UNCCD processes.

IV. Conclusion of the session

A. Adoption of the report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to the Conference of the Parties

125. At its ninth meeting, on 5 December 2025, the Committee decided, in line with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the COP, to defer item 4 “Interim report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework” and item 5 “Consideration of priorities for science–policy guidance” of the CRIC 23 provisional agenda to COP 17 for further consideration and action by Parties.

126. The Committee considered the draft report on its twenty-third session.

127. An intervention was made by a representative of the Russian Federation.

128. The Committee adopted the draft report as a whole, as orally revised, and entrusted the Rapporteur to finalize it in consultation with the CRIC Bureau and the UNCCD secretariat.

B. Closure of the session

129. Statements were made by the representatives of Bhutan (on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group), the European Union and its Member States, Paraguay (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries), Spain (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV)) and Azerbaijan (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V)).

130. Statements were delivered also by the representatives of Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Canada, China, the Cook Islands, Cuba, the Dominican Republic,

Kuwait, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mauritius, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Türkiye.

131. A further statement was made by the representative of the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management.

132. Statements were also made by the representatives of the Green Mongolia Hub (on behalf of civil society and Indigenous Peoples) and the UNCCD Youth Caucus.

133. The Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Ms. Andrea Meza Murillo, also made a closing statement.

134. The CRIC Chair, Ms. Philippine Dutailly (France), made concluding remarks and declared closed the twenty-third session of the CRIC.

Annex

Documents before the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its twenty-third session

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/CRIC(23)/1	Provisional agenda and annotations. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(23)/2	Procedures for the communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(23)/3	Policy frameworks and thematic topics: sand and dust storms, land tenure. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(23)/4	Interim report by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention
ICCD/CRIC(23)/4/Add.1	Interim report by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention. Addendum
ICCD/CRIC(23)/5	Implementation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts. Report by the Global Mechanism.
ICCD/CRIC(23)/6	Development and promotion of activities for targeted capacity-building to further the implementation of the Convention. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(23)/7	Consideration of priorities for science–policy guidance. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(23)/INF.1	Information for participants. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(23)/INF.2	Information on the Gender Caucus
ICCD/CRIC(23)/INF.3	Assessment of the indicators for national reporting on the strategic objectives of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(23)/INF.4	List of participants