



## Convention to Combat Desertification

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### Conference of the Parties

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#### 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

#### Enhancing the implementation of the Convention and its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

## Enhancing the implementation of the Convention and the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

### Note by the secretariat

#### *Summary*

By its decision 7/COP.15, the Conference of the Parties (COP) launched the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework), which led to decision 7/COP.16 on enhancing the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework in 2025–2030. By that decision, the COP requested and/or proposed several measures to enhance the implementation of the Convention and the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework. Most of the action taken to implement the decision is presented in detail in COP, Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and Committee on Science and Technology documents dedicated to various topics included in decision 7/COP.16. This document provides a brief overview of the action taken on two topics that are not covered elsewhere: (i) national information-sharing and coordination; and (ii) the globality of the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought. The focus of this document is on measures taken by Convention institutions and bodies.

As the content of this agenda item and related documentation are directly relevant to the consideration of the post-2030 strategic framework, which is being considered under a separate agenda item, it is proposed that for future COPs, this agenda item and related documentation are merged with those for the post-2030 strategic framework.

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## I. Introduction

1. By its decision 7/COP.15, the Conference of the Parties (COP) launched the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework), which involved an evidence-based independent assessment of the progress made toward the objectives of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, and a report by the Intergovernmental Working Group to Oversee the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework Midterm Evaluation Process (IWG-MTE) presenting its findings and recommendations to the COP at its seventeenth session. Building on the recommendations of the IWG-MTE, Parties adopted decision 7/COP.16 on enhancing the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework in 2025–2030.

2. By the same decision, the COP commended the progress made in the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, while underlining the importance of further enhancing and expanding measures and global and regional cooperation to avoid, reduce and reverse desertification and land degradation, and mitigate, adapt to and manage the effects of drought worldwide. The COP also recognized the importance of further mobilizing substantial, adequate, timely and predictable additional resources from developed country Parties and other Parties, relevant United Nations entities, international financial organizations, and private sector institutions. Furthermore, the COP recognized the importance of translating the provisions of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and the decisions made in the UNCCD process into effective integrated, coherent, multi-stakeholder and large-scale implementation, in accordance with national circumstances. It also recognized the potential of the Convention to become an effective catalyst for such large-scale, multi-stakeholder implementation.

3. By the same decision, the COP also requested and/or proposed several measures addressing Parties, Convention institutions and bodies, and key stakeholders to enhance the implementation of the Convention and the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework. These measures focused on national information-sharing and coordination, the private sector, synergies, gender equality and women’s empowerment, the globality of the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), science-policy interfacing, national reporting, resource mobilization, and the engagement of the civil society.

4. Most measures taken in the follow-up to decision 7/COP.16 are presented in detail in the COP, Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and Committee on Science and Technology documents dedicated to the topics included in that decision.<sup>1</sup> To avoid duplication, this document provides a brief overview of the action taken only on those two topics that are not covered elsewhere: national information-sharing and coordination, and the globality of the impacts of DLDD. The focus of this document is on measures taken by the Convention institutions and bodies.

5. As the content of this agenda item and related documentation are directly relevant to the consideration of the post-2030 strategic framework, which is being considered under a separate agenda item, it is proposed that for future COPs, this agenda item and related documentation are merged with those for the post-2030 strategic framework.

## II. Follow-up to decision 7/COP.16

6. Decision 7/COP.16 requested Parties to enhance national information-sharing and coordination on the preparation for and follow-up to UNCCD meetings and on the topics discussed in the Convention process. It also requested the secretariat to support the capacity

<sup>1</sup> Document [ICCD/COP\(17\)/4](#) on the private sector; document [ICCD/COP\(17\)/6](#) on synergies; document [ICCD/COP\(17\)/9](#) on gender equality and women’s empowerment; document [ICCD/COP\(17\)/CST/5](#) on the future functioning of the Science-Policy Interface; document [ICCD/CRIC\(24\)/4-ICCD/COP\(17\)/CST/7](#) on national reporting; document [ICCD/CRIC\(24\)/2](#) on resource mobilization; and document [ICCD/COP\(17\)/3](#) on the engagement of civil society.

of national focal points (NFPs) and science and technology correspondents (STCs), as well as their respective offices, in that task.

7. Such support was provided in many ways; for example, in the follow-up to COP 16, the secretariat compiled the main provisions of the COP 16 decisions into an overview of what the COP had requested/proposed to be done by Parties, and what was to take place in the intergovernmental process. This compilation was shared with all Parties. Many briefings and webinars were also organized on different key topics, including land tenure and budget, among other things, to assist the NFPs and STCs in sharing and using UNCCD information in their own work.

8. Also, in response to decision 7/COP.16, the secretariat prepared recommendations for the NFPs and STCs, as well as their respective offices, to assist in national efforts to effectively coordinate and share information concerning the Convention at the national and local levels, with a view to supporting its implementation. These recommendations are contained in the annex to this document.

9. With regard to the globality of the impacts of DLDD, decision 7/COP.16 recognized that DLDD impacts everyone and that observed and projected trends demonstrate increasing aridity. It encouraged Parties categorized as non-affected to enhance their implementation of the Convention and the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, including setting their voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and submitting national reports.

10. The decision also requested the Executive Secretary to consult with Parties categorized as non-affected on how best to integrate their national circumstances, aims, actions and needs within the UNCCD process and participate in the next reporting cycles within the framework of the Convention. Furthermore, it requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to initiate an overall comprehensive discussion among Parties on how to best to reaffirm the global role and importance of the UNCCD in deepening political commitment and cooperation to address DLDD, taking into account new trends and recognizing that DLDD impacts everyone.

11. The requests presented in paragraph 10 above are among the matters discussed in the Intergovernmental Working Group for the Future Strategic Framework (IWG-FSF), which will submit its report to the COP at its seventeenth session in document [ICCD/COP\(17\)/2](#).

### **III. Conclusions and recommendations**

**12. The developments and measures deriving from the midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework have been integrated into the work on the topics that they relate to: the private sector, synergies, gender equality and women’s empowerment, science-policy interfacing, national reporting, resource mobilization, and the engagement of the civil society.**

**13. To enhance national information-sharing and coordination, the secretariat has drafted recommendations for the NFPs and STCs to assist in national efforts to effectively coordinate and share information concerning the Convention at the national and local levels, with a view to supporting its implementation. These draft recommendations are presented in the annex to this document for the consideration and possible action by Parties.**

**14. The follow-up to the COP requests concerning the further recognition of the globality of the impacts of DLDD and the respective role of the UNCCD are among the matters discussed in the IWG-FSF, which will submit its report to the COP at its seventeenth session in document [ICCD/COP\(17\)/2](#).**

**15. It is proposed that this agenda item on the follow-up to the midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and related documentation are merged with the process to develop the post-2030 strategic framework, as they are directly relevant to its content.**

## Annex

### **Recommendations on the key roles and responsibilities of the national focal points and science and technology correspondents under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**

#### **1. General principles**

- Ensure clear institutional mandates, adequate resourcing, and continuity of both national focal point (NFP) and science and technology correspondent (STC) roles.
- Promote strong coordination mechanisms between the policy, science and implementation communities.
- Strengthen two-way communication between national stakeholders and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) process.
- Encourage formal recognition and visibility of both roles within national governance structures.

#### **2. National focal points**

##### **2.1 Core functions**

- Serve as the official national liaison with the UNCCD secretariat and Convention bodies.
- Ensure timely communication, dissemination and follow-up on UNCCD decisions and processes.
- Coordinate national engagement in the Conference of the Parties (COP), the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST).

##### **2.2 Policy and coordination role**

- Lead national coordination on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD).
- Facilitate interministerial and multi-stakeholder collaboration (environment, agriculture, water, planning, finance, etc.).
- Align UNCCD implementation with:
  - National development plans
  - Climate strategies
  - Biodiversity frameworks.
- Often act as focal point for land degradation neutrality (LDN), drought planning and UNCCD reporting processes.

##### **2.3 Strategic and technical oversight**

- Maintain awareness of:
  - Relevant policies, programmes and projects
  - National reporting obligations and indicators.
- Guide preparation of national reports and voluntary targets (e.g. LDN).
- Support integration of scientific inputs (via STCs) into policy decisions.

##### **2.4 Representation and negotiation**

- Coordinate the development of national positions for UNCCD meetings.
- Lead or support national delegations in negotiations.
- Ensure coherence between national positions and regional/global agendas.

### 3. Science and technology correspondents

In accordance with decision 24/COP.10, the role of STCs is to assist NFPs in scientific matters related to the implementation of the Convention, including:

- Enhancing relationships and networks with the scientific community at the local, national, regional and global level with the support of NFPs;
- Establishing a dialogue with scientists and technologists at the local, national, regional and global level;
- Measuring progress in the achievement of the strategic objectives of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and other such frameworks that may be established, to enhance the implementation of the Convention and the reporting process.

#### 3.1 Core functions

- Provide scientific and technical support to the NFP and national processes.
- Serve as the main interface between science and policy at the national level.

#### 3.2 Engagement with UNCCD bodies

- Actively participate in sessions of the CST and support the intersessional work of the CST Bureau.
- Contribute to the work of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) through elected representatives serving on the CST Bureau.
- Contribute to the scientific review of science-based communications of the secretariat and products developed by the SPI.

#### 3.3 Knowledge and network development

- Develop and strengthen linkages and facilitate information exchange related to the work of the CST and SPI with relevant regional and national agencies and experts, including, inter alia:
  - National research institutions
  - Universities
  - Technical agencies
  - Regional and global scientific networks.
- Participate in national science-policy interface(s) that are relevant to DLDD.
- Help improve the effectiveness of the CST and help facilitate the implementation of the Convention at the national level by:
  - Communicating with the scientific representatives of other intergovernmental scientific bodies at the national level;
  - Communicating and collaborating with the STCs of other countries.
- Promote knowledge exchange and innovation uptake.

#### 3.4 Technical advisory role

- Support the NFP on matters related to:
  - Monitoring and national reporting
  - Data collection and analysis
  - Application of scientific tools and methodologies.
- Advise on evidence-based decision-making and emerging technologies.

#### 3.5 Capacity-building

- Support capacity development for national reporting.
- Identify national science and technology gaps.
- Promote training and capacity development for:
  - Government staff
  - Local practitioners.
- Facilitate access to global knowledge platforms and tools.
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#### **4. Collaboration between national focal points and science and technology correspondents**

- Establish regular coordination mechanisms (meetings, joint planning).
- Ensure clear division of responsibilities:
  - NFP → policy, coordination, representation
  - STC → science, data, technical input.
- Promote joint contributions to:
  - National reports
  - Policy briefs
  - UNCCD submissions.
- Encourage co-leadership on LDN and drought initiatives.

#### **5. Nomination**

- NFPs:
  - Officially nominated by governments
  - Recognized as primary national contact points.
- STCs:
  - Nominated through the NFP
  - Submission includes formal nomination and curriculum vitae.

#### **6. Further recommendations to support national focal points and science and technology correspondents and strengthen effectiveness**

- Establish or strengthen a national DLDD coordination platform.
- Leverage an existing or establish a national science-policy interface.
- Strengthen integration of science into policy cycles.
- Enhance digital systems for data sharing and reporting.
- Provide capacity-building support for both roles.
- Ensure adequate financial and institutional resources.
- Promote continuity and institutional memory (e.g. avoid frequent turnover).
- Encourage participation in regional coordination platforms.