Decision 18/COP.17

Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Sand and dust storms

The Conference of Parties,

Noting decisions 31/COP.13, 25/COP.14, 26/COP.15 and 27/COP.16,

Also noting the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions 2/21, 4/10 and 6/7, and United Nations General Assembly resolutions 70/195, 71/219, 72/225, 73/237, 74/226, 75/222, 76/211, 77/171, 78/158, 79/212 and 80/143,

Recalling that the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2025–2034 as the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms through resolution 78/314,

Noting that sand and dust storms are a global challenge of increasing frequency, intensity and duration in some areas, with impacts on, inter alia, infrastructure, transport, communications, agriculture, ecosystems and human health, and transboundary impacts that require international technical and scientific cooperation,

Recognizing that effective sand and dust storm management responses must address both (1) natural sources, in terms of risk mitigation, adaptation, response and recovery for affected communities, ecosystems and economic sectors; and (2) anthropogenic sources, where source prevention and reduction are key strategic priorities, subject to the availability of financial and technical resources to address these sources,

Acknowledging that sustainable land and water management, agroforestry, reforestation and other regenerative practices, as well as nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches and other activities for combating desertification, land degradation and drought, are key components of proactive efforts to mitigate the negative effects of sand and dust storms and adapt and build resilience to them,

Underscoring that efforts to combat the negative impacts of sand and dust storms need to be strengthened through enhanced regional, interregional and international cooperation, including voluntary cooperation on monitoring, forecasting, early warning, scientific knowledge and capacity-building, within the respective mandates of relevant institutions and agreements, while avoiding duplication and additional reporting burdens (i.e. leveraging synergies among relevant multilateral agreements), as well as through national and regional coordination tools and instruments developed to implement them,

Stressing the importance of science–policy dialogue to contribute to the development of further voluntary guidance and strategies to address sand and dust storms, including for the establishment and enhancement of in-situ monitoring of source areas and early warning systems, coupled with data collection and scientific evaluation,

Welcoming the update of the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox, including (i) the revised module on source detection and the addition of a searchable inventory of source management practices, as significant advances in the dissemination of knowledge-based approaches and methods; as well as (ii) practical guidance and tools for more effective sand and dust storm management,

Also welcoming the progress made on developing the Global Implementation Initiative on Sand and Dust Storms,

Noting the international early warning initiative for sand and dust storms, launched by Saudi Arabia during the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Riyadh in 2024, in support of the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms 2025–2034,

Welcoming with appreciation contributions received to support the implementation of the international early warning initiative for sand and dust storms through the World

Meteorological Organization Sand and Dust Storm Warning Advisory and Assessment System Trust Fund,

Noting the Interregional Initiative to Combat Sand and Dust Storms in Western Asia with the support of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, as well as the Middle East Green Initiative,

1. *Urges* Parties, as appropriate, and in accordance with national circumstances, priorities, needs and legislations, to:

(a) Enhance policy coherence and sectoral coordination to more effectively address sources and impacts of sand and dust storms, specifically by designing and implementing integrated land management projects and programmes that attract the necessary technical and financial resources, including making use of the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox;

(b) Strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms and regional initiatives that address sand and dust storms linked to desertification, land degradation and drought, including through source area monitoring and the enhanced mitigation of their negative impacts, taking note of the regional and subregional nature of the impacts and with particular attention to involving people in vulnerable situations, giving consideration to women and girls;

(c) Increase their efforts to better understand the differentiated socioeconomic impacts of sand and dust storms on populations, including on people in vulnerable situations, notably by disaggregating relevant data and developing corresponding indicators through their national statistics offices and systems, as appropriate;

2. *Invites* the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms and regional and multilateral financial institutions, technical agencies and organizations, institutions and other relevant stakeholders to provide technical and financial support to source and affected country Parties to design and implement national and regional policies and action plans, including early warning systems, in order to cope with sand and dust storms linked to desertification, land degradation and drought and achieve their voluntary land degradation neutrality targets;

3. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, within their mandated activities under the Convention, subject to the availability of resources, to:

(a) Strengthen cooperation with other United Nations entities and programmes, within the framework of the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, as well as with regional and international organizations and other relevant partners, donors and civil society stakeholders, to continue developing and implementing the Global Implementation Initiative on Sand and Dust Storms;

(b) Continue updating and improving the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox, including through enhanced collaboration with the relevant scientific community and regional and international institutions;

(c) Further engage in advocacy, awareness-raising and related communication activities for the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025–2034);

(d) Collaborate with the World Meteorological Organization and its Sand and Dust Storm Warning Advisory and Assessment System and support the implementation of the international early warning initiative for sand and dust storms;

4. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, within their mandated activities under the Convention, to present for consideration at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties a report on progress made in implementing this decision.

14th plenary meeting
28 August 2026