Decision 6/COP.17

Final report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decision 4/COP.16, by which it established the 2024–2026 Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention (hereafter termed IWG-FSF #1) and which was tasked with identifying key elements for a post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention and undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the current indicators under the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Noting that, at its twenty-third meeting in December 2025, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention decided, in line with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, 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", to the provisional agenda of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its twenty-fourth session during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties for further consideration and action by Parties,

Having reviewed document ICCD/COP(17)/2, taking into account the need for consistent, sustained and comprehensive work on the post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention in a spirit of collaboration and in the interest of the effective functioning of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as a whole,

1. *Takes note* of the final report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention and the recommendations, draft vision and key elements contained therein;

2. *Decides* to renew and extend the mandate of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework (IWG-FSF #1) for the duration of the 2026-2028 biennium (hereafter termed IWG-FSF #2), in line with the terms of reference contained in annex I to this decision.

3. *Adopts* the terms of reference contained in annex I to this decision;

4. *Requests* the UNCCD secretariat to support and facilitate the effective functioning of the IWG-FSF #2, subject to the availability of financial resources, by providing relevant information and support, facilitating its work and arranging its access to expertise as deemed appropriate by its members.

5. *Also requests* the IWG-FSF #2 to:

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

(b) Also present its proposal in a final report to Parties for their consideration and action at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

13th plenary meeting
28 August 2026

Annex I

Terms of reference and mandate of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework #2

I. Scope and mandate of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework #2

1. Conduct a thorough analysis of the current indicators as contained in the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, with a view to making them more relevant and responsive for a post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention, while ensuring that future methodologies are feasible, accessible and within the capacities of Parties, and taking into consideration decision 8/COP.16

2. Develop a draft post-2030 strategic proposal based on the aforementioned analysis, which shall include goals and targets for a post-2030 strategic framework of the Convention, building on (i) the key elements and draft vision identified in document ICCD/COP(17)/2, as well as (ii) the statements issued in the plenary of the Committee of the Whole during its consideration of agenda item 3 at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17).

II. Composition

3. The IWG-FSF #2 shall be comprised of the same total number of members as the IWG-FSF #1, ensuring adequate participation of regional representatives supported by technical experts and taking into account geographical balance, namely:

(a) three representatives per United Nations region[1] with policy, scientific and technical expertise.

(b) The regional representatives serving on the IWG-FSF#1, who were identified as members of the IWG-FSF#1 in line with the "Terms of Reference and mandate of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention" (IWG TOR1) would be automatically granted a renewed mandate to participate as member in the IWG-FSF #2, to be confirmed through a letter from their respective regional Chairs within four weeks of the adoption of this decision. In case the region decides to replace one or more representative(s) (including in case a member would no longer be available to serve), a communication of this change shall be shared by its regional Chair to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (COP Bureau) and the secretariat, and the selection shall follow the procedure referred to in section II.A.

A. Regular nomination process to fill in seats of regional representatives

4. If necessary, a new regional representative(s) shall be nominated by their respective regional group, through their regional Chair, on the basis of nominations received from their national governments.

5. In this case, the regional Chair(s) shall facilitate the selection to fill the representatives, assessed against an agreed set of criteria used in the context of the selection of IWG-FSF #1 members, with due regard for policy, scientific and technical expertise, as well as geographic balance. The regional Chair shall share the proposed candidate(s) to their respective regional group for consideration.

[1] Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Latin America and the Caribbean; Central and Eastern Europe; and Western European and Other Countries.

6. Following a two-week regional silence procedure, the proposed candidate(s) shall be considered consensually endorsed. If the silence procedure is broken, the ad hoc nomination process described in Section II.B shall be initiated. The overall duration of the regular nomination process, including the communication of the final names of the proposed regional representatives filling vacant seats by their respective regional Chair(s) or respective COP Bureau members to the secretariat and the COP Bureau, shall be no later than 10 weeks after the adoption of this decision.

7. Five additional experts will form part of the IWG-FSF #2, comprising three independent scientists and two technical experts, and comprising one representative from an international organization and one representative from an accredited civil society organization, taking into account geographical balance.

8. Unless otherwise decided by the Bureaux of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), all additional experts already participating in the IWG-FSF#1 would be automatically granted a renewed mandate to participate as a member in the IWG-FSF #2. In case the CST and CRIC Bureaux decide to replace one or more experts, the selection shall follow the procedure established in the COP Bureau-approved terms of reference, as mandated by decision 4/COP.16.

B. Ad hoc nomination process to fill in seats originally allocated to regional representatives

9. In a situation where a region is unable to renew the mandate of IWG-FSF #1 members (see para. 3 (b)) or propose a number of regional representatives to fill the seats to complete its allocated regional quota (see Section II.A) upon expiry of the regular regional nomination process, with a view to overcome potential deadlock and to ensure comprehensive work of the IWG in accordance with paragraph 3 (b) and Section II.A, an ad hoc Selection Committee composed of the Presidents of each of the UNCCD COP 16 and COP 17, and COP 18 Presidency shall be called upon, with support from the secretariat, to:

(a) Within four weeks, organize an open call for expression of interest for independent expert candidates within the region under consideration no later than three weeks after the provided deadline that a region is not able to confirm (para. 3 (b)) or appoint (Section II.A), inviting the submission of applications within four weeks of its launch that respond to the criteria contained in annex II;

(b) Within four weeks, create a list of candidates on the basis of the call for expression of interest, assess candidates and proceed with the final selection of the required number of independent experts from that region, in line with the set of criteria contained in annex II, with no more than one expert per country.

10. Those experts selected according to Section II.B (on the basis of annex II) shall act in a personal capacity and ensure that their ability to provide contributions and views reflect specific regional experiences and geographically contextualized expert perspectives. As full members of the IWG-FSF #2, their contributions and views shall be considered on an equal basis with those of all other members, consistent with the approach applied in the IWG-FSF #1.

11. Once all procedures for the establishment of IWG-FSF#2 are finalized, their names shall be published on the UNCCD website and communicated to all Parties through the national focal points (NFPs).

III. Working modalities

12. Unless otherwise agreed by the IWG-FSF #2, the group shall have three in-person meetings, subject to availability of resources: one at the beginning of its work, a second after the intersessional session (CRIC 25), and a final meeting at the end of its work to finalize its report scheduled to be submitted to COP 18. In addition, the IWG-FSF#2 shall meet online,

either in full or in smaller subgroups, on particular aspects of its work programme, and it shall also actively communicate through email exchanges.

13. The secretariat shall facilitate the meetings of the IWG-FSF #2 and communication among its members. The IWG-FSF #2 is also encouraged to regularly consult with Parties, via NFPs, regional Chairs, science and technology correspondents, and relevant stakeholders, online or physically through its members with the support of the secretariat, as requested, to seek broad technical input and ensure transparency of the process and buy-in from all Parties and relevant actors.

14. In cooperation with the Co-Chairs of the IWG-FSF#2, selected among and by its members, the secretariat shall coordinate and assist in the organization and preparation of the agenda of its meetings, issue notices and provide any other support deemed necessary by its members. Additionally, it shall offer technical assistance, addressing questions related to the functioning of the Convention and leveraging its in-depth knowledge to facilitate discussions.

Annex II

Criteria for selection

1. Experts applying to become members of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention (IWG-FSF) shall demonstrate capabilities in policy, scientific or technical expertise in relation to the matters of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) by fulfilling at least three of the following criteria:

(a) An advanced university degree (Masters or PhD) and a strong academic and/or professional background in any of the following fields: desertification, land degradation, drought, sustainable land management, ecosystem restoration, climate science, or environmental monitoring; or

(b) Substantive relevant professional experience in scientific research, science-policy analysis, or programme implementation in areas related to land degradation, desertification or drought; sustainable land management or ecosystem restoration; indicator development and monitoring, or reporting frameworks; multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), conventions or governance; or strategic policy development; or

(c) Substantive evidence of significant, peer-reviewed publications in international journals, technical assessments, or contributions to intergovernmental processes; or

(d) Experience in strategic policy development, indicator design or data analysis, or related technical/scientific assessments at international, regional or national levels; or

(e) Experience in providing policy, scientific or technical advice to decision makers and/or practitioners at global, regional, national and/or subnational levels in thematic areas relevant to the UNCCD; or

(f) Understanding of the UNCCD processes/procedures, related United Nations and/or intergovernmental processes, and/or MEAs.

2. In addition, the expert shall:

(a) Have full professional fluency in English (the working language of the IWG-FSF) (oral and written);

(b) Be willing to commit the time and effort necessary to contribute to the work of the IWG-FSF.