

## UNCCD CRIC 23

### Annex IV Closing Statement

Thank you, Madam Chair,

Ms. Executive Secretary,

Madam Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we draw the curtains on the 23rd session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in Panama, on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean Countries, we would like to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Panamá for hosting this successful event, and our appreciation to the UNCCD Secretariat and the GM for their support and efforts.

The past few days have been marked by meaningful discussions, insightful exchanges, and a shared sense of purpose to address the challenges posed by desertification, land degradation and drought. We have efficiently explored a broad spectrum of topics, each with its own significance and bearing on the implementation of the UNCCD's mandate, although we regret not having been able to discuss the agenda items related to the science-policy guidance and the IWG on the Future Strategic Framework. In this regard, we commend the efforts of this IWG and encourage its members to consider any suggestions made in the informal consultations.

The discussions on capacity building have clearly highlighted its role as an essential enabler of transformative change. Annex IV fully aligns with this assessment, regarding capacity building as a core element to be reflected in the future strategic framework. Furthermore, we consider essential to enhance synergies across existing technical cooperation mechanisms under the Rio Conventions, recognizing that such collaboration could bring important benefits for Parties, including in the context of regional support structures.

We acknowledge Secretariat efforts on improving PRAIS 4 and building data platform, easing the report preparation and facilitating the exchange of information. Our commitment to improving the reporting process signifies our

dedication to achieve a process that could underpin UNCCD and national decision-making knowledge based. We hope that we can work together to continue improving the UNCCD reporting process, especially regarding geospatial data, as well as its comparability. We also welcome the efforts to improve the quality of the default data and the training activities and support to be provided by the secretariat to improve national data accuracy and quality.

The Gender Caucus sessions have played a crucial role in showcasing the leadership of Indigenous Women actions in sustainable land management practices, although we still have a lot to do regarding gender responsive and transformative action, and regarding the specific and differentiated impacts of DLDD and SDS phenomena on all women and men. The lessons learned should inform the work of the IWG-Future Strategic Framework in exploring gender-specific indicators.

The discussions on Sand and Dust Storms highlighted how much this issue is affecting people's wellbeing, and underscored the urgency of adopting a proactive, nature-based approach to address their source mitigation and alleviating their impacts. We also concur that a holistic approach is needed, ensuring that the differentiated implications for our societies are recognized and that inclusivity continues to guide our collective strategies moving forward.

The LDN target-setting program 2.0 has delivered significant progress in activating Rio Synergies, empowering women, and enhancing the achievability of national LDN targets. We believe that increasing the exchange of experience among countries during the TSP will help accelerate overall progress. Strengthening the link between sustainable land management interventions and geospatial planning will further improve the traceability and reportability of these targets and facilitate their attainability.

We reiterate the importance of applying lessons learned from the first phase of national consultations on land tenure and we look forward to exploring options for land governance reporting under the Future Strategic Framework of this Convention, building on emerging tools and mechanisms.

Lastly, the adoption of the report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to the Conference of the Parties which highlights all expressed opinions signifies the culmination of our collective work during this session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we conclude CRIC 23, we want to emphasize that our region remains committed to the principles and objectives of the UNCCD. We will continue to

work diligently and collaboratively to meet our obligations and contribute to a more sustainable and resilient world.

We extend our appreciation to all delegates, observers, and organizers for their tireless efforts in making this session a success. Let us carry forward the spirit of cooperation and determination that has defined our discussions here and reconvene in Mongolia with energy and progress.

Thank you for your attention and safe travels to all.