

Statement for CRIC23 Closing  
Ceremony on behalf of Annex V Parties  
Read by the Chair of Annex V (CEE)  
Mr. Toghrul Feyzиеv (Azerbaijan)

**Madame Chair,  
Executive Secretary,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

1. On behalf of the Annex V countries, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Panama for the very warm welcome of the UNCCD family and extend our warmest congratulations on the successful organization of the 23rd Session of the UNCCD Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC23).
2. Annex V acknowledges the progress made by Parties on strengthening capacity-building, recognizing it as a cornerstone for achieving land degradation neutrality and enhancing effective implementation of the Convention. We note the valuable work of the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism, as reflected in the report to CRIC23, while acknowledging that persistent structural challenges and limited, unpredictable financing still hinder long-term institutional development.
3. Annex V Parties stress that sustainable, predictable financing is essential to make capacity-building a continuous effort and a strategic enabler across all UNCCD objectives, and that the new capacity-building and innovation strategy should align with the post-2030 framework.
4. Annex V appreciates the positive progress made in enhancing reporting procedures and the PRAIS platform, which has strengthened transparency and data quality. We appreciate the increased technical support, regional cooperation, and alignment with other Rio Conventions. These improvements mark an important step toward more consistent, accessible and policy-relevant reporting for all Parties.
5. We welcome the tailored support provided under the Umbrella project and call for its continuation so eligible Parties can fully benefit from its tools and guidance. At the same time we would like to stress the need to simplify the reporting process and provide possibilities to integrate options for enhancing its usefulness reporting for national purposes.
6. Our region also fully supports the Community of Learning and Practice on Drought Management as an effective platform for knowledge exchange, proactive drought planning, and innovative, digitally driven resilience measures

7. We encourage donors to continue supporting eligible Parties on drought planning and implementation process, as well as implementation and review of LDN and NAPs.
8. Annex V recognizes the vital role of the Gender Caucus in ensuring that our collective work under the Convention remains inclusive, equitable, and grounded in the real experiences of women and girls. We underscore that gender-sensitive approaches are indispensable for driving effective land restoration, drought resilience, and sustainable livelihoods in accordance with national laws and priorities and with full respect of religious and ethical values, cultural traditions of peoples. We reiterate our commitment to strengthening gender integration across policy frameworks, data systems, and capacity-building efforts as we move forward. Ensuring women's full and meaningful participation and strengthening their capacities is essential for achieving sustainable land management and land degradation neutrality. We are grateful and commend the work of the newly established UNCCD Women Delegates Fund and the Land Youth Negotiator Academy and call Parties and relevant institutions to support them.
9. We recognize the progress achieved in securing land tenure as a fundamental pillar of combating land degradation and achieving long-term drought resilience. We would like to draw attention to the need to increase financial resources dedicated to land governance within broader efforts to combat desertification.

**Madame Chair,  
Esteemed delegates,**

10. In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that the Annex V countries remain fully committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in particular, to achieving target 15.3.
11. We look forward to continuing our productive discussions at COP17 in the Republic of Mongolia well informed by key discussions held within CRIC23.
12. We once again express our gratitude to the UNCCD Secretariat for its continuous support, and to the Government and people of Panama for their warm hospitality and the memorable experiences we take with us. We wish you all a safe and pleasant flight.

I thank you for your attention!