



UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

About UNCCD

A. The Convention

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is an international agreement on good land stewardship. It helps people, communities and countries create wealth, grow economies and secure enough food, clean water and energy by ensuring land users an enabling environment for sustainable land management. Through partnerships, the Convention's [197 parties](#) set up robust systems to manage drought promptly and effectively. Good land stewardship based on sound policy and science helps integrate and accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, builds resilience to climate change and prevents biodiversity loss.

B. Vision¹

The aim for the future is to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

C. Mission

To make UNCCD the most trusted global institution for all those who want to better care for and steward their land resources and build their resilience to drought.

D. Objective

As per the Convention Article 2, the objective of the Convention is set as follow:

1. The objective of this Convention is to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, through effective action at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, in the framework of an integrated approach which is consistent with Agenda 21, with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in affected areas.
2. Achieving this objective will involve long-term integrated strategies that focus simultaneously, in affected areas, on improved productivity of land, and the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions, in particular at the community level.

UNCCD's history and structure

The international community has long recognized that land degradation/[desertification](#) is a major economic, social and environmental problem of concern to many countries in all regions of the world. In 1977 the United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD) adopted a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PACD). Despite this and other efforts, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) concluded in 1991 that the problem of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas had intensified, although there were "local examples of success". As a result, the

¹ [Decision 3/COP.8](#)



question of how to tackle desertification was still a major concern for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Conference supported a new, integrated approach to the problem, emphasizing action to promote sustainable development at the community level. The Rio Conference called on the United Nations General Assembly to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INCD) to prepare, by June 1994, a [Convention to Combat Desertification](#), particularly in Africa.

A. [Conference of the Parties](#)

In December 1992, the General Assembly agreed and adopted resolution 47/188 on this matter. Working to a tight schedule, the Committee completed its negotiations in five sessions. The Convention was adopted in Paris on 17 June 1994 and entered into force on 26 December 1996, 90 days after the 50th ratification was received. 196 countries and the European Union are Parties as at August 2018. The Conference of the Parties (COP), which is the Convention's supreme governing body, held its first session in October 1997 in Rome, Italy.

B. [Regional Implementation Annexes](#)

The implementation of the UNCCD is organized around five regional implementation annexes: I) Africa, II) Asia, III) Latin America and the Caribbean, IV) Northern Mediterranean, V) Central and Eastern Europe. The annexes specify how the Convention will be implemented for each region and set the focus and content of [regional and subregional action programmes](#). These action programmes provide a framework for regional coordination and collaboration. Though the country Parties of the regions define together how the UNCCD will be implemented, most action takes place at the national level.

C. **Subsidiary Bodies**

1. [Committee on Science and Technology](#)

In line with [Article 24](#) of the UNCCD, the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) is established as another subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to provide it with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The role and responsibilities of the Committee are actively supported by the work of [the CST Bureau](#). As a means to strengthen the CST, at its eleventh session the COP decided to establish a [Science-Policy Interface](#) (SPI) to promote dialogue between scientists and policy makers on desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD). The mandate of the SPI is to provide the CST with thematic guidance on knowledge requirements for implementing the UNCCD.

2. [Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention](#)

In 2001 during the fifth session of the COP in Geneva, Switzerland, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) was established by [decision 1/COP.5](#), as a subsidiary body to the COP to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention. Parties at COP 13 adopted new Terms of Reference of the CRIC ([decision 13/COP.13](#)). According to its Terms of Reference, the CRIC shall assist the COP in reviewing the implementation of the Convention under the authority and guidance of the COP and as an integral part of the [Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System](#) (PRAIS). PRAIS is the reporting platform for UNCCD Parties to submit national reports delineating measures taken to implement the Convention at national



level. CRIC sessions use information submitted by Parties as well as additional information to discuss bottlenecks and successful stories in implementing the Convention and assisting the COP in drawing up targeted recommendations of future steps to be taken thereby helping Parties to orient the Convention to those issues that are most needed in the short, medium and long term. Since 2021 UNCCD Parties are supposed to start reporting again, the bulk of the work of CRIC at this moment is geared towards updating reporting tools and methodologies according to decisions and requests made by Parties at the last COP.

D. Action Programmes

National action programmes (NAPs) are the key instruments to implement the Convention. They are often supported by action programmes at sub-regional (SRAP) and regional (RAP) levels. The NAPs are developed through a participatory approach involving various stakeholders, including relevant governmental offices, scientific institutions and local communities. They spell out the practical steps and measures to be taken to combat desertification in specific ecosystems. The UNCCD urges affected country Parties to align their action programmes, as well as other relevant implementation activities relating to the Convention, to the UNCCD's 10-Year Strategy. Since the adoption of the Strategy in 2007, many affected countries have started the process of aligning their national action programmes, in addition the alignment of the sub-regional and regional action programmes has also been initiated.

E. The Global Mechanism

The Global Mechanism (GM) was established under Article 21 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to assist countries in the mobilization of financial resources to implement the Convention and address desertification, land degradation and drought. As an operational arm of the Convention, the GM provides advisory services and works together with developing countries, private sector and donors to mobilize substantial resources for the implementation of UNCCD.

Reports

COP14 reports

[ICCD/COP\(14\)/23](#)

[ICCD/COP\(14\)/23/Add.1](#)

[ICCD/COP\(14\)/23/Add.2](#)

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