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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification?**

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD), was adopted on 17 June 1994 in Paris, France, and entered into force in 1996. The Convention has 197 Parties. It is implemented on the basis of five regional implementation annexes; for Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. For more information on the regional annexes see Fact Sheets 11-15 available online at the following address: <https://www.unccd.int/convention/regions>

At the 20-year review of the Rio Conference in June 2012, world leaders called for global action in three key areas in the context of the Convention. First, to *strive towards a land-degradation neutral world* so that land degradation does not exceed the pace of land rehabilitation and its recovery from degradation. Second, to monitor, globally, land degradation and land restoration. Third, to strengthen the scientific basis of the Convention.

### **What is the mandate of the Convention?**

The objective of the Convention is to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought by taking effective action at all levels through international cooperation and partnership in order to achieve sustainable development in the affected areas. In 2017, the Conference of the Parties adopted the 2018-2030 strategic framework to implement the Convention, with five strategic objectives to be achieved during this period. The 2018-2030 strategic framework is available in all UN languages at: <https://www.unccd.int/convention/about-convention>

### **Why Does the Issue Matter?**

The issues of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) are still overlooked in political and private sector agendas at all levels. Therefore, raising awareness about the human impacts – both costs and benefits – of decisions on land management and ecosystems is vital, for timely action. More so as the negative effects of climate change on degraded land are increasingly evident.

The pressures on our land resources are huge, and expected to grow due to competing demands for its use, particularly to meet the very basic demands of food, water and energy. And at the same time, a significant proportion of the natural and managed ecosystems are in decline.

Over the last two decades alone, about 20 percent of the Earth's vegetated surface has shown consistent declines in productivity. Furthermore, land degradation negatively affects more than 1.3 billion people living directly off these lands and over 3.2 billion negatively impacted.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Data from *The Global Land Outlook* (UNCCD 2017) and *The Assessment of Land Degradation* (IPBES 2018).



Land degradation can manifest in many ways. For example, over 150 UNCCD country parties are affected directly by Sand and Dust Storms, with 45 of these classified as SDS source areas.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, over 70 countries are regularly hit by drought. In the last two years alone, more than 20 countries declared a national emergency due to drought. Already, more two decades ago, the direct impacts of drought were estimated to cost about USD80 billion per year,<sup>3</sup> and they are projected to grow in their spread, severity and frequency. Long term droughts, for instance, will become three times more common.<sup>4</sup> These realities do not bode well for the future, when considered in the context of a changing climate that will bring about more extreme and erratic weather.

### What is CRIC?

The Parties to the Convention meet every two years in a Conference – the Conference of the Parties (COP) – to negotiate and take decisions for collective action. Their next meeting, the Fourteenth Session of the Conference of Parties (COP 14) in fall 2019, is tentatively scheduled to take place in Bonn, Germany, unless a government offers to host it. In between COP sessions, the Parties work through a bureau that they elect, known as the COP Bureau, which is headed by a COP President.<sup>5</sup> In practice, it is the country that hosted the last COP.

Preparations for the COP sessions are *made inter alia through* the Convention's subsidiary bodies that eventually prepare options and recommendations for action that the COP considers and decides on. The main task for the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) is to assess the progress the countries have made in carrying out past decisions along the strategic framework for implementing the Convention. Once they agree on the achievements and shortcomings, they agree on various options for future action and propose them for the COP to consider. Additional information about the current mandate of the CRIC and the reports of their meetings are available here: <https://www.unccd.int/convention/committee-review-implementation-convention-cric>

### Interviews

For international media seeking interviews or with inquiries about media coverage contact Wagaki Wischnewski, <[wwischnewski@unccd.int](mailto:wwischnewski@unccd.int)> (+49 173 268 7593) . For inquiries about the World Day global observance events, contact: Yukie Hori <[yhori@unccd.int](mailto:yhori@unccd.int)> (+49 173 268 7590). For journalists in Turkey, contact: Sibel Tekin, [sibelnihal.tekin@tarimorman.gov.tr](mailto:sibelnihal.tekin@tarimorman.gov.tr) (0541 386 17 76). For social media message in Ankara, contact, [sergie@un.org](mailto:sergie@un.org) and Helga Karsten, [hkarsten@unccd.int](mailto:hkarsten@unccd.int) in Bonn.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/9/6/1053/htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Carolwicz (1996), Natural hazards need not lead to natural disasters. EOS 77(16):149-153.

<sup>4</sup> Sheffield, J and Eric F Wood (2007). Projected Changes in drought occurrence under future global warming for multi-model, multi-scenario, IPCC AR4 Simulations, accessed 12 December 2018, <https://iri.columbia.edu/~blyon/REFERENCES/P32.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the COP see Article 22 of the Convention.