



Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought

4th Coordination Committee Meeting

1st July 2020

Participation

Attendees: Gunilla Björklund, Gaius Eudoxie, Sara-Jade Govia, Caroline King-Okumu, Luca Perez, Roger S Pulwarty, Robert J Stefanski, Mark Svoboda, Abduvokgid Zakhadullaev, Skumsa Ntshanga, German Kust, Michael Brüntrup, Theodore Horbulyk, Roger S. Pulwarty, Nathalie van Haren, Thizwilondi Rambau, María de Estrada.

Secretariat: Daniel Tsegai, Jeroen van Dalen, Norah Ngeny and Saravanan Subramanian.

Key decisions

- **Writing team for the interim report identified:** IWG members, Ted Horbulyk and Caroline King, have responded positively to the request of the Coordinating Committee to lead the drafting process of the interim report. They will work closely with the secretariat, the leaders of the four Task Groups and the wider IWG.
- **IWG physical meeting at CRIC?** To fast-track the interactions and processes, the possibility of the 1st physical meeting of the IWG is being explored to be held back-to-back to the 19th CRIC session (24-26 November 2020 in Bonn).
- **Zero order draft Interim report will be disseminated among IWG members on 22nd July:** The Coordinating Committee agreed to work harder and engage with their respective group members to ensure Zero-order draft of the interim report is ready by 22nd of July for comments and interaction among IWG members.
- **3rd IWG Meeting on 29th July:** Proposal to hold the 3rd IWG meeting on 29th July to review the draft interim report.
- Reminders of the timelines to CRIC and the requirements of the **interim report to be submitted for translation by mid-August** was emphasized
- Parallel to drafting of the interim report, the task group leaders agreed to continue the work of their groups to further to develop their chapters
- Concern is raised about the minimal interaction, **due to COVID 19**, within and between task groups thus missing analysis and recommendations attributed to the virtual nature of the IWG exchanges. Secretariat is requested to find ways to better facilitate the interaction of IWG members. Secretariat proposed to send training materials on the use of **MS Teams** for those who have difficulties and offered to organize a webinar on MS teams, if required.

Opening Remarks

Gunilla Björklund (Chair) welcomed the participants to the 2nd meeting of the IWG Coordination Committee (IWG CC). She highlighted the significance of the Coordinating Committee meeting as the Task Group leaders of the four groups will make the presentation of their respective reports, which will form the basis for the writing team to bring together the IWG interim report.



Daniel Tsegai (UNCCD Secretariat) welcomed and reminded the participants about the importance of the meeting which will deal with the major milestone of putting together the materials from the four task groups. This will be the starting point to work on a single document (interim report) targeting the 19th CRIC meeting scheduled for 24-26 November. Following this, the TG leaders were invited to present their deliberations in the group.

Task Group 1: Drought Monitoring and Early Warning - Moving from Early Warning to Early Action:

The TG documents the drought monitoring and early warning (DEWS), identifies best options and alternatives for intelligent monitoring and forecasting indicators, and identifies relevant case studies.

The Group addressed the following issues: How do we enhance DEWS? How does DEWS relate to the two other pillars? Though the scope is global, the discussion underlines the need to consider its application at the local level. And it further identified the challenges and gaps.

Among the key discussion points raised were:

- The need for diligent monitoring by creating usable/useful information which serves the needs at the local level (basin, sectors).
- The significance of rethinking the concept of drought from a “slow-onset” phenomenon to “flash droughts” which are becoming more frequent.
- The need to monitor non-traditional indicators (environmental/ecological).
- Improving communication that will build trust and make information user friendly, resulting in positive feedback.
- The need to have diligent monitoring before and after drought.
- Validating the value and accuracy of DEWS at various scales. Application of Machine Learning/ Artificial Intelligence to combine diverse indicators and for better learning.
- Monitoring impact as important as any other parameter to better understand vulnerability and trigger policy actions.
- Case made for the use of non-traditional media to support sub-seasonal forecasting e.g. social media. Integrating local knowledge and experience is also important.
- Translating science to policy is critical.
- Each country needs to develop its own drought indicators for use in their respective country plans.
- The need to operationalize drought impact the same way as we monitor precipitation and temperature and other environmental parameters. Impacts are the “face of drought” and show us where we are vulnerable and at risk.

Comments

- Missing the process. Drought as such as is difficult to estimate when it is severed, and worse when it comes to the processes at different stages of drought. The state of science distinguishing between different stages of drought is tied to frequency of drought occurring, how often, and the magnitude of occurrence. In several countries documented by WMO,



they are using percentile rank based formulae to determine the frequency or the probability of non-axions.

- Some of the challenges (and consistent across nations) are the lack of resources to sustain and operationalize impact monitoring and to maintain flow of information noted. With mobile phones and non-traditional data collection e.g. social media could be tapped to address this challenge.
- Different indicators can be used for different definitions of drought. Case made for a blended approach where typical physical indicators and socio-economic indicators and data are considered.
- It will be good to have good case studies from countries and regions such as the Caribbean for drought monitoring on all the three pillars. This will be documented and shared in the group document.

Task group 2: Vulnerability Impact Assessment & Risk

- The group took stock of what is happening in the vulnerability and risk, and then the definitions (universally defining vulnerability and risk).
- There is limited information available on vulnerability and impact assessment available from the country submissions. With this, we were not able to get a sense of the tools adopted by various countries.
- Due to this, there is a need to engage a wider platform, as typically drought is viewed from an agricultural perspective. A multisectoral approach is required to looking at drought recognizing that it affects a wide range of sectors.
- Though there were different tools, practicality and guidance is required in strengthening the vulnerability and risk assessment.
- There is a lack of political and economic understanding or awareness of vulnerability and impact. Defining these and applying them was important.
- The group will work on recommendations, considering what exists to improve the assessment of risk and vulnerability with case studies to back the recommendations. The group plans to survey during the CRIC to gain more knowledge on this.

Comments

- The group was asked to get deeper to assess how vulnerability to drought is assessed. The group will explore the complex relationship between Drought assessment and readiness to climate change adaptation to avoid duplication.
- The Group will use case studies to identify how vulnerability has been assessed and then looking at the impact of vulnerability assessment. These impact assessment loop back into reducing vulnerability and validate them.
- Note made that strategic objective 3 (SO3) of the UNCCD is on vulnerability and reducing impact. TG 2 can also investigate factors and variability affecting vulnerability particularly sensitivity and adaptive capacity.
- Vulnerability is dynamic there monitoring and vulnerability of drought will be important to be highlighted. This will also link between TG1 and TG2.



Task group 3: Risk Mitigation & Response Measures to Coping Capacity- Economic/ Financial Perspective

The key discussion points: the strong emphasis on how economic and financial incentives are crucial to prevent losses, reduce economic uncertainty, and achieve co-benefits.

What is needed?

- A stronger business case is required to justify investments in preparedness and resilience in contrast to traditional humanitarian responses such as investments in prevention and preparedness.
- Assessing the cost of action vs cost of inaction in drought management, investment is proven to be effective in prevention and preparedness. There is plenty of evidences on this, but we fail to bring this to the attention of the policymakers and trigger required action at all levels. Existence of right enabling policy or institutional environment to incentivize the right course of action is needed.
- Full set of economic and financing tools that can support action on the ground is extremely important. This must come from domestic financing (public, private, enterprises) in addition to ODA funds.

Financial Instruments: This instrument should focus on (i) the behavioral change (individuals, corporation, government, or society at large). (ii) Compensating losses of affected populations, (iii) Provide a flow of financial capital that can enable beneficial investments to be made and/or that promote the smooth functioning of commodity markets, especially in economies where financial and credit markets are already constrained without the added stress of droughts).

Lessons from COVID-19 crisis also makes a case for action up front rather than being reactive. *Multiperiod drought and co-disasters* cause complications and make responses difficult.

- Special attention should be paid to the design of appropriate economic tools and incentives,
- Identifying the droughts that coinciding with other natural or public health disasters.
- What are the solutions that might work well to mitigate the damage from a drought that lasts a single season might be ineffective or counter-productive in other cases,
- Multiperiod drought may bring symptoms and challenges that are not present with shorter droughts and which call for alternate solutions.

Further Reflection:

- TG 3 will also look at UNCCD's role in economic and financing response.
- Case made to better link drought risk management in the context of climate change and adaptation financing and reflecting on drought risk management in context of multi-hazard approach.
- Gap identified in the analysis on the financial flows, constraints and challenges, and the interface between humanitarian investments and investment in longer-term measures.

Comments



- TG 3 should consider how to align mechanisms that are cross-sectoral within a country and the effectiveness of international funding agendas, tie them to innovations needed in land and ecosystem, infrastructure, and others. Examples of how innovative collaboration have worked (even outside of drought management), being more analytical, and identifying how and where within countries alignments can take place and global agendas are driving the funding. There was a suggestion to link with climate change financing.
- TG 3 also asked to reflect on the capacities of financial agencies, donors, etc to invest in responsible governance in drought resilience. This is where the importance of bankable projects national and sub-national level is important to access funding mechanisms e.g. loans also raised – designing viable economic activities where it is related to private profits isn't easy as they are more nuanced and more complex. Consideration of additionality required to make investments viable. Blended finance such as loans and grants should also be considered in addition to partnerships that can influence better participation and response. The TG3 will be examining the barriers and for aligning financing in the governance mechanism.
- Africa Risk Capacity has offered support to the IWG process and can provide examples of innovative financing instruments for addressing drought, which should be the recommendation to the COP.
- Requests made to provide a distinction between small and large economies as are impacted by drought differently. TG 3 requested to provide some categorization on the scale of economies and how they can respond to efforts.

Task Group 4: Risk Mitigation & Response Measures to Coping Capacity- Policy & Implementation Measures

Focus Area:

- What are the most appropriate policy, advocacy, legal, institutional and implementation and coordination frameworks needed for addressing drought effectively in various contexts?
- The need for communication, raising public awareness, education and capacity development
- The need for drought Contingency Plans, coordinated emergency responses
- Promote international cooperation (water conflicts), north-south, south-south cooperation of countries/regions to foster drought policies? For ex. Establishment of Drought collaborative center.
- Relevant case studies and available evidences
- UNCCD's approach to addressing drought together with other similar processes.

Key Issues

- The need for a long-term integrated implementation framework for drought with a menu of options.
- Drought issues should be integrated in the LDN target setting and implementation processes making linkages with land degradation related matters.
- Drought Initiative to be maintained and scaled up in an integrated and comprehensive manner.
- Support regular revisions of drought national plans/policies, establish and propose model objectives or principles and procedures.
- Establish guidance on drought measurement of effectiveness.



- Drought toolbox to be further developed and refined, to be more flexible and take into account local needs at national and regional level, and knowledge;
- Focus on land-based solutions should be maintained, including improved land use planning, sustainable land management, and promotion of land rights;
- Include focus on groundwater use, participatory catchment management and governance;
- Improve access to drought relevant data, enhance knowledge on best practice;
- Stronger advocacy for drought issues, and more drought-related cooperation and partnerships – UNCCD Communication Plan, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, etc;
- Regular Monitoring and Evaluation and review of drought national plans – support from the Global Mechanism;
- Strengthening Institutional mechanism: the establishment of drought collaborative centres at regional level, Strengthening of UNCCD Liaison Office, stronger linkage to relevant funding mechanisms.

There are two differing proposals:

Proposal 1: to continue addressing drought under the existing frameworks:

- Amendments to UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework (SO3, implementation framework, monitoring)
- Decision on comprehensive measures by the UNCCD on drought
- A Declaration on Drought by the High-Level Segment

These proposals are premised on the argument that a legal instrument (such as Protocol, Annex or Amendments) for addressing drought under the Convention is hardly possible. These are based on the discussion at COP 14.

Proposal 2: Policy re-direction through establishing a policy instrument/framework on drought, later endorsed at UNGA

- UNCCD-based uniform framework approach anchored in binding mechanism such as a protocol/COP decision,
- Basis for co-ordinated and detailed activity planning, partnership harmonisation, mobilisation of technical assistance, and leveraging funding and support country aid-effectiveness co-ordination.
- Legally anchored drought plans useful for defining roles & responsibility, accountability

Food-for-thought

- Whether we should focus on land-based or broader approach, private vs public, policy strategies beyond the national level, analysis of experiences and lessons learned, the funding issues.
- The TG3 is dwelling into funding issues at national and higher levels.
- The toolbox must a depository or must we make it interactive.
- Funding – who, what, binding, channels, including UNCCD, national and higher levels?
- Regional particularities with regards to measures or overall (cross-sectoral embedding of) policies and processes at a higher level.
- The UNCCD mandate in terms of possible a binding instrument or a protocol. In this regard, we might want to examine policy options.



- Importance of reimagine a global drought response in post-COVID world highlighted
- Plus: How to foster discussion within TG, and across TGs?

Comments

- Suggestion for TG 4 to review the menu of options for drought produced by UNCCD for COP 14. Approaches taken by other conventions should also be considered, looking at the gestation periods for agreeing. Two-pronged approaches – start with an early mandate and in the long term prepare for a new protocol.
- Concern was, however, raised that the protocol is a political process negotiated by ministries. IWG should refer to mandate and propose practical measures for the UNCCD to take. It is worthwhile to look at the arguments for the different instruments. It was also noted that avoiding the discussion on the “protocol” will be a missed opportunity, likely to be raised at COP 15. Views should not be excluded as the IWG report will go to regional groups for further consultations that will lead to more concrete recommendations. IWG needs a holistic approach to all these views.
- Possibility to propose a multi-layered approach. Synthesis should go beyond listing the policy measures towards deepened analysis of their effectiveness, as implemented in other conventions.
- It was also noted that regional mechanisms can help coordinate capabilities that we can leverage capacity and information for funding, resources, and capacities.
- Looking at Covid-19 and other systemic risks is a key governance issue that requires an integrated view of risk and aligned with the funding. The public was noted to be the insurers of last resort for a catastrophe is still the public. Insurers operate based on underwritten public funds. We need to keep both ideas in mind: leveraging financial tools, such as insurance, and the then skills and knowledge that is needed for handling catastrophes.



Annex: Agenda

IWG on “Effective Policy and Implementation Measures for Addressing Drought under the UNCCD”

2nd Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of IWG- Draft Agenda

Date: 1st of July 2020

Time: 15:00 - 17:30 hrs CET

15:00 – 17:30 Skype conference in Plenary – All IWG Members

Facilitator: Gunilla Björklund [Chair]

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| 15:00-15:10 | Opening Remarks: G. Björklund [Chair] |
| 15:10-16:10 16:10-16:40 | - Presentation of updates of Group leaders (each 15 minutes) - Q and A Session |
| 16:40- 17:15 | - The way forward for the Draft Interim Report - Nomination of writing team - Proposed Steps - Agenda items for the next IWG Meeting (29 July) |
| 17:15-17:30 | Closing Remarks - Gunilla Björklund (Chair) - Secretariat |