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Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional level

Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies

Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies

Note by the secretariat

Summary

Decision 9/COP.12 calls for a review and assessment of the progress made by the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies. This document provides a summary of a select number of such activities and highlights their efficacy in promoting and strengthening these relationships as well as enhancing the implementation of the Convention. A report on the partnerships on land degradation neutrality coordinated by the Global Mechanism is contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/2.

The review and assessment includes the various initiatives undertaken with: (i) the other Rio conventions and the Global Environment Facility with regard to the development of common indicators and Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.3.1 as well as other synergies in reporting processes and capacity-building; (ii) other United Nations entities on issues of, inter alia, food security, climate change, land degradation and restoration, forests, gender, drought, sand and dust storms, and migration; and (iii) other international organizations and institutions.

Following a brief conclusion, the document outlines recommendations for future work priorities to promote and strengthen existing and new relationships.

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I. Background

1. Decision 9/COP.12 calls for a review and assessment of the progress made by the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies. This document provides a summary of a select number of such activities and highlights their efficacy in promoting and strengthening these relationships as well as enhancing the implementation of the Convention. A report on the partnerships on land degradation neutrality (LDN) coordinated by the Global Mechanism is contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/2.

2. Making significant progress towards the strategic objectives of the Convention requires strong and effective relationships that are able to leverage the appropriate synergies with other organizations that have overlapping or convergent missions. This includes not only the Rio conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements but also those organizations and institutions concerned with a variety of issues directly impacting land management and dryland communities, including capacity-building, knowledge transfers, target setting, monitoring and reporting.

3. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, countries have once again reiterated the critical importance of halting and reversing desertification and land degradation, and mitigating the impacts of drought, including a commitment to strive to achieve a land degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development. It is this recognition of the role of sustainable land management in improving overall human well-being that necessitates strong partnerships with relevant organizations on issues such as economic growth, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture and food security, eradicating poverty, women's empowerment and gender equality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, migration and security, sand and dust storms and the improvement of water quality and availability, including mitigating the impacts of droughts.

II. Rio conventions and the Global Environment Facility

4. The 14th meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions (JLG) was held in Bonn, Germany, on 24 August 2016 and chaired by the UNCCD Executive Secretary. The JLG agreed on the need for a permanent JLG working group to take up synergetic issues on an ongoing basis, including to stay updated on relevant processes, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on climate change and land degradation,¹ and to anticipate decisions to be taken at future sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP).

5. The secretariat contributed to the background documents for three decisions taken at Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP 13, held in December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico. On indicators, the secretariat participated in the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, which proposed the utilization of generic and specific indicators,² including the “proportion of land that is degraded over total land area” (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 15.3.1). On ecosystem restoration, the secretariat contributed to the short-term action plan on ecosystem

¹ <www.cbd.int/doc/reports/jlg-14-report-en.pdf>.

² <www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-28-en.pdf>.

restoration³ designed to help to achieve numerous goals and targets, including LDN. On climate change, the secretariat has been invited to become a member of a technical reference group to review voluntary guidelines on ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.⁴

6. In February 2016, the secretariat, in collaboration with CBD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, organized an expert meeting at the World Bank in Washington, DC with over 60 experts from organizations, institutions, governments and the private sector concerned with the implementation of SDG 15 and the monitoring of target 15.3. The participants agreed that further work was needed to develop good practice guidance to derive the SDG indicator 15.3.1 using the UNCCD progress indicators, namely: (i) trends in land cover; (ii) trends in land productivity or functioning of the land; and (iii) trends in carbon stock above and below ground. Subsequent to the meeting, the secretariat established a formal inter-agency advisory group, composed of the UNCCD, CBD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), FAO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the United Nations Statistics Division, to guide the work of an international team of experts in the form of a Research Collaboration Agreement with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation with funding from the World Bank and the Government of Spain.

7. As part of the ongoing Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) process to review and approve the SDG indicators, the secretariat participated in the biannual meetings of the IAEG-SDGs supported by voluntary contributions from the Government of France. During this time, the secretariat presented a revised metadata document, a work plan for the further development of SDG indicator 15.3.1, and a note requesting a fast-track review of the indicator to upgrade it to Tier II status. In December 2016, the IAEG-SDGs working group on geospatial information decided to focus on three priority indicators, one of which is 15.3.1. In March 2017, the Group on Earth Observation, in collaboration with the secretariat, published a booklet⁵ for the 48th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission highlighting the approach of the UNCCD to monitoring land degradation.

8. The collaboration with the secretariat of the GEF continued strengthening during the period under review. At the 52nd GEF Council meeting in May 2017, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office presented the *Land Degradation Focal Area Study*⁶ covering the GEF grant funding and intended to inform the process of the seventh replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund (GEF-7) on activities in agricultural lands, rangelands, degraded productive lands, desert lands, and combating deforestation and desertification. The study highlighted the fact that by investing more resources in land, the GEF can help to deliver on multiple goals and benefits in a more strategic and effective manner, and achieve a higher return on its investment. This approach was reinforced at the above-mentioned Council meeting by the Executive Secretary, who emphasized the importance of a robust GEF-7 replenishment for the land degradation focal area, strengthening country ownership and granting priority to the poor.

9. The secretariat continues to work with the gender focal points of CBD, UNFCCC and the GEF on gender mainstreaming and, under the GEF Global Gender Partnership

³ <www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-05-en.pdf>.

⁴ <www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-04-en.pdf>.

⁵ <<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/side-events/documents/20170306-1M-JAXA-SDG.pdf>>.

⁶ <www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/land-degradation-focal-area-study>.

(GGGP), reviewed the GEF guidelines for mainstreaming gender in GEF projects and programmes in preparation for the November 2017 GEF Council meeting on GEF-7. GGGP set up a gender community of practice to exchange information, share lessons learned and collaborate on events. Under the joint partnership of the GEF Small Grants Programme and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, an e-course on gender equality and women's empowerment and the environment is being designed. For effective course targeting and to identify the potential for joint capacity development and awareness-raising, the gender focal points of the secretariats of the Rio conventions designed and administered a joint survey for the national focal points of the three Rio conventions. CBD and the UNCCD participated in the informal and formal consultations to develop the UNFCCC gender action plan for 2017–2030. Consultations with the GEF show that joint capacity-building under the GEF is possible, but only where such demand is identified and requested by Parties. The CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC gender focal points hold virtual consultative meetings every month to consult and share information.

III Other United Nations entities

A. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

10. A joint UNCCD-FAO workshop on collaboration to support delivery of SDG target 15.3 was held in May 2017 in Rome, Italy. The objectives of the workshop were to assess and understand respective areas of technical expertise within the UNCCD and FAO to optimize support to countries for monitoring and reporting on the indicator for SDG 15.3, and agree on a shared vision and collaborative way forward. In this regard, it was agreed that the missions of the UNCCD and FAO are closely intertwined, and that the UNCCD, as the custodian of indicator 15.3.1, is committed to closely collaborating with its key partner FAO in order to upgrade the indicator from Tier III to Tier II status as soon as possible. Likewise, FAO has committed to help to implement and monitor SDG target 15.3 in select countries participating in the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme. A road map for cooperation to achieve these goals was agreed to at this workshop.

11. The secretariat is a partner in the FAO-led initiative on the Global Framework for Action on Water Scarcity,⁷ launched during UNFCCC COP 22 in November 2016. The initiative aims to respond to the increasingly urgent issues of water scarcity by catalyzing international cooperation on water scarcity in agriculture in the context of climate change and the growing competition for water resources.

B. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

12. In 2016, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) approved the publication of a special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, to be published in 2019. On 13 January 2017, the secretariat and Science-Policy Interface (SPI) members engaged in a bilateral consultation with the IPCC secretariat to exchange views and make recommendations on the structure of the report. In February 2017, the secretariat and an SPI co-chair participated in the scoping meeting, held in Dublin, Ireland, and the resulting outline of the report⁸ was adopted by the IPCC at its 45th session, held in Guadalajara, Mexico, from 28 to 31 March 2017.

⁷ <www.fao.org/land-water/overview/global-framework/en/>.

⁸ <www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session45/Decision_Outline_SR_LandUse.pdf>.

13. The secretariat was a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the FAO-IPCC expert meeting on climate change, land use and food security,⁹ which took place in Rome from 23 to 25 January 2017 and was attended by the secretariat and SPI members. On 21–23 March 2017, the secretariat and the SPI co-organized, with FAO, the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils of the Global Soil Partnership, the IPCC and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a Global Symposium on Soil Organic Carbon which highlighted the role of soils and soil organic carbon management in advancing the climate change and sustainable development agendas. The outcome document¹⁰ is expected to contribute to the IPCC in its regular reports, starting with the special report referred to in paragraph 12 above, the refinement of the inventory guidelines, and the Sixth Assessment Report, as well as to the reporting processes under UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the SDGs.

C. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

14. In 2015, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) launched the Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment (LDRA) and the UNCCD was recognized as a key user of, as well as a key contributor to, this assessment. Subsequently, the secretariat contributed to the scoping and first authors meeting. In May 2016, the secretariat reviewed and commented on the first order draft of the LDRA. The secretariat also provided feedback to the review of the second order draft of the LDRA, including the “Summary for policymakers”, during May–June 2017.

15. The secretariat continues to contribute to the IPBES capacity-building process, specifically in the development of the work plan; participation in technical and expert meetings; and the sharing of expertise. The IPBES match-making facility is based on the concept of the UNCCD Capacity Building Marketplace, which in turn allows IPBES to reach a larger global audience. Furthermore, as a member of the IPBES Forum on Capacity Building, the secretariat has played a major role in setting up the IPBES fellowship programme and, inter alia, in the development of all its capacity-building plans and activities; participation in its webinars and seminars; and the promotion of synergies in capacity-building to support the implementation of IPBES activities, particular with regard to the on-the-ground implementation of projects.

D. United Nations Development Programme

16. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued its support in communications and gender mainstreaming in the context of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification. It played a key role in guiding, editing and contributing human interest stories for the publication *Land for Life: Managing Land Sustainably for Better Livelihoods*.¹¹ On gender, UNDP supported the participation of the UNCCD in the 2016 GGGP and provided partial support for the working paper on gender¹² published in conjunction with the Global Land Outlook. Since 2013, UNDP continues to play a key role in promoting women’s empowerment in the implementation of the Convention. Together with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the UNCCD, it is part of the task force that

⁹ <www.ipcc.ch/pdf/supporting-material/EM_FAO_IPCC_report.pdf>.

¹⁰ <www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/25eaf720-94e4-4f53-8f50-cdfc2487e1f8/>.

¹¹ See document ICCD/COP(13)/4.

¹² <www.unccd.int/glo/>.

conceptualized, co-organized and supported the gender training workshop held back-to-back with COP 13.

E. United Nations Environment Programme

17. The secretariat contributed to a resolution on sand and dust storms adopted at the 2nd meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in May 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya. In accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/195, the secretariat collaborated with United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to prepare the report titled “Global assessment of sand and dust storms”,¹³ which was submitted to the 71st session of the General Assembly by the Secretary General. As a follow-up, the secretariat developed a policy framework and technical guide for sand and dust storms with focus on economic impact assessment.¹⁴ With the support of the Changwon Initiative, the secretariat continues to advance the implementation of the Greening Drylands Partnership, which aims to promote LDN testing and implementation. The secretariat is also collaborating with UN Environment in developing project proposals for consideration to the Green Climate Fund on issues including drought early warning systems.

F. World Meteorological Organization

18. The secretariat collaborated with WMO in the development of a policy framework and technical guide regarding early warning, assessment, management and prevention of sand and dust storms. As a member of the Steering Committee of the WMO Sand and Dust Storm Warning Advisory and Assessment System (SDS-WAS), the secretariat contributed to the development of the work programme of SDS-WAS. The secretariat is also collaborating with WMO in the framework of two programmes that are outcomes of the High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy: (i) UN-Water Initiative on “Capacity Development to Support National Drought Management Policies” (NDMP) and (ii) the Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP). For IDMP, the secretariat contributed to the publication *Building Resilience to Drought: Learning from Experience in the Horn of Africa*¹⁵ and another publication on *Benefits of action and costs of inaction: Drought mitigation and preparedness – a literature review*.¹⁶ The secretariat participates in the annual steering and management committee meetings of IDMP as well as events jointly organized by WMO, the UNCCD and FAO such as a joint event during the African Drought Conference held in Windhoek, Namibia, in August 2016.

G. United Nations Forum on Forests

19. As a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the secretariat contributed to the development of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (2017–2030) adopted in special session in January 2017 and the global core set of indicators for monitoring forest-related targets. In addition, the secretariat was a member of the Steering Committee for the Organization-Led Initiative meeting held in November 2016 in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), including the ongoing work under UNFF on streamlined monitoring, assessment and reporting on the implementation of the United

¹³ <http://uneplive.unep.org/media/docs/assessments/global_assessment_of_sand_and_dust_storms.pdf>.

¹⁴ See document ICCD/COP(13)/20.

¹⁵ <www.droughtmanagement.info/literature/GWP_HOA_Building_Resilience_to_Drought_2016.pdf>.

¹⁶ <www.droughtmanagement.info/literature/IDMP_BACI_WP.PDF>.

Nations Forest Instrument and its Global Objectives on Forests, as well as the forest-related SDGs and targets.

H. International Organization for Migration

20. The secretariat and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have renewed their commitment to delivering joint messages on the importance of addressing the environmental root causes of human mobility and displacement. In terms of research and knowledge-sharing, the secretariat has contributed to the IOM Atlas of Environmental Migration and, in turn, IOM has provided inputs for the Global Land Outlook. The “3S” initiative on sustainability, stability and security in Africa has been a stepping stone in advancing the partnership, both at the advocacy and the operational level. In terms of advocacy, IOM has actively supported the secretariat in promoting the 3S initiative at the Global Forum on Migration and Development, a formal channel contributing to the work on a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. Operationally, the two organizations are collaborating to implement the 3S demonstration projects to create land-based jobs for migrants, hosted in the IOM transit center in Agadez, Niger, in order to help them to reintegrate in their countries of origin.

I. UN-Water

21. As a member of UN-Water, the secretariat participates in the biannual UN-Water meetings to contribute to the wide-ranging discussions, including UN-Water governance, monitoring and progress on SDG 6 “Clean water and sanitation”, the organization of World Water Days and the High-level Panel on Water, among others. The secretariat also contributes to the forthcoming UN-Water publication *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2018*. As part of the UN-Water mechanism, UNCCD is a member of both the “Water Scarcity” and the “Water and Climate Change” expert groups.

J. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

22. The secretariat worked with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) to strengthen its capacity to enhance gender mainstreaming in its work. In September 2016, the UNCCD gender focal point participated in a gender training workshop held in Bonn, which was conducted by UN Women for UNFCCC staff. Following this, the secretariat consulted extensively with UN Women in the development of the proposed UNCCD gender action plan. At the time this report was under preparation, the secretariat, UNDP and UN Women were initiating further activities to bring greater attention to gender considerations in the outcomes of COP 13 and enhance women’s participation: conducting a training session to strengthen the gender expertise of UNCCD stakeholders to be held back-to-back with COP 13; sponsoring gender experts to attend COP 13; organizing Gender Day in the Rio Conventions Pavilion; and strengthening collaboration between UN Women’s country-level gender experts and technical experts from the three Rio conventions.

K. United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response

23. The secretariat is collaborating with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and its affiliated programme, the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, to develop a joint work programme for 2017–2018 to integrate space technology into the implementation of the Convention, including drought and sand and dust storms policy documents and technical guidelines, so as to assist and facilitate the capacity-building of affected country Parties.

24. The secretariat co-organized a regional expert meeting on “Strengthening early warning systems for drought (SEWS-D)” with a focus on the use of space-based information in drought early warning systems, held in July 2016 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The secretariat also contributed documents¹⁷ to a workshop titled “Use of space technology for dust storm and drought monitoring in the Middle East Region” which took place in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, in November 2016.

IV. Other international organizations and institutions

A. International Union for the Conservation of Nature

25. The IUCN-UNCCD Joint Work Plan 2015–2020 covers a wide range of issues with the overarching goal to support progress towards policies and programmes that deliver LDN through the application of nature-based solutions at the national and subnational levels. Two major areas of collaboration during the intersessional period were the World Conservation Congress and the LDN target setting programme.

26. The secretariat, the Economics of Land Degradation initiative, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Commission on Ecosystem Management and the IUCN Global Drylands Initiative collaborated in organizing a themed journey titled “Life on Land” at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii in September 2016. The journey was designed to support a move towards a more comprehensive response to achieving LDN by 2030. It connected many diverse approaches to land use and land management to explore potential synergies or conflicts. The final report¹⁸ gives an overview of the journey combined with a synthesis of the main observations and lessons contributed by the participants.

27. In addition, the IUCN is a member of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification task force and made a significant contribution to the development and production of the human interest stories from the Middle East and Eastern Africa in the publication *Land for Life: Managing Land Sustainably for Better Livelihoods* referred to in paragraph 16 above. Through the IUCN-Global Mechanism partnership on FLEUVE (Front Local Environnemental pour une Union Verte), the secretariat conducted case studies in Burkina Faso, Chad and Senegal on gender equality and women’s empowerment in LDN implementation. Building on past collaborations, IUCN has been a valuable source of gender expertise, including on the proposed draft gender action plan.

¹⁷ <www.unoosa.org/oosa/oosadoc/data/documents/2017/aac.105c.12017crp/aac.105c.12017crp.22_0.html>.

¹⁸ <www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/lof_journey_report_2.pdf>.

B. International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives

28. In response to decision 29/COP.12, Turkey, as part of the Ankara Initiative, committed to strengthen the involvement of local government administrations in support of future COP discussions. In this regard, the secretariat established a partnership with International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) – Local Governments for Sustainability, a global network of over 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future, and jointly organized a session at the 8th Global Forum on Urban Resilience and Adaptation, which took place in Bonn in 2017, with the participation of more than 400 representatives from all over the world. The collaboration also included the preparation of a briefing sheet¹⁹ on the relevance of land degradation and sustainable urban development. The document describes the role of local and subnational governments with a focus on migration, including the urban/rural continuum and resilience, food/water security, climate change adaptation and biodiversity.

C. World Bank/TerrAfrica

29. World Bank/TerrAfrica supported awareness-raising activities in the context of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification through: (i) the publication of *Land for Life: Managing Land Sustainably for Better Livelihoods* (see para. 16 above) containing human interest stories, in English and French; (ii) the production of three films on migration to raise awareness about the 2017 World Day to Combat Desertification; (iii) the production of about 100 photographs showing the impacts of land restoration and rehabilitation; and (iv) the sponsorship of the World Future Council 2017 Future Policy Award. The World Bank/TerrAfrica also supported the secretariat's work to develop and refine SDG indicator 15.3.1.

D. African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development

30. The secretariat of the task force of the 3S initiative referred to in paragraph 20 above, launched by the Senegalese Presidency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and by the Moroccan Presidency of UNFCCC COP 22, has been assigned to the UNCCD secretariat. In this framework, the secretariat has enhanced its exchanges with the NEPAD agency, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States Secretariat and the Economic Community of West African States Commission, which have been invited to the preparatory meetings and political events of the 3S initiative. Promoting coordination with existing African Union/NEPAD programmes and initiatives on conflict prevention, youth employment, rural development and natural resource management to achieve the 3S goals is among the priorities of the task force.

E. German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik

31. The Secretariat is also collaborating with Bonn-based national and international organizations working on drought and related issues such the German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik and the United Nations University-Environment and Human Security to help to develop better and more relevant drought policies at the national level.

¹⁹ <www.iclei.org/fileadmin/PUBLICATIONS/Briefing_Sheets/Land_Degradation/ICLEI_Briefing_Sheet_Land_Degradation.pdf>.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

32. When considering the next steps for promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies, priority should be given to those relationships that assist countries in the implementation of the Convention.
33. Accordingly, the Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the following elements for a decision:
34. *Recalling* Article 1 of the Convention,
35. *Also recalling* decision 9/COP.12, which requests a review and assessment of the progress made by the secretariat in promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies,
36. *Acknowledging* that making significant progress towards the strategic objectives of the Convention requires strong and effective relationships that are able to leverage the appropriate synergies with organizations that have overlapping or convergent missions,
37. *Also acknowledging* that this includes not only the Rio conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements but also the organizations and institutions concerned with the issues addressed in this decision,
38. *Reaffirming* the use of the three land-based progress indicators as set out in decision 9/COP.12 for reporting under the Rio conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals, which are coherent with the progress indicators/metrics adopted in decision 22/COP.11, namely: (i) trends in land cover; (ii) trends in land productivity or functioning of the land; and (iii) trends in carbon stock above and below ground,
39. *Recognizing* the need for enhanced collaboration with technical bodies and experts to assist countries in monitoring and reporting on the three progress indicators, including, inter alia, the Group on Earth Observation,
40. *Welcoming* the initiatives undertaken to address gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the Convention,
41. *Reiterating* that addressing the gender inequities that drive land degradation would enhance the implementation of the Convention,
42. *Taking into consideration* the relevant decisions taken at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties,
43. *Invites* the Group on Earth Observation to establish an initiative or other appropriate mechanism, in coordination with the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, to provide space-based information and in situ measurements to assist countries in fulfilling the reporting requirements for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.3.1, including data access, national data capacity-building and the development of standards and protocols;
44. *Also invites* the Global Environment Facility to provide support for joint requests that enhance synergy in awareness-raising and capacity-building to increase gender equality at the regional and global levels, which are submitted by the Rio conventions at the request of their respective Parties;
45. *Requests* the secretariat and appropriate bodies of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification:

(a) To promote further harmonization of indicators and reporting procedures, including the land-based progress indicators across the Rio conventions and the Global Environment Facility;

(b) To continue working with the Interagency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, in its role as the custodian agency, to finalize the methodology and data options for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.3.1 and begin coordination with countries on national, regional and global reporting according to the protocols established within the Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework;

(c) To build on the collaboration initiated with relevant United Nations entities, such as UN Women, United Nations Development Programme, International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Rio conventions secretariats, as well as development partners and relevant international organizations to support gender mainstreaming at all levels, but especially at the national and subnational levels;

(d) To promote further collaboration with relevant organizations, such as United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, World Meteorological Organization, World Health Organization, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and United Nations Environment Programme, to finalize policy development and a technical guide for implementation, including tools and methodologies, in accordance with decision XX/COP.13;²⁰

(e) To continue fostering partnerships with World Meteorological Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Convention on Biological Diversity and UN-Water and to identify new partnerships with other relevant organizations in order to strengthen countries' support in the development of national drought management policies that include monitoring and early warning systems, vulnerability assessment, and drought risk mitigation measures in the context of implementing the Convention;

46. *Also requests* both the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to continue to fulfil their respective roles in the established partnerships and to seek new partnerships according to their respective mandates in order to further enhance the implementation of the Convention, its Strategic Plan 2018–2030, and, if appropriate, to bring them to the attention of the Conference of the Parties for any necessary action;

47. *Further requests* the secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth session on progress made in implementing this decision.

²⁰ It is a draft decision to be considered for adoption at COP 13.