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Overview of gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Convention: 1998–2018

Summary

This document contains information supplementary to the Gender Plan of Action contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/19, for use by Parties in (i) considering actions to address the gender inequalities that undermine effective implementation of the Convention and (ii) designing a robust gender-responsive approach complementing the Convention's future strategic plan for 2018–2030 (the 2018–2030 UNCCD Strategic Framework). It responds to decision 9/COP.11, requesting the secretariat to: (i) regularly report to the Conference of the Parties (COP) on the implementation of the gender policy advocacy framework, and (ii) mainstream gender in the implementation of the Convention.

The Rationale explains why a stronger approach is needed in addressing the gender inequalities associated with the Convention, highlighting relevant data and research findings in studies on gender and the environment. Under section II on Mandate, the document presents a summary of the Convention's legal framework and COP decisions on addressing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Section III presents an overview of the findings from the reports submitted by Parties regarding the actions on gender and women's empowerment undertaken at both procedural and programmatic levels. The section also contains reports of the findings regarding mainstreaming gender at project level based on case studies carried out in 2016 in Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia and Senegal, in the context of the FLEUVE project of the Global Mechanism and the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme pilot projects. The analyses and lessons learned contained in the Conclusion are used to highlight key issues for consideration in the formulation of future actions to mainstream gender and empower women in the implementation of the Convention.

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I. Rationale

1. The use, access, control and management of natural resources matter for humanity, but they are especially critical issues for many developing countries, where livelihoods are defined by them. Understanding and addressing the roles and responsibilities of males and females in this regard, and the power relations linked to natural resource use and management, is a primary requirement for effective and successful outcomes in combatting land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought. The plans by Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to agree on a new strategic plan for the implementation of the Convention at a time when there is renewed international cooperation to empower women is a window of opportunity to enhance and advance the progress made to address the gender inequalities that have undermined effective implementation of the Convention.

2. The Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) states that the drivers of land degradation are not gender neutral, underlining the fact that poverty is both a root cause and a consequence of land degradation, with gender inequality playing a significant role in the process, worsening the impacts on women.

3. Studies show that in developing countries, rural women are more dependent on natural resources than men for survival, and that they are also poorer than men due to structural constraints that impede their access to critical resources, such as land rights, finance and credit, and appropriate knowledge and technologies, which are essential for sustainable land use and management. For instance, less than 20 per cent of land holders worldwide are women¹ and only 13 per cent of land users making the major decisions on agricultural land are women.² In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, women hold 10 per cent of the credit available to smallholder agriculture.³ Female farmers receive only 5 per cent of all agricultural extension services, and only 15 per cent of agricultural extension officers are women.⁴ In many countries, women are only half as likely as men to use inputs.⁵

4. Thus, women's relative poverty compared to men's on the one hand constrains their effective contribution to the global efforts to combat desertification and land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought. At the same time, women are potentially strategic agents. They make up a significant labour force which is shaping the land. Globally, women make up 43 per cent of the agricultural workforce.⁶ In many poor countries, more than 95 per cent of all economically active women work in agriculture.⁷ Women are also guardians of valuable traditional and indigenous knowledge on land use.⁸

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *State of Food and Agriculture*, cited, 2011.

² de la O Campos, et al, 2015.

³ United Nations Secretary General's Report, cited, p. 9, 2012.

⁴ Add reference

⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food and Agriculture*, 2010-2011, 2011.

⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food and Agriculture*, p. 35, 2014.

⁷ International Organization for Migration, *Barriers to Women's Land and Property Access and Ownership in Nepal*, 2016. <www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DOE/LPR/Barriers-to-Womens-Land-Property-Access-Ownership-in-Nepal.pdf>. Accessed 21 December 2016.

⁸ Samandari, A., cited, 2015; Nelson, V., L. Forsythe and J. Morton, *Empowering Dryland Women: Capturing opportunities in land rights, governance and resilience. A synthesis of thematic papers from the series, 'Women's empowerment in the drylands'*. Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, Chatham, United Kingdom, 2015. <www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-03/Dryland%20women%20SYNTHESIS%20FINAL_0.pdf>.

5. Evidence shows that gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are vital in achieving sustainable development and significantly enhance economic growth and productivity.⁹

6. The Science-Policy Interface (SPI) recommends integrating gender considerations into implementation of the UNCCD, including through LDN planning and implementation, decision making, stakeholder engagement and the preliminary assessments for LDN.¹⁰ In particular, the SPI argues that excluding gender from the analysis of preliminary assessment data (for example gender analysis, poorly selected or incomplete indicators, lack of advanced planning for the disaggregation of data by sex) will lead to incomplete or misleading findings.

7. The need to act now is important and urgent due to the amplified impacts of extreme weather events, such as droughts, flash floods, mud- and land-slides and unpredictable rainfall, on rural women. Women in land-dependent communities, particularly in the regions affected by the impacts of land degradation, require special attention to access the resources they need to provide for their households and make communities resilient and stable.¹¹

8. The opportunity to act is timely in the light of two developments. First, at COP 13, Parties expect to adopt a new strategic plan for 2018–2030. Agreement on an effective gender plan of action aiming to address women’s challenges would advance national efforts to achieve the LDN target. Second, the global commitments for international cooperation to 2030¹² include targets that are critical to the implementation of the Convention, such as participation in leadership and decision-making (sustainable development goal SDG 5.5), women’s access to land rights and financial services (SDG 5.a), eradicating poverty (SDG 1.1 and 10.4), access to appropriate technologies and information (SDG 5.b) and the education of women and girls (SDG 4.7). UNCCD Parties are obligated to supporting these commitments. More importantly, Parties can advance the realization of the Parties’ strategic objectives they have formulated for 2030 by building on these commitments and the achievements and lessons learned from past activities, which are highlighted below.

II. Mandate and Conference of the Parties actions

9. The UNCCD underlines the importance of both women and men in efforts to combat desertification, land degradation and drought. The preamble stresses the need to take into account the important role women play in regions affected by desertification and/or drought, particularly in the rural areas of developing countries, and the importance of ensuring the full participation of both men and women at all levels in programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

10. Specifically, the Convention obliges Parties to, *inter alia*, provide for the effective participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local populations in policy planning, decision-making, and the implementation and review of national action programmes (NAPs) at local, national and regional levels. In this regard, it specifies both women and men, particularly resource users, including farmers and pastoralists and their

⁹ United Nations. Addis Ababa Agenda Action, pp. 6-7, 2014.

¹⁰ SPI Conceptual Framework on Land Degradation Neutrality
<www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/documents/LDN%20Scientific%20Conceptual%20Framework_FINAL.pdf>
2017.

¹¹ Nelson, V., L. Forsythe and J. Morton, *Achieving Dryland Women’s Empowerment: Environmental resilience and social transformation imperatives*, 2015.

¹² Includes the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (A/RES/69/313) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs (A/RES/70/1).

representative organizations.¹³ With regard to capacity-building, the Convention requires Parties to undertake institution building, training, and development of local and national capacities on issues that are particularly relevant for women.¹⁴ It emphasizes the full participation of local people, “especially women”.¹⁵ It calls for public awareness and education programmes for all, but especially those that meet the needs of girls and women for the identification, conservation and sustainable use and management of the natural resources in affected areas. The programmes are to be based on an assessment of the educational needs in affected areas and embody appropriate school curricula and, where needed, educational and adult literacy programmes and opportunities.

11. Since COP 4 and as recently as COP 12, parliamentarians, Ministers and civil society organizations (CSOs) have called attention to the critical role of women in the implementation of the Convention, and have expressed commitment to strengthening their capacities and their participation in decision-making.¹⁶ The Ankara Ministerial declaration, for instance, states that the Ministers “*Dedicate ourselves to promoting gender equality and the role of women as actors of change in addressing desertification, land degradation and drought.*”¹⁷

12. Parties have taken some action to operationalize their mandate and these commitments through various decisions.

13. Between COP 1 and COP 7, Parties gave attention to the development of gender-responsive institutions, more specifically gender balance in the Roster of Experts,¹⁸ Ad-Hoc Panels¹⁹ and decision-making. They also stressed: continuing the promotion of the role of women as a key element in implementing the Convention; building women’s capacities at grassroots level, focusing on awareness-raising, education, training, income-generating activities and access to credit; and the use of quantifiable and readily verifiable indicators and benchmarks to measure the participation of all local populations, communities and major groups, particularly women.²⁰

14. The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) adopted at COP 8 requested Parties to promote awareness of women and to include them in the implementation of the Convention,²¹ following which Parties took further actions. They requested the secretariat (i) to develop an Advocacy Policy Framework (APF) on gender to support an enabling environment for implementation of the NAPs, in the context of promoting and strengthening relationships with other conventions and institutions;²² (ii) to take gender-sensitive approaches into account in the development of other thematic APFs,²³ including the issue of drought (water scarcity);²⁴ (iii) to facilitate gender mainstreaming at various levels involving multiple stakeholders²⁵ and increase advocacy efforts; and (iv) to make available on the UNCCD

¹³ Article 10, paragraph 2(f).

¹⁴ Extension services; alternative energy; knowledge/know-how/practices of local populations, adaptation of traditional knowledge and environmentally sound technologies; alternative livelihoods; early warning information on drought conditions and on food production – subparagraph 1(b).

¹⁵ Article 19 subparagraphs 1(a) and 3(e).

¹⁶ See Ministerial Dialogues and the Declarations of Parliamentarians and of the CSOs.

¹⁷ ICCD/COP (12)/20.

¹⁸ Decision 19/COP.1; 13/COP.2; 15/COP.3; 15/COP.4; 15/COP.5.

¹⁹ Decision 17/COP.1.

²⁰ Decision 5/COP.3.

²¹ Decision 8/COP.10.

²² Decision 8/COP.9.

²³ Decision 8/COP.9.

²⁴ Decision 9/COP.10.

²⁵ Decision 9/COP.11.

website information on the gender balance in the roster of experts.²⁶ They continued to emphasize gender balance in the steering committee of the Scientific Conferences,²⁷ the eligibility criteria for CSO participation²⁸ and again in 2015, in the Roster of Experts.²⁹

15. Looking towards the future following the global consensus on a new framework for cooperation on sustainable development, Parties have underlined the need to give attention to women's empowerment in the integration of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development into its target 15.3 on land degradation neutrality in efforts to combat desertification and drought.³⁰ CRIC 15, after reviewing the draft strategic plan, stressed the need to clearly articulate women's issues in relation to the strategic objective on the living conditions of affected populations.³¹

16. The following section summarizes how these actions were translated into practice.

III. Implementation on the ground: a gender review and steps ahead

A Trends in reporting on gender-related actions

17. UNCCD stakeholders submitted reports in three two-year reporting cycles from 1999 to 2008, with different entities reporting at the COPs. With the adoption of The Strategy, a new reporting approach was agreed. For each biennium (2010–2014) all reporting entities were required to submit their reports based on the standardized Performance Review and Assessment of the Implementation of the Strategy (PRAIS) framework. During this period, stakeholders were not required to report on the gender dimension. Even so, many mentioned what was done, without providing too much detail. Therefore, the summary below attempts to capture and make sense of what the reports contained, in an attempt to highlight the nature and scope of activities undertaken on the ground.

1. Reports submitted between 1999 and 2010, by thematic areas

18. Parties submit reports on implementation at country level and on the basis of the NAPs they have formulated. Between 1999 and 2010, prior to the implementation of the PRAIS system, 45 Annex I (Africa) parties reported their actions in support of women and women's groups. From Annex II (Asia), six countries mentioned gender and attention to women's issues, while in Annex III (Latin America and the Caribbean), 10 countries also reported. From Annex IV (Northern Mediterranean), one country³² made reference to gender, and from Annex V, three countries mentioned gender.³³

19. Most reports identify women's **participation** as the main challenge that was addressed in the context of their NAPs. In some cases, specific indicators were set up by Parties to increase the participation of women, for instance 30 per cent in the cases of Mauritania,³⁴ Eritrea and Gabon. Participation has also been identified as a priority for

²⁶ Decision 11/COP.8.

²⁷ Decision 21/COP.11.

²⁸ Decision 5/COP.9.

²⁹ Decision 22/COP.12.

³⁰ Decision 3/COP.12.

³¹ ICCD/CRIC(15)/7

³² Albania report, 2002.

³³ The Reports of Arzerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria and Ukraine are not included in this review.

³⁴ Country names are provided simply as examples. No value judgement is implied.

Annex II countries, particularly Bangladesh, where a 50 per cent target indicator was set for participation in the local coordination mechanism. Among the Annex II countries, Cuba, Dominica and Grenada also emphasized the importance of increasing women's participation.

20 Acknowledgment of the importance of promoting participation has led some countries to conduct a thorough **mapping and analysis** of women's organizations in their own countries (for example, in Ethiopia) so that they could better assess their needs and define empowerment strategies. Others focused on **awareness-raising campaigns** at local, regional and national level (Morocco), on equal participation (Namibia) or on the importance of mainstreaming gender in the Convention (South Africa).

21. Some Parties focused on **capacity-building** with a view to strengthening the skills of vulnerable women. Chile, for example, collected sex disaggregated data and reported that 46 per cent of the poorest households were led by women and needed to be targeted through special programmes. Capacity-building is highlighted as a critical and strategic response to address the gaps identified in the mapping and planning exercises, and as key to the successful implementation of programmes. However, Parties focused on diverse issues. For instance, the Central Africa Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Tanzania and Uganda focused on technology. Cambodia and El Salvador focused on providing rural women with tools that, at the same time, alleviated their domestic burden and addressed desertification.

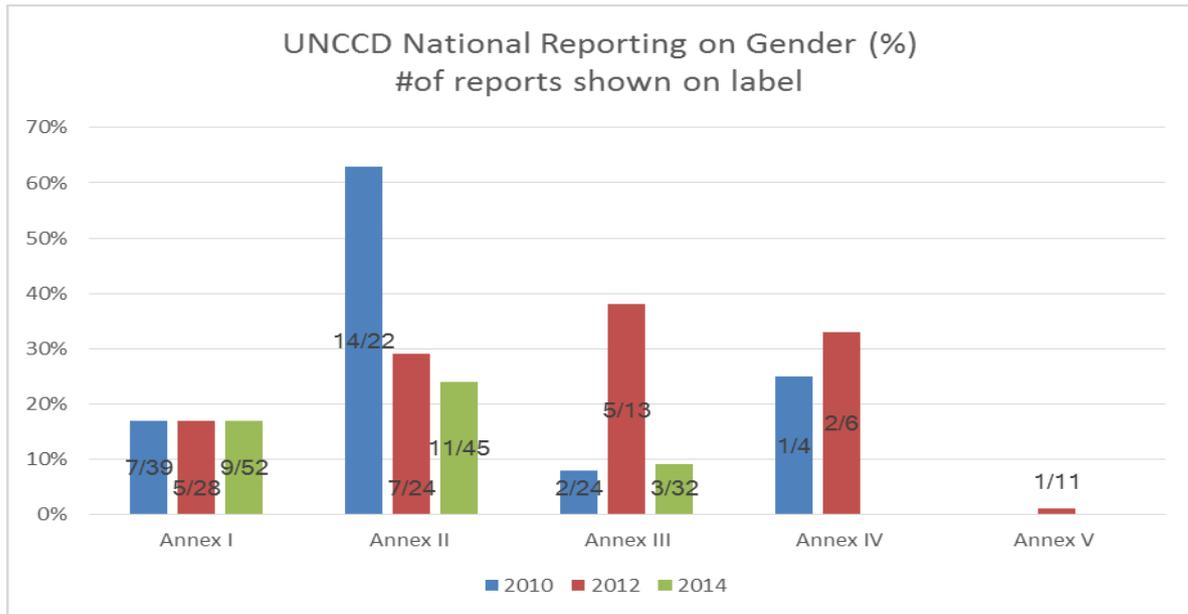
22. In Senegal, for example, **women's economic empowerment**, including access to credit, was also an important element in capacity-building. It is part of a holistic approach to gender equality as reflected in a comprehensive and consensual policy framework, *The National Action Plan for Women* (PANAF). Egypt's approach to capacity-building programmes involved providing women's organizations with managerial and organizational skills in order to improve their participation rates. Brazil and Chile have also taken steps in acknowledging the need to create opportunities for women through targeted capacity-building programmes.

23. Some Parties have taken action to strengthen the **legal protection framework** for women, particularly land, property and succession rights. There was increased awareness and limited revision and amendment of legal codes in Ethiopia, Gabon and Morocco. In the last case, a family code was adopted in 2004 to address gaps in the existing legal framework. Women's access to land rights in Namibia was improved through legal adjustments. In the Cook islands, several legislative reviews are taking place to increase women's social protection, including maternity leave.

2 Reports submitted 2010–2014

24. After the adoption of The Strategy, a total of 335 reports were submitted from 2010 to 2014. Of these, 80 (23 per cent) mentioned the role of women, women's groups or gender with varying degrees of importance, of which 67 reports were by Parties who reported voluntarily on activities that related primarily to women. See the graph below.

Number of countries (and overall percentage) explicitly making reference to addressing gender issues or actively involving women in their national reports (2010–2014)



25. The results show Annex I countries, with a consistent 17 per cent reporting rate throughout the years under consideration, as the most consistent in addressing gender, with the most actions relating to the inclusion of women and women’s groups in their programmes. A majority of the reports mentioned women’s participation in programmes, but rarely addressed gender disparities substantively.

26. Most of the Parties, particularly from Annex I in 2010, mentioned participation as their key area of gender focus, with efforts aimed mainly at project implementation in the field rather than at developing wider comprehensive programmes. But subsequent years showed a growing awareness of the need to address women’s empowerment and gender equality from a more comprehensive perspective. Country reports underlined the need to develop a process that begins with the acknowledgment of inequalities and disparities that should be addressed through the establishment of appropriate coordination mechanisms and the development of comprehensive programmes to increase participation and enhance women’s capacities.

27. There was a gradual increase in the number of reports from Africa that mentioned and recognized women’s role and their engagement, and women’s organizations. Ghana made explicit reference to an impact on women’s organizations that had participated in the implementation of their programmes. Namibia defined how it targeted the participation of women’s organizations and submitted sex disaggregated data. In 2012, even though the proportion of reports mentioning the efforts to include women and women’s organizations did not increase significantly, there were explicit references to women’s inclusion in implementation activities in Namibia and Tunisia. In 2014, the number of reports mentioning gender and/or women showed a growing awareness as well as a critical analysis and understanding of the complexity of gender issues. For example, Nigeria highlighted a connection between land degradation, limited resources and gender-based violence.

28. In their reports, Annex II countries referred to the importance of including women’s groups in their projects, and accounted for the highest number of reports covering gender in any one biennium – for 63.6 per cent of the reports in 2010 that addressed gender issues. The efforts made to adopt a gender-equal approach to participation in the programmes implemented in India (through the village development committees and self-help groups which targeted up to 300 women) are noteworthy. The impact on women’s empowerment

strategies was notable through a considerable reduction in the domestic burden of women, more specifically in fetching water, fuel and fodder.³⁵ Several countries from the region, including Nepal, Iran and Lebanon, mentioned women's empowerment and participation as a best practice. In 2012, 27 women cooperatives in Lebanon participated in projects in dryland areas aiming to end the exploitation of women and children. Pakistan reported on its social mobilization programme that supported the establishment of 2,409 women's organizations.³⁶ One Party requested the addition of a special section in the PRAIS system to report on the progress made on gender by Parties.

29. Ecuador, Panama and Honduras reported on women's involvement and capacity-building activities. One country highlighted the stronger impact land degradation had on vulnerable groups, including women. Honduras reported that it had made their national institute for women the main recipient organization.³⁷

30. A quarter of the **Annex IV** countries submitted reports specifying how their implementation programmes addressed gender inequalities. Similarly, one³⁸ **Annex V** Party mentioned ensuring the equal participation of men and women as an issue of concern.

B Case studies: Gender mainstreaming at grassroots level

31. During the 2016–2017 biennium, the UNCCD secretariat initiated pilot projects in five countries to identify the key gender gaps associated with the implementation of the Convention on the ground. The two case studies implemented by governments focus on gender mainstreaming in countries involved in the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme (LDN-TSP). The other three case studies, which were implemented through a partnership with intergovernmental organizations and NGOs, supported activities identified by women involved in sustainable land management (SLM) activities at the local level.

32. The *Projet Front Local Environnemental pour l'Union Verte* (FLEUVE) of the Global Mechanism was the entry point for the non-governmental projects. FLEUVE is the component in the Great Green Wall for the Sahara Sahel and Lake Chad Initiative that aims to boost investment in land restoration and create employment opportunities or 'green jobs' by strengthening the capacities of local communities. When it was first conceptualized, FLEUVE did not have a gender component. But during the feasibility study, women identified the unique needs they wanted realized under FLEUVE. From the perspective of the NGOs, the aim of the project was to build the capacities of the women to become "earth entrepreneurs" by providing them with skills appropriate to fully understanding and managing all the stages of entrepreneurship, from planting to developing a business plan to marketing the product.

33. The secretariat's case study supported the implementation of these activities in order to understand their relevance in the implementation of the Convention. The projects were also interesting because the needs identified by the women fitted the empowerment approaches UNCCD stakeholders advocated at the COP 11 (Namibia) and COP 12 (Ankara) Gender Days. They also aligned with ministerial declarations that have called for identification of the gaps in capacity and strategies needed to move women beyond food security to ensure their economic empowerment through, *inter alia*, income generation.

³⁵ UNCCD, 4th reporting and review cycle, report from India, 2010.

³⁶ UNCCD, 4th reporting cycle, Pakistan, 2010–2011.

³⁷ UNCCD, Honduras National report, 2012.

³⁸ UNCCD, Bulgaria National Report, 2006.

34. The UNCCD focal point ministries were the entry points for the LDN-TSP initiatives in Ethiopia and Uganda.³⁹ Ethiopia, one of the pilot projects of the LDN-TSP in 2014, identified gender mainstreaming and livelihoods as two of its nine indicators to be achieved under the LDN-TSP. The case study was designed to integrate the gender dimension more practically in the LDN-TSP.

35. The objectives of the case studies were:

(a) To assess how the existing gender initiatives could be integrated in the emerging land degradation neutrality processes;

(b) To identify best practices and lessons learnt for mainstreaming gender in the LDN-TSP;

(c) To build women’s capacities in line with the priority areas identified by women and women’s groups for attention in the implementation activities.

1. Ethiopia Case Study

36. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change identified the need to strengthen its participatory approach in order to achieve the LDN objectives it had developed. The process began with the organization of regional awareness-raising workshops to introduce the concept of LDN, in the course of which discussions on gender mainstreaming would be held.

37. Four workshops were held in the Tigray and Amhara regions, with two objectives. First, to raise public awareness of the concept of LDN, as it is a new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target that is known in only a few policy circles. Second, to tease out the understanding of gender mainstreaming in the context of LDN. The awareness-raising workshops involved 200 participants from four regions and 25 sectors drawn from research and development institutions, civil society, NGOs and community-based organizations. Participants discussed the impact of land degradation on men, women and youth, and highlighted the challenges land degradation and drought posed for them. They also identified the unique impacts for each category, and the benefits of gender mainstreaming in LDN. The outcomes are summarized in table 1 below.

Table 1

Challenges Arising from Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought

General	Women	Men	Youth
Poverty	<i>Higher work load</i>	<i>Increased work load</i>	<i>Increased work load</i>
Migration	<i>Health problems</i>	<i>Health problems</i>	<i>Health problems</i>
Demographic imbalances	Long distance travel for fetching water	<u>Low income</u>	<u>Less income</u>
Disease	School dropout	<u>Migration</u>	<u>Migration to cities</u>
Reduced life expectancy	Death	Social crisis	School dropout
Loss of dignity	Carry more than 25 litres of water twice a day		Death
Health problems	Firewood shortage		Unemployment
Poor care of children	Moral deterioration		Economic insecurity
Water, fuel wood scarcity	Social interaction		Illiteracy
Gender-based violence	Malnutrition		Adultery
Malnutrition	Infertility		Dependency
Higher costs of fuel and water			Exposure to violence

³⁹ Uganda’s case study is still ongoing.

38. The challenges of gender mainstreaming that they identified included: cultural influences; insufficient administrative support; women's work load at home; cultural and social attitudes; political commitment; and acceptance and belief in the value of gender mainstreaming. The benefits are: development that is sustainable; equity and equality in resource use; appropriate land management; participation of the entire community; effective utilization of knowledge; social security; food security and proper nutrition; social empowerment and a healthy society; nationalism; and a resilient society.

39. The results also reveal some interesting outcomes. There are more challenges listed for women than men, suggesting that women face more challenges than men. Loss of income is a challenge identified for men and youth, but not for women. Also interesting was the finding that at all the regional meetings, the participation of women at the workshops hovered at around 20 per cent.

2. Burkina Faso Case Study

40. In Burkina Faso, 36 women – 9 women from each of four villages in the Commune of Dori – were trained in the cultivation and management of two cereals, sesame and *niébe* (beans), and two trees, moringa and baobab. In this region, the leaves of the moringa and baobab trees are harvested and consumed as vegetables. Moringa is also used to produce various medicinal products. The success other women's groups in the region had achieved in marketing the moringa and baobab products was what motivated the women to identify training in the cultivation and management of both trees as a need when the FLEUVE feasibility study was designed. The secretariat supported the implementation in order to assess the market potential of the idea and to understand the capacities needed to promote women's economic empowerment.

41. The project was designed from a supply chain perspective, with a view to training the women in each production process, from the cultivation of each of the plants to their sale in global markets. At the end of the training, the women identified the three priority products they would experiment with in 2017–2018 and, with the support of the trainers, produced a business plan for subsequent action. A key outcome was a decision by the women to set up a cooperative in each village that will operate as an association with a legal entity to be named the "*Coopérative des Productrices de Moringa du Sahel* (CPMS)." The purpose of CPMS is to coordinate their activities and provide legal cover, recognition and identity.

42. New land management concepts were introduced during the training, including: agroforestry; the social and economic value of the moringa tree and its production in a nursery; the selection of a planting site, crop measurement and propagation (grafting), composting and ploughing; the preservation of beans; the hygiene standards required for different products; and market access, including market research and demand, product costing that internalizes all the production and marketing expenses, such as transportation, storage and brokers (middlemen). The women learned about the country's Cooperatives Act, which guides the agricultural profession.

43. The case study uncovered critical knowledge gaps in SLM and water conservation techniques, food conservation and hygiene standards in marketing and how markets work. Since the women do not own land in their own names, the local government allocated land close to a forest with a view to meeting three objectives: to provide women with security of tenure of the land; to increase forest cover in future (after the Moringa trees grow); and to provide access to productive land that is not threatened by drought.

44. The trainers (some drawn from the local government) and participants acknowledged that both the project development process and the outcome of the training are important learning opportunities. The process created awareness of the importance of a

participatory approach and that addressing gender strengthens ownership and the successful implementation of LDN programmes.

3. Senegal Case Study

45. This case study, conducted in the Mboula district in the northern part of Senegal, involved capacity-building for 45 women, in response to needs identified by women in the region during the FLEUVE feasibility study. Women had asked to be trained in the planting and cultivation of the balanitis tree, as well as conservation techniques in order to meet household food needs and for commercial oil production.

46. In the region, balinitis is primarily cultivated by women to meet household food needs. But it is a difficult plant to grow. The women had identified it as a need in order to acquire new skills to make its cultivation easier and be trained in how to exploit its market value to boost household incomes.

47. The NGO partners implementing the project viewed women's needs as an entry point for building women's capacities to combat land degradation through balanitis. The training thus focused on the planting, cultivation, production, conservation and commercialization of balanitis. Participants discussed all the uses of the balanites plant, that is, its leaves, fruit, nut, wood, pulp, etc., and its potential – from a supply-chain approach – to generate income for the communities in Mboula. They also diagnosed the challenges and their solutions and the alternative organizational models the women could use to market the products, and produced a business plan.

48. The training ranged from hygiene to the marketing and development of business models. A video recording of interviews with some of the women participants was produced after the training. Some interviewees said they felt empowered with stronger skills, which would help them to plan their production better with a view to market access. The experience in Senegal was also an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the challenges in implementation of the project, and to address in a more constructive way the need to mainstream gender in all LDN processes.

4. Chad Case Study

49. The National Agency for the Great Green Wall (ANGMV) in Chad is involved in an initiative to enable women's effective participation in efforts to combat land degradation. Women in the target regions make up more than half the population and play vital roles in providing family household needs and in managing their land for half the year when most men migrate to the cities in search of supplementary income.

50. The study targeted 360 people, of whom 201 were women and 159 were men from the Blatoukouli and Fouo Wadi communities in the Kanem region. The lessons learned will eventually benefit a total population of 4,150 in these villages. A gender analysis was conducted in the Kanem region, in a project designed to examine the potential to create micro-enterprises or agri-business centres to market the locally-produced goods: dates and kitchen garden produce (tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, beetroot, okra, chilli, etc.) as well as cattle and chickens.

51. A key issue for the project team was the need to address the stereotypes that keep the women in the region under "socio-cultural" constraints. Although it is clear that women are left in charge of the household once the men migrate for economic reasons, women are still not given the recognition needed to be part of the leadership processes that fill these "vacancies". But there is growing awareness that women will inevitably need to be playing a more prominent role in the decision-making structures at local levels in the near future.

IV. Conclusion

52. The local communities involved in the case studies will receive further capacity-building through support from the local implementation partners. They will use the business plans they developed to mobilize resources to support the women in producing and marketing the products and for the sustainable cultivation of trees in order to boost agroforestry. In Chad, the communities will strengthen the cooperatives already in existence and in use by the women who have been trained and who will receive further training in new irrigation technologies. The ANGMV plans to set up a micro-enterprise loan-system to provide credit facilities to enable the 21 community groups to purchase improved technologies and to increase local production for local consumption and marketing, and for the management of their land; for instance, fencing off the restored areas. In Ethiopia, where the focus was gender mainstreaming in LDN, the government will seek to address the impacts of land degradation and the threats identified for both men and women, as well as youth.

53. These case studies show that the development and implementation of plans addressing land management need to take into account and consistently consider women's needs. Women's capacities that need to be built include the ability to identify opportunities to articulate their needs and to advocate efficiently for their rights in order to address gender equality and get support for their involvement in LDN activities. They reinforce the claim in the SPI Conceptual Framework on Land Degradation Neutrality that addressing livelihoods – which include women's primary needs starting with project design – is critical for addressing gender-based capacity gaps and identifying the key entry points for women's empowerment.

54. The results from Ethiopia show that there are gendered impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought, and reveal why it is important to employ a varied approach to the analyses of impacts. The results of the general analysis of the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought differ significantly from what the communities identified when the same questions were posed with reference to gender (men/women) and age (youth).

55. For each of the cases, the implementation of activities required the collaboration of several organizations working on land and gender from different perspectives. Crucially, the cases drew in experts in marketing, supply chains and communications that typically would not be involved in addressing SLM issues. Using the market approach as a way to mobilize women through the women's groups yielded high participation levels (over 50 per cent). It is important to note that the women's groups also (and often) do not exclude men. By contrast, where women were invited to participate in workshops, the turnout was about 20 per cent.

56. The projects also uncovered critical issues to be tackled in efforts to mainstream gender. Approaching SLM from a market perspective helped to address gaps in women's market analyses, especially in estimating the real production costs of their goods. One case highlighted that when they estimated how much their product should cost on the market in order to recover the real cost of land management, most women hardly took into account the costs middle-men incur.

57. At the COP 11 and COP 12 Gender Days, participants called for initiatives to build women's capacities to access markets. These perspectives are consistent with the needs identified by women, particularly under the FLEUVE project. The outcomes underline the value of: (i) conducting feasibility studies that target women and women's groups in the context of LDN implementation; and (ii) using a variety of frameworks when conducting gender-related analyses.

58. In their efforts to address gender, national reports show that most countries worked with individual women, or women in projects or in women's groups. The trends in Party reporting on gender points are not consistent, which may be due to several factors, including the lack of specific requirements and detailed guidelines from the secretariat. There is an overall awareness of the lack of capacities and of a great need to invest in comprehensive capacity-building programmes.

59. Nevertheless it should still be noted that Annex I countries were consistent in reporting and that there were cases where a deeper consequential analysis was also provided in terms of gender implications for achieving SLM.

60. The APF on Gender of 2011 identifies the policy, organizational and constituency levels as the key spheres of action for addressing gender equality in the implementation of The Strategy. The APF is a particularly valuable instrument for promoting gender equality in women's participation in policy processes at all levels, from the local to the national. But it is limited in its scope, and is unlikely to realize the kind of transformative change envisioned under the new 2018–2030 UNCCD Strategy, when viewed against: (i) the results of the case studies; (ii) the scope of gender issues addressed by the Parties on the ground; (iii) the scope of gender issues relating to land management that are addressed under the SDGs; and (iv) the gender plans developed or under development under the Biodiversity and Climate Change Conventions.

61. SDGs have set the trajectory on which international organizations and institutions should base their strategic directions. The definition of a specific target for LDN provides a strong basis to build partnerships and common strategies. SDG 5 on Gender Equality has a more comprehensive and ambitious agenda than its Millennium Development Goals predecessor. Target 5.a, for instance, specifically addresses land rights, an area of relevance to the work of the UNCCD: "Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws."

62. The Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality⁴⁰ clearly states that "women are central to successful efforts to manage land sustainably, build resilience, and ensure food security and they play critical roles in the agricultural value chain including the availability, access and utilization of food". Assessments of how gender inequality and its impacts are addressed in LDN implementation would strengthen these actions. Having a clear gender plan of action that can guide implementers on the scope of actions, and the inclusion of a gender component based on these actions in the reporting/monitoring framework for the new 2018–2030 UNCCD Strategy could provide the basis for a consistent review of the progress being made.

63. Past experience in the implementation of the Convention and the case studies above offer some ideas regarding possible areas in which to address gender, in view of the proposed 2018–2030 UNCCD Strategy to build synergies with the sister Rio Conventions and to reinforce realization of the SDGs.

64. Globally, there is a recognition that development programmes succeed when gender concerns are addressed early on, starting with the project inception phase. The design, implementation and monitoring phases of interventions to address LDN need to assess gender needs, identify gender gaps and develop sound gender capacity-building

⁴⁰ Orr, B.J., A.L. Cowie, V.M. Castillo Sanchez, P. Chasek, N.D. Crossman, A. Erlewein, G. Louwagie, M. Maron, G.I. Metternicht, S. Minelli, A.E.

Tengberg, S. Walter, and S. Welton. 2017 Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality, A Report of the Science-Policy

Interface. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Bonn, Germany.

programmes and indicators to ensure that gender issues are addressed throughout the project's life cycle.

65. By building synergies between the LDN activities and the national mechanisms implementing the SDGs, implementers may be able to gather relevant data about the impact they are making in promoting gender equality through LDN implementation. Through collaboration with the Rio Conventions, specifically, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Environment Facility, and with other relevant United Nations agencies, the Convention can identify areas for joint action that accelerate women's empowerment and the achievement of the Convention's strategic objectives. Such actions could be prioritized for action. Stakeholders can also draw on the best practices from these processes to enhance implementation.

66. The brief SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis presented below in table 2 provides an idea of the opportunities and challenges Parties can expect in future attempts to mainstream gender within the context of the 2018–2030 UNCCD Strategy.

Table 2

A SWOT Analysis of the Potential for Gender Mainstreaming in UNCCD

Dimension	Analysis
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convention and COP decisions provide a solid legal framework for promoting gender equality Potential exists for collaboration with the sister Rio Conventions The global agenda on gender has created a strong momentum to action The mechanisms established to implement the Convention have enormous potential for gender mainstreaming and supporting the participation of women's groups
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat gender machinery is still in a developmental phase Collaboration among sister agencies is a challenge due to differing priorities Gender mainstreaming, analysis of capacities and coordination among implementing agents in the field need to be strengthened
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global consensus exists on the key gender issues that are relevant to the Convention The majority of UNCCD staff recognize the need for gender equality in their work (based on an informal internal survey) Partnership and collaboration mechanisms with strategic United Nations agencies exist Financing agents of sustainable development are developing incentives to promote gender equality in development projects and programmes Complementarities among the sister Rio Conventions offer possibilities for collaboration
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial unpredictability of support for gender programmes Climate change effects on existing work can impact prioritization A changing external environment with budget cuts to development resources and women's initiatives could affect reporting and motivation, and roll back gains made