



United Nations

ICCD/COP(13)/L.14



Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.: Limited
14 September 2017

Original: English

Conference of the Parties

Thirteenth session

Ordos, China, 6–16 September 2017

Agenda item 5

Special segment

The Ordos Declaration

Draft decision submitted by the President of the Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties,

1. *Welcomes* the Ordos Declaration with appreciation;
2. *Decides* to include the Ordos Declaration as an annex to this decision.

GE.17-16056(E)



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Annex

The Ordos Declaration

We, the Ministers and high-level representatives, gathered for the high-level segment at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), held on the 11–12 September 2017 in Ordos at the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China,

Expressing our sincere appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China for its hospitality and to the secretariat of the UNCCD for the organization of the high-level session,

Welcoming the commitment of the Government of the People's Republic of China to work jointly with Parties to combat desertification, drought and sand and dust storms, especially in Asia and Africa, and to provide support to the “Belt and Road Cooperative Mechanism for Combating Desertification”, a multi stakeholder partnership that promotes sustainable development and a green economy for land degradation neutrality in the region and beyond through sharing of experience, capacity building and demonstration projects,

Confirming that desertification/land degradation and drought are major environmental, economic and social challenges for global sustainable development in particular for poverty, poor health, lack of food security, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, reduced resilience to climate change and forced migration,

Recalling that poverty is a global challenge and that there is a vicious cycle of poverty and desertification/land degradation and drought affecting, in particular, rural people and local communities,

Recognizing the need to ensure the sustainable provision of ecosystem functions and services for food security and sustainable development,

Deeply concerned about the impact of desertification/land degradation and drought on the most vulnerable people (including youth, children and the elderly; indigenous peoples and local communities; persons with disabilities; poor farmers and migrants) depending on national circumstances,

Noting The Windhoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Drought in Africa and *considering* that drought is a complex, natural hazard negatively affecting the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable and requiring effective and enhanced drought risk preparedness and resilience at all levels,

Considering sand and dust storms, and the resulting loss of fertile soil, as an emerging, cross-sectoral, transboundary challenge that is exacerbated by unsustainable land management and water use that can aggravate existing environmental challenges,

Recognizing that climate change is a serious global threat that should be taken into account for the implementation of the UNCCD,

Recognizing the importance of the land, water and forestry sector in mitigating and adapting to climate change, and *noting* that the preamble to the Paris Agreement, adopted at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, recognizes the importance of the conservation and enhancement, as appropriate, of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases,

Emphasizing the important role of combating desertification/land degradation and drought in achieving other related Sustainable Development Goals (such as those related to poverty, food security, environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources) and for reducing risks and vulnerabilities to natural hazards,

Reaffirming our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3 to strive to achieve a land degradation neutral world,

Reaffirming also the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recalling the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2011–2020,

Welcoming the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in April 2017, which contributes to preventing desertification,

Noting the Durban Declaration on the 2050 Vision for Forests and Forestry, adopted at the fourteenth World Forestry Congress in September 2015,

Further noting the *G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* adopted at the G20 Hangzhou Summit in September 2016,

Reiterating our strong commitment to the effective implementation of the UNCCD,

Welcoming the work done to formulate a 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the UNCCD as a solid basis for our future prosperity and resilience,

Welcoming national efforts to set voluntary targets to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030,

Reaffirming the importance of government leadership, multi-stakeholder partnerships and increasing private engagement for the sustainable management, restoration and rehabilitation of ecosystems, biodiversity and land,

Acknowledging the importance of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, sound policies and incentives, good governance and the rule of law to improving land governance for sustainable land management and access to ownership and control over land, and *encouraging* countries to give due consideration to the dissemination, promotion and implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts towards transformation of current production and consumption patterns in order to become more resource-efficient, socially inclusive, environmental friendly and environmentally sustainable,

Recognizing the value of knowledge, education, science and new technology to sustainable development and good land management, including making use of, inter alia, the Voluntary Guidelines on Sustainable Soil Management of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *emphasizing* the importance of science-based decision-making and that therefore science and technology to combat desertification/land degradation and drought should be further promoted, and *welcoming* the organization of the Technology Fair at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD,

Convinced that sustainable land management practices that rehabilitate and restore the land have long-term positive impacts for the society and *further convinced* that diverse multi-stakeholder participation from all sectors of society (in particular civil society organizations,

philanthropic organizations, the private sector, scientific community, municipalities, women, indigenous peoples and local communities and youth) will be crucial to secure these benefits and achieve the objectives of the Convention,

Stressing the importance of the involvement of civil society organizations in the implementation of the Convention and its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework,

Highlighting the importance of full and effective participation of both men and women in decision-making at all levels and *reaffirming* our commitment to achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls,

Acknowledging the call, championed by civil society, for better access, control and stewardship over land, including strengthening tenure security, access and user rights for women and men, in particular the poor and vulnerable, as well as indigenous peoples and local communities, as a critical element of sustainable development,

Noting the efforts of Parties to support communities in affected areas and to offer decent employment opportunities to vulnerable individuals, leading to greater resilience and prosperity, by rehabilitating degraded land,

1. *Welcome* the 2018-2030 Strategic Framework of the UNCCD;
2. *Commit to facilitate*, for Parties that wish to do so, the voluntary land degradation neutrality target-setting process, and to *provide* sufficient support to national efforts to turn defined land degradation neutrality targets into effective projects and equitable action;
3. *Encourage* those Parties that have not yet done so to consider using voluntary land degradation neutrality targets as an effective tool to drive UNCCD implementation at the national level;
4. *Invite* all stakeholders in a position to do so to facilitate scientific and technical support for Parties that wish to implement and follow-up on their voluntary land degradation neutrality target at national and local levels, with a particular focus on strengthening the technical capacities of the most affected countries, taking advantage of the guidance offered by the Committee on Science and Technology and Science-Policy Interface;
5. *Pledge* to further integrate sustainable land management objectives and practices into relevant policies, plans and investments in order to contribute to achieving land degradation neutrality;
6. *Welcome* the progress made in mobilizing public and private sector resources, including the establishment of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund (LDN Fund), and *invite* the private sector and other stakeholders to step up investments to achieve land degradation neutrality at national level;
7. *Encourage* the public and private sector to continue to invest in developing technologies, methods and tools to combat desertification/land degradation and drought in different regions, and to boost knowledge exchange (including of traditional knowledge, with the consent of the knowledge holders), capacity building and sharing of technologies;
8. *Emphasize* the need to enhance cooperation with relevant international or regional financial institutions, the private sector and international organizations, develop national capacities on the ground and increase synergies, as appropriate, with the other Rio conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements and processes;
9. *Aim*, as appropriate, to further mobilize resources at all levels and to strengthen funding mechanisms and opportunities to support UNCCD implementation, diversify funding channels in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;

10. *Prioritize*, as appropriate, those initiatives which benefit the most vulnerable and which seek to empower those who have the least capacity to cope with the consequences of desertification/land degradation and drought;
 11. *Encourage* innovative national and regional initiatives that create decent land-based jobs and offer employment opportunities for vulnerable individuals, rehabilitating degraded land in areas affected by desertification/land degradation and drought and its social and economic impacts, and *take note* of initiatives such as The Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel, the 3S Initiative and The Green Dam/Barrage Vert;
 12. *Recognize* the positive steps taken to promote women's and girls' empowerment and *pledge* to address the gender inequalities which undermine progress in the implementation of the Convention by pursuing the full and effective participation of both men and women in planning, decision-making and gender-responsive implementation of the Convention at all levels;
 13. *Promote* approaches which bring together government, private sector and local communities to provide economic and ecosystem services that can be shared by business and local farmers who have previously been affected by land degradation and poverty, for example "green desert economics" demonstrated in Kubuqi Desert, Ordos;
 14. *Invite* local governments, in particular, to collaborate to create inclusive and sustainable cities using sustainable land management approaches and integrated land use planning;
 15. *Urge* a proactive approach to enhance cooperation and coordination at global, regional and sub regional levels to address the causes and impacts of drought and Sand and Dust Storms including through the promotion of sustainable water use and land management, to reduce future risks and the impact of drought and sand and dust storms, while promoting and supporting initiatives to streamline comprehensive drought preparedness, including through monitoring and assessment systems in conjunction with measures that reduce the risk and boost the resilience of climate change-affected and vulnerable communities and ecosystems;
 16. *Promote* the prevention of desertification and further degradation with an integrated landscape approach, including the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded land and sustainable land management.
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