



Conference of the Parties

**Report of the Conference of the Parties on its thirteenth
session, held in Ordos, China from 6 to 16 September 2017**

Part one: proceedings

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I. Opening of the session

A. Opening of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties

1. On 6 September 2017, the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) was opened by His Excellency Cemal Nogay, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs on behalf of COP 12 President His Excellency Veysel Eroğlu, Minister of Forestry and Water Affairs (Turkey) who, pursuant to article 22 of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), delivered a statement.

B. Election of the President

(Agenda item 1 (a))

2. At its 1st meeting, on 6 September 2017, the Conference of the Parties (COP) elected, by acclamation, His Excellency Zhang Jianlong, Minister of State Forestry Administration of China, as President of its thirteenth session.

3. The incoming President made a statement.

C. General statements

4. Also at the 1st meeting, on 6 September 2017, the Governor of the People's Government of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Ms. Bu Xiaolin, made a statement on behalf of the host city.

5. At the same meeting, the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD secretariat made a statement.

6. Also at the 1st meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Ecuador (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Estonia (on behalf of the European Union and its Member States), Kenya (on behalf of the African Group), Bhutan (on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group), Argentina (on behalf of Latin America and Caribbean Group), Italy (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV)) and Armenia (on behalf of the Central and Eastern European Group).

7. A statement was also made by a representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

8. Furthermore, a statement was made by a representative of a non-governmental organization (China Green Foundation).

II. Organizational matters

A. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work, including the sessions of the subsidiary bodies

(Agenda item 1 (b) and (f))

9. The Conference considered agenda item 1 (b) and (f) at its 1st meeting, on 6 September 2017.

10. Following a statement by the President of COP 13, the Conference adopted its agenda and the organization of work as contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/1, as follows:

1. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of the President;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Election of officers other than the President:
 - (i) Election of Vice-Presidents;
 - (ii) Election of the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology;
 - (iii) Election of the Chair of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;
 - (d) Credentials of delegations;
 - (e) Accreditation of intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and representatives from the private sector, and admission of observers;
 - (f) Organization of work, including the sessions of the subsidiary bodies.
2. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: implications for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification:
 - (a) Integration of Sustainable Development Goal 15 and related target 15.3 which states: “to combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world”, into the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;
 - (b) The future strategic framework of the Convention;
 - (c) Implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy and the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010–2020).
3. Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional level:
 - (a) Report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties;
 - (b) Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention – Terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;
 - (c) Addressing particular regional and national conditions;
 - (d) Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies;
 - (e) Securing of additional investments and the relations with financial mechanisms:

- (i) Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Global Environment Facility;
 - (ii) Report of the Global Mechanism.
- 4. Linking scientific knowledge with decision-making: review of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology and its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties.
- 5. Special segment:
 - (a) Parallel ministerial/high-level round tables:
 - (i) Round table 1: Land degradation: a challenge to development, prosperity and peace;
 - (ii) Round table 2: Drought and sand and dust storms: early warning and beyond;
 - (iii) Round table 3: Land degradation neutrality: “From targets to action...what will it take?”;
 - (b) Gender and land rights (a dialogue with civil society);
 - (c) How can local governments help address the challenges of land degradation? (a dialogue with elected and local government representatives);
 - (d) How can the private sector invest to help achieve land degradation neutrality? (a dialogue with the private sector).
- 6. Programme and budget:
 - (a) Programme and budget for the biennium 2018–2019;
 - (b) Financial performance for the Convention trust funds;
 - (c) Report of the Evaluation Office.
- 7. Procedural matters:
 - (a) Participation and involvement of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;
 - (b) Participation and involvement of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the business engagement strategy;
 - (c) Programme of work for the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties.
- 8. Report on the session.

B. Election of officers other than the President

(Agenda item 1 (c))

11. The Conference considered this agenda item at its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 6 and 9 September 2017, and elected the following officers for its thirteenth session:

Vice-Presidents:

- Mr. Richard Mwendandu (Kenya)
- Mr. Abdessamad Hajibi (Morocco)
- Ms. Karma Dema Dorji (Bhutan)
- Mr. Jorge Heider (Argentina)
- Mr. Trevor Benn (Guyana)
- Mr. Andrei Kuzmich (Belarus)
- Mr. Valeriu Cazac (Republic of Moldova)
- Mr. Damien Barchiche (France)
- Ms. Barbara De Rosa-Joynt (United States of America).

12. At the 2nd meeting, on 9 September 2017, the Conference appointed Mr. Trevor Benn (Guyana) as Rapporteur of the thirteenth session.

Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology

13. At the 10th meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Conference elected Mr. Omer Muhammad (Pakistan) as Chair of the forthcoming fourteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology.

Chair of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

14. At the 10th meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Conference elected Mr. Samuel Mabilin Contreras (Philippines) as Chair of the forthcoming seventeenth and eighteenth sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

C. Credentials of delegations

(Agenda item 1 (d))

15. At the 9th meeting, on 14 September 2017, the Conference considered the report on credentials of delegations, as contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/20, and the recommendation contained therein.

16. At the same meeting, the Conference adopted a draft decision contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/L.3 approving the report.

17. The COP, on the basis of the report of the Bureau of the COP and additional credentials provided by Cambodia, Malta, Zambia and Zimbabwe, accepted the credentials of Parties attending the session.

D. Accreditation of intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and representatives from the private sector, and admission of observers

(Agenda item 1 (e))

18. At the 1st meeting, on 6 September 2017, following a statement by a representative of the UNCCD, the Conference decided to accredit as observers the national, international, governmental and intergovernmental organizations listed in annex I, the non-governmental and civil society organizations listed in annex II and the business and industry entities listed in annex III of document ICCD/COP(13)/17.

E. Committee on Science and Technology

19. The thirteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST 13) was convened under the chairmanship of Mr. Hamid Custovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The Committee held six meetings, from 6 to 9 September 2017.

20. At the 1st meeting, on 6 September 2017, the Committee adopted its agenda as contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/CST/1, and approved the organization of work for the session as contained in annex II to that document.

21. At the same meeting, the Committee appointed the Vice-Chair of the CST, Mr. Jean-Luc Chotte (France), as Rapporteur of CST 13.

22. Also at the same meeting, the Committee agreed to establish a contact group and appointed Mr. Jean-Luc Chotte (France) as Facilitator of the contact group.

23. At its 5th meeting, on 9 September 2017, the Committee elected by acclamation the following as Vice-Chairs for its forthcoming fourteenth session: Mr. Carl Fiati (Ghana), Ms. María Angélica Fernández (Colombia), Mr. Ahmet Senyaz (Turkey) and Mr. German Kust (Russian Federation).

24. The Committee submitted six recommendations to the COP. The Conference took action on these recommendations at its 9th meeting, on 14 September 2017.

F. Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

25. The sixteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention was convened under the chairmanship of the Chair, Mr. Aliyu Bananda (Nigeria). The Committee held five meetings, from 7 to 13 September 2017.

26. At the 1st meeting, on 7 September 2017, the Committee adopted its agenda as contained in document ICCD/CRIC(16)/1 and approved the organization of work for the session as contained in annex II to that document.

27. At the same meeting, the Vice-Chair of the CRIC, Mr. Raymond Baptiste (Grenada), was appointed Rapporteur of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

28. Also at the same meeting, the Committee agreed to establish a contact group and appointed Mr. Trevor Benn (Guyana) as Facilitator of the contact group.

29. The Committee submitted six recommendations to the COP. The Conference took action on these recommendations at its 9th meeting, on 14 September 2017.

G. Committee of the Whole

30. At its 1st meeting, on 6 September 2017, the Conference decided to establish a Committee of the Whole and to allocate to the Committee the agenda items listed in paragraph 15 of document ICCD/COP(13)/1.

31. In addition, during the second meeting of the Committee, on 8 September 2017, two draft proposals were tabled for consideration by the COW under the agenda item: Procedural matters-Any other matters deemed to be appropriate.

32. At its 1st meeting, on 6 September 2017, the Conference designated Ms. Nosipho Ngcaba (South Africa) as Chair of the Committee of the Whole. The Committee held four meetings, from 6 to 15 September 2017.

33. At the 1st meeting, the Committee established two contact groups: (a) a contact group on programme and budget matters, under the facilitation of Mr. Patrick Wegerdt (European Commission); and (b) a contact group on COW matters other than the programme and budget, under the facilitation of Mr. Luis Domingos Constantino (Angola).

34. At its fourth meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Committee submitted 15 recommendations to the COP.

35. A statement was made by the representative of the European Union in connection with the adopted draft decision on the future strategic framework of the Convention (document ICCD/COP(13)/L.18), and requested to be reflected in the report of the session.

36. While the European Union reiterated that it joined the consensus for the adoption of the said draft decision, it recalled that the COP, in the decision adopting the strategic framework of the Convention, reaffirmed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. In that regard, the European Union underlined that the interpretation and application of the Strategic Framework must be fully aligned with those documents and that the language used in the Strategic Framework may not be used as a precedent in other fora. In particular, the European Union stressed that the expected impact 5.3¹ must be read in line with paragraph 120 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.²

37. The Conference took action on the recommendations of the Committee at its 10th meeting, on 15 September 2017.

H. Attendance

38. The thirteenth session of the COP was attended by representatives of the following 144 Parties to the Convention:

¹ Document ICCD/COP(13)/21/Add.1, decision 7/COP.13, Annex, Chapter III, Strategic objectives and expected impacts.

² Addis Ababa Action Agenda: <www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf>.

Algeria	Germany	Norway
Angola	Ghana	Oman
Antigua and Barbuda	Grenada	Pakistan
Argentina	Guatemala	Panama
Armenia	Guinea	Papua New Guinea
Australia	Guinea-Bissau	Peru
Bangladesh	Guyana	Philippines
Belarus	Haiti	Poland
Belgium	Hungary	Portugal
Benin	Iceland	Republic of Korea
Bhutan	India	Republic of Moldova
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Indonesia	Romania
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Russian Federation
Botswana	Iraq	Rwanda
Brazil	Israel	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Burkina Faso	Italy	Saint Lucia
Cambodia	Japan	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Cameroon	Jordan	Samoa
Canada	Kazakhstan	Sao Tome and Principe
Cape Verde	Kenya	Saudi Arabia
Central African Republic	Kiribati	Senegal
Chad	Kuwait	Serbia
China	Kyrgyzstan	Seychelles
Colombia	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Slovakia
Comoros	Lebanon	Somalia
Cook Islands	Lesotho	South Africa
Costa Rica	Liberia	South Sudan
Croatia	Luxembourg	Sri Lanka
Cuba	Madagascar	Sudan
Czechia	Malawi	Swaziland
Côte d'Ivoire	Malaysia	Switzerland
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mali	Syrian Arab Republic
Dominica	Malta	Tajikistan
Dominican Republic	Marshall Islands	Thailand
Ecuador	Mauritania	Togo
Egypt	Mauritius	Tonga
El Salvador	Mexico	Tunisia
Equatorial Guinea	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Turkey
Eritrea	Mongolia	Uganda
Estonia	Montenegro	Ukraine
Ethiopia	Morocco	United Republic of Tanzania
European Union	Mozambique	United States of America
Fiji	Namibia	Uruguay
Finland	Nepal	Uzbekistan
France	Netherlands	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Gabon	Nicaragua	Viet Nam
Gambia	Niger	Zambia
Georgia	Nigeria	Zimbabwe

39. The session was also attended by observers from the following States not Party to the Convention:

Holy See

Palestine

40. The following United Nations organs, organizations and programmes, offices and specialized agencies were represented:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Global Environment Facility

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

International Fund for Agricultural Development

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

United Nations Capital Development Fund

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Forum on Forests

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

United Nations Office for Project Services

United Nations University

United Nations Women

World Bank

World Food Programme

World Meteorological Organization

41. The session was also attended by representatives of 16 intergovernmental organizations and 120 civil society organizations.

I. Documentation

42. The documents submitted for the consideration of the COP at its thirteenth session are listed in annex V.

III. Inclusion of activities of non-governmental organizations within the official programme of work of the Conference of the Parties: open dialogue session

(Agenda item 1 (b) and (f))

43. The Conference held an open dialogue session under agenda item 1 (b) and (f) at its 2nd meeting, on 9 September 2017, on the theme “Land and Climate”.

44. The meeting was opened and moderated by Ms. Liu Fangfei, UNCCD Dryland Ambassador.

45. Following a statement by the keynote speaker, Mr. Bariş Karapınar, Lead Author of the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), presentations were made by the following panellists: Mr. Ahmed Sekou Diallo, Executive Director of the Association de Formation et d'Appui au Développement from Mali (on behalf of the African Group), Ms. Vu Thi Bich Hop, Executive Director of the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development from Viet Nam (on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group), Mr. Juan Riet, Professor and Technical Advisor from Uruguay (on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group), Ms. Sophiko Akhobadze, Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus from Georgia (on behalf of the Eastern European Group), Mr. Robert Tansey, Advisor at the Nature Conservancy (on behalf of the Western Europe and Others Group), Mr. Andrew Lesa from New Zealand (on behalf of the Youth).

46. In the ensuing discussion, the panellists responded to comments made and questions posed by the representatives of the civil society of India, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Senegal, Chad, Iraq, Uruguay, China, Nepal, Cabo Verde, Namibia, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), South Africa, Peru, Cuba, Republic of Korea, Morocco, Niger, Liberia and the State of Palestine and by a representative of UNDP.

IV. Special segment

(Agenda item 5)

A. Parallel ministerial/high-level round tables

47. At its 3rd to 8th meetings, on 11 and 12 September 2017, the Conference held a special high-level segment with opening and closing meetings, three parallel ministerial/high-level round tables and three interactive dialogue sessions under the agenda item.

48. At the 3rd meeting, on 11 September 2017, the President of the Conference opened the special high-level segment and made a statement.

49. At the same meeting, His Excellency Wang Yang, Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China read a message from His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China and delivered a keynote speech.

50. At the same meeting, a video message from the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres was presented.

51. Also at the same meeting, the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD made a statement.

52. At the same meeting, statements on behalf of regional and interest groups were made by: Her Excellency María Victoria Chiriboga Nielsen, Undersecretary of State for Climate Change of the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China); Mr. Richard Mwendandu, Director of International Environmental Agreements of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya (on behalf of the African Group); Ms. Rawea Mizel Mahmood Al-Azawi, UNCCD National Focal Point and Director General of the Natural Resources Management and Land Degradation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture of Iraq (on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group); Dr. Ion Perju, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Moldova on Agro-Industrial and Public Administration Issues (on behalf of the Eastern European Group); Her Excellency Lina Dolores Pohl Alfaro, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador

(on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group); His Excellency Siim Kiisler, Minister of the Environment of Estonia (on behalf of the European Union).

53. Statements were also made by Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, from the Mbororo pastoralist community of Chad (on behalf of civil society organizations) and by Ms. Liu Yang from the Chinese Academy of Forestry (representing the Chinese youth delegates and the global youth representatives).

54. Statements were also made by special guests Ms. Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Archbishop Joseph Chennoth, Apostolic Nuncio to Japan (on behalf of His Holiness Pope Francis).

55. At the 4th meeting, on 11 September 2017, the Conference held three closed parallel ministerial/high-level round tables under agenda item 5 (a), as follows:

1. Round table 1: Land degradation: a challenge to development, prosperity and peace

56. Round table 1 was chaired by His Excellency Sydney Alexander Samuels Milson, Minister of Environment and Natural Resource of Guatemala.

2. Round table 2: Drought and sand and dust storms: early warning and beyond

57. Round table 2 was chaired by His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Board–Director General of the General Authority for the Environment of Kuwait.

3. Round table 3: Land degradation neutrality: “From targets to action...what will it take?”

58. Round table 3 was chaired by Her Excellency Ndahimananjara Bénédicte Johanita, Minister of Environment, Ecology, and Forests, Madagascar.

59. The Chairpersons’ summary reports on the three parallel ministerial/high-level round tables are included in Annex I to the current report.

60. From its 5th to 7th meetings, the Conference held three interactive dialogue sessions under agenda items 5 (b), (c), and (d), respectively, as follows:

B. Gender and land rights (a dialogue with civil society)

61. At the 5th meeting, on 12 September 2017, the Conference held the first interactive dialogue of the special high-level segment under agenda item 5 (b), which was moderated by Her Excellency Barbara Thomson, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs of South Africa.

62. The declaration of civil society organizations attending the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties is included in Annex II to the current report.

C. How can local governments help address the challenges of land degradation? (a dialogue with elected and local government representatives)

63. At the 6th meeting, on 12 September 2017, the Conference held the second interactive dialogue of the special high-level segment under agenda item 5 (c), which was moderated by His Excellency Paweł Sałek, Secretary of State for Environment of Poland.

64. The moderator's summary report on the interactive dialogue with elected and local government representatives is included in Annex I to the current report.

D. How can the private sector invest to help achieve land degradation neutrality? (a dialogue with the private sector)

65. At the 7th meeting, on 12 September 2017, the Conference held the third interactive dialogue of the special high-level segment under agenda item 5 (d), which was moderated by Mr. Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director General for Environment at the European Commission.

66. The declaration from the Sustainable Land Management Business Forum is included in Annex III to the current report.

67. At the 8th meeting, on 12 September 2017, the President of the Conference closed the special high-level segment. The meeting heard reports by the respective Chairs of the three closed parallel ministerial/high-level round tables held under agenda item 5 (a). The outcomes of the three interactive dialogues held under agenda item 5 (b), (c) and (d) were also presented.

V. Decisions and resolution adopted by the Conference of the Parties

68. At its 9th and 10th meetings on 14 and 15 September 2017, the Conference adopted 37 decisions and one resolution.

A. Decisions taken at the recommendation of the President of the Conference of the Parties

69. At the recommendation of the President of its thirteenth session, the Conference adopted the following decisions:

- 24/COP.13 Designation of a Convention secretariat and arrangements for its functioning: administrative and support arrangements
- 26/COP.13 Special segment
- 27/COP.13 The Ordos Declaration
- 32/COP.13 Declaration of civil society organizations attending the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties
- 33/COP.13 Declaration from the Sustainable Land Management Business Forum
- 34/COP.13 Declaration of the Youth Forum
- 35/COP.13 Programme of work for the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties
- 36/COP.13 Date and venue of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties

70. A statement was made by the representative of the United States of America to explain their position on document ICCD/COP(13)/L.14 welcoming the Ordos Declaration and underscoring that it did not affect obligations under international law.

71. The United States recognized the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a global framework for sustainable development and as the United States policies were at that

time under review, the United States was unable to affirm all aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United States emphasized that countries must work towards implementation in accordance with their own national circumstances and priorities.

72. Regarding the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests,³ the United States stressed that the plan was voluntary and did not alter or affect rights or obligations under international law. The United States emphasized that the World Trade Organization was the appropriate forum for negotiation of trade issues and the strategic plan did not represent an agreement on such issues and did not interpret or alter any World Trade Organization agreements or decisions. Similarly, the United States dissociated itself from all references to transfer of technology in the plan, notably, paragraphs 15 and 58b. With those clarifications, the United States joined the consensus on welcoming the Ordos Declaration and requested that the statement be reflected in the report of the session.

B. Decisions taken at the recommendation of the Bureau

73. At the recommendation of the Bureau of the COP at its thirteenth session, the Conference adopted the following decisions:

25/COP.13 Credentials of delegations

C. Decisions taken at the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole

74. At the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, the Conference adopted the following decisions:

- 1/COP.13 Multi-year workplans of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies
- 3/COP.13 Integration of Sustainable Development Goal 15 and related target 15.3 which states: “to combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world”, into the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- 4/COP.13 Review of progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy and the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010–2020)
- 5/COP.13 Participation and involvement of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- 6/COP.13 Participation and involvement of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the business engagement strategy
- 7/COP.13 The future strategic framework of the Convention
- 8/COP.13 Enhancing the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the enhancement, strengthening and promotion of capacity building
- 9/COP.13 Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies

³ Please see document: E/RES/2017/4 at www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2017/4.

- 10/COP.13 Programme and budget for the biennium 2018–2019
- 11/COP.13 Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Global Environment Facility
- 13/COP.13 Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention – Terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
- 28/COP.13 The positive role that measures taken under the Convention can play to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that causes migration
- 29/COP.13 Policy advocacy on drought
- 30/COP.13 Gender equality and women’s empowerment for the enhanced and effective implementation of the Convention
- 31/COP.13 Policy Advocacy Framework to combat Sand and Dust Storms

D. Decisions taken at the recommendation of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

75. At the recommendation of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, the Conference adopted the following decisions:

- 2/COP.13 Development and implementation of strategies through national action programmes to achieve the objectives of the Convention in light of target 15.3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- 12/COP.13 Collaboration with the Global Environment Facility
- 14/COP.13 Mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Convention
- 15/COP.13 Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties
- 16/COP.13 Programme of work for the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
- 17/COP.13 Date and venue of the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

E. Decisions taken at the recommendation of the Committee on Science and Technology

76. At the recommendation of the Committee on Science and Technology, the Conference adopted the following decisions:

- 18/COP.13 Follow-up on the work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2016–2017
- 19/COP.13 Improving the efficiency of the Science-Policy Interface
- 20/COP.13 Promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub
- 21/COP.13 Work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2018–2019

- 22/COP.13 Cooperation with other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies
- 23/COP.13 Programme of work for the fourteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology

F. Resolution adopted by the Conference of the Parties

77. At its 10th meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Conference adopted the following resolution at the recommendation of Algeria:

- 1/COP.13 Expression of gratitude to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China

VI. Conclusion of the session

A. Adoption of the report of the Conference of the Parties on its thirteenth session

(Agenda item 8)

78. At its 10th meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Conference adopted the draft report on its thirteenth session (ICCD/COP(13)/L.19) and authorized the Rapporteur, with the assistance of the secretariat, to complete the report, as appropriate.

B. Closure of the session

79. Also at the 10th meeting, closing remarks were made by the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD.

80. Statements were also made by Ecuador (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), a representative of the EU, Kenya (on behalf of the African Group), Iraq (on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group), Peru (on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group), Belarus (on behalf of the Central and Eastern European States) and Egypt (on behalf of the Arab Group).

81. A statement was also made by a representative of the non-governmental organization Asociación para la Investigación y Desarrollo Integral of Peru (on behalf of civil society organizations).

82. His Excellency Zhang Jianlong, Minister of State Forestry Administration of China and President of COP 13, made concluding remarks and declared closed the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD.

Annex I

Summary of the high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth session

Round table 1: Land degradation: a challenge to development, prosperity and peace

Chair: H.E. Mr Sydney Alexander Samuels Milson, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Guatemala.

Moderator: Mr Manoel Sobral Filho, Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

Keynotes: H.E. Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, Minister of the Interior of Nigeria, and Mr Alhagie Camara, President of the Association of Gambia Returnees from the Backway.

1. Around 70 participants attended round table one to discuss the interlinkages between land degradation, sustainable development and peace. The keynote speakers identified drivers, as well as the potential responses to forced migration, relating to the work of the Convention.
2. Louise Arbour, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for International Migration (video-message), opened the discussions, stressing the importance of environmental drivers such as desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) within the global migration debate that led to the global compact on safe, regular and orderly migration. She recalled that environmental drivers are rarely the sole cause of migration but are often closely linked and exacerbate other political, economic and social drivers.
3. H.E. Mr Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, Minister of the Interior of Nigeria, highlighted the significant threats to peace and stability in his country as a result of DLDD. He underlined the relationship between DLDD, conflict and instability. He noted, in particular, the growing issue of local conflict among pastoralists and farmers and the expansion of terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, in degraded areas of the country. He acknowledged the potential of land management and youth employment to stabilize vulnerable areas.
4. The third speaker, Mr Alhagie Amadou Camara, recounted his harrowing story as a migrant who tried to cross the Sahara desert. He described the harsh economic and environmental conditions that led to his decision to leave his home country and then his dangerous and painful journey. In sharing his story, he also expressed his willingness to restart his life back in the Gambia. The speaker founded an association of returnees to rehabilitate lands in order to create income opportunities for migrants.
5. During the discussion, ministers and delegates described how land degradation is creating serious challenges for development and destabilizing communities. They shared positive experiences of land-based projects and initiatives that have helped community and social cohesion as well as poverty eradication.
6. Several national, intergovernmental and multilateral initiatives were described and evoked, including the Great Green Wall, the Lake Chad Initiative, Terrafrica, the 3N Initiative (Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens), the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia, the G5 Sahel and the Initiative for Sustainability, Stability and Security (3S) in Africa. In this context, increasing resilience and creating new jobs for vulnerable groups, youth,

women, smallholders and people living in extreme poverty was stressed, in particular, by a number of speakers as a vital component of a successful initiative.

7. To describe the challenges faced by the very poor, one minister quoted Eric Eckholm, “*Struggling week by week to survive, caught in endless circles of hunger, exploitation and disease, the poor have no time to worry about global environmental problems, yet in many ways, they are more affected by environmental quality than the affluent.*”

8. Other interventions focused on the specific challenges faced by fragile states. These included internal displacement and migration driven by drought and other natural disasters and the increased tension and sometimes even conflict among land users at local level over the availability of productive land. The need for improved access to land and greater tenure security was highlighted as a potential response by a number of Parties. Meanwhile, the need to rehabilitate degraded land to provide alternatives to forced migration and create employment opportunities was recognized as a key element to community stabilization and development, especially for the reintegration of returnees.

9. Parties highlighted a number of areas for action. Coordination across sectors and within government should be enhanced with greater inclusion of local government to deliver better policies and an increased exchange of good practice. The need for increased attention to vulnerable groups, a participatory approach and more political commitment was expressed. It was stressed that evidence of the impact of land degradation on instability should be better documented. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations stressed the importance of preventive action with the statement that, “*the optimists invented the plane, the pessimists invented the parachute. We want to be among the ones who invented the plane*”.

10. Finally, some Parties acknowledged that the topic of migration has gained increased importance in the context of the implementation of the Convention.

Round table 2: Drought and sand and dust storms: early warning and beyond

Chair: H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Board and General Director of the General Authority for the Environment (Kuwait).

Moderator: Erik Solheim, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment).

Keynotes: H.E. Ms Lina Dolores Pohl Alfaro, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, and H.E. Ms Oppah Charm Zvipange Muchinguri-Kashiri, Minister of Environment and Climate of Zimbabwe.

11. Around 80 participants attended round table two to discuss how to drive forward the agenda on drought and sand and dust storms (SDS), and promote the development of national drought policies.

12. In her keynote speech, H.E. Ms Lina Dolores Pohl Alfaro, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, stressed that “*drought is a dynamic problem that needs systematic action*”. El Salvador has experienced drought for the last six consecutive years which has led to negative consequences for livelihoods, health, agriculture and natural resources, with 90 per cent of river flows lost. The Minister made three proposals for enhancing drought preparedness. She proposed: 1) strengthening early warning and monitoring systems, complemented by risk management mechanisms; 2) a national programme for the restoration of ecosystem services, including land use maps at high

resolution, prioritizing areas for restoration; and 3) rethinking agriculture with improved, climate-smart agricultural practices.

13. The second keynote speaker, H.E. Ms Oppah Charm Zvipange Muchinguri-Kashiri of Zimbabwe, explained that drought is a complex natural hazard with multiple impacts on livelihoods, food security, the economy and ecosystems. Meanwhile, SDS is increasing because of unsustainable land management.

14. Participants stressed that drought and SDS are global problems requiring global solutions. The transboundary nature of drought and SDS requires global and regional cooperation. At the same time, harnessing synergies among the three Rio conventions to address these challenges and their impacts on the land sector was considered a cornerstone of an effective response. There should be coordination and cooperation among stakeholders, sectors and institutions in order to avoid duplication of efforts, minimize trade-offs, and increase efficient use of resources.

15. In this respect, the role of the land as a nature-based solution for drought and SDS was highlighted. It was noted that degraded land is less resilient to these phenomena and, as one delegate pointed out, *“a nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself”*. Parties acknowledged that by adopting integrated and sustainable land/water management at the appropriate landscape or watershed scale, the land’s health and resilience to these phenomena would be enhanced. Land degradation neutrality (LDN) was considered a suitable tool for addressing drought, SDS and resilience building.

16. Parties highlighted that an enhanced scientific knowledge base and data for addressing the multi-dimensional aspects of drought and SDS is needed. A global forum on drought and SDS was proposed by one participant to facilitate the exchange of know-how, technology and experience. There was particular interest in technology transfer and the use of indigenous knowledge. With particular reference to SDS, Parties encouraged the inclusion of the issue in the future work plan of the Science-Policy Interface and proposed the development and provision of technical guidance for SDS policy and implementation for Parties.

17. The most controversial issue was that of the “binding protocol for drought and SDS”, with diverging views among participants on this topic. While the concept received support from the floor with participants arguing that a globally binding protocol could facilitate international cooperation, other participants expressed their preference for using existing mechanisms so as to focus on action and partnerships. *“What we need is action and not negotiation,”* said one delegate. In this regard, some Parties expressed their support for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) positive agenda on drought.

18. There was a consensus that strong partnerships should emerge to support implementation of the work of the UNCCD in this area. According to some participants, the UNCCD should, in particular, enhance its partnership with the World Meteorological Organization and United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The important role of civil society organizations in drought preparedness was emphasized with a view to promoting women’s participation and mobile education, and building the knowledge base of local communities. This would lead to improved public awareness, enhanced local capacity and the wider uptake of good practices on drought and SDS.

19. Special mention was given to promoting the engagement of smallholders and local businesses for effective drought early warning and communication systems. Participants stressed that closer interaction between urban and rural areas and the engagement of the private sector is crucial for enhanced efficiency and the mobilization of innovative financing and resources.

Round table 3: Land degradation neutrality: “From targets to action ... what will it take?”

Chair: Ms. Ndahimananjara Bénédicte Johanita, Minister of Environment, Ecology and Forests, Madagascar.

Moderator: Ms. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Keynote speakers: Mr. Gustavo Alberto Fonseca, Global Environment Facility, Director of Programs, and Mr. Christopher Knowles, Head of the Climate Change & Environment Division at the European Investment Bank.

20. Around 150 participants attended round table 3 to discuss how to turn the land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets into action. The discussion involved interventions by more than 30 delegates, including several ministers and representatives from international organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations.

21. The Chair of the round table, Ms. Ndahimananjara Bénédicte Johanita, Minister of Environment, Ecology and Forests of Madagascar, opened the session by highlighting the strong political commitment of Madagascar to achieving LDN and linking this with the country’s climate and biodiversity priorities. Ms. Paşca Palmer then moderated the session, framing the conversation around three elements that may be required to move from LDN targets to action, namely: transformative projects, increased financial resources and increased private sector engagement in financing. She noted that “Setting targets is important but will make a difference only if actions on the ground are happening.”

22. In his keynote, Mr. Fonseca confirmed that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is ready to continue its support for the LDN Target-Setting Programme and reinforce capacity at the national level, as well as capitalize on the potential of the private sector. During the 7th Replenishment of the GEF (GEF 7), there will be a focus on transformative change to address the drivers of environmental degradation, and Mr. Fonseca highlighted the potential of synergies between the three Rio conventions.

23. Mr. Christopher Knowles’ keynote outlined three important factors to be considered: political leadership and a stable policy framework; the bankability of projects; and the relationship between public and private capital.

24. The floor was opened with interventions by Brazil and India announcing their intention to join the group of countries committed to setting voluntary LDN targets. With these announcements, it was noted that, to date, 112 countries have now embarked on a process of establishing LDN targets.

25. In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn from the discussions.

26. **Strong political commitment is required.** Participants widely acknowledge that the highest possible level of political commitment is the key ingredient for bold action to achieve LDN.

27. **Private capital is the “Holy Grail”.** USD 90 trillion is the estimated pool of private capital looking for investment opportunities. Bridging liquidity with transformative ideas and projects for sustainable development is essential. The crucial elements to mobilize private finance are well-designed projects that are bankable and anchored in a stable and coherent policy framework that provides certainty to investors. This should include strong political commitment towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and good governance. Technical assistance to design transformative projects is needed.

28. **Leveraging scarce public sources is crucial.** Using public resources to leverage private finance is a central part of the equation to tap into the USD 90 trillion pool. Countries welcomed the establishment of the LDN Fund as a concrete example of innovative finance to achieve the SDGs, including LDN. The LDN Fund provides a good example of blended finance and the use of public resources to mobilize impact investments. Public sector expectations for the private sector are high. There is a belief that enterprises should not only be profit-oriented, but should share some of the responsibility for sustainable development.

29. **Silos must be broken.** Transformative action also means synergies. It means projects and programmes that simultaneously deliver on the three Rio conventions and the SDGs by bringing together national agendas. Achieving LDN targets also means advancing the achievement of climate and biodiversity targets.

Interactive dialogue 2: How can local governments help address the challenges of land degradation? (a dialogue with elected and local government representatives)

Moderator: Mr. Pawel Salek, Secretary of State, Ministry of the Environment, Poland.

Panelists: Ms. Shi Yanjie, Vice Mayor of Ordos, China; Mr. Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of Bonn, Germany; Mr. Ahmed Aziz Diallo, Mayor of Dori, Burkina Faso; Mr. Manuel António Lopes de Araújo, Mayor of Quelimane, Mozambique; Mr. Roland Ries, Mayor of Strasbourg, France.

30. In the interactive dialogue 2, mayors, ministers and delegates discussed how municipalities can help address land degradation challenges.

31. Panelists highlighted the numerous challenges cities are facing and underscored the need to create an enabling environment fitting the national context, strengthen technical capacities and mobilize financial resources, including financing mechanisms. The many examples of existing good practices involving cities and/or municipalities give cause to hope for an optimistic future.

32. In the subsequent fruitful dialogue, participants reiterated the need for stronger support and political will for the implementation of the Convention and their commitment to achieve land degradation neutrality at local, national, (sub)regional and international levels.

33. Participants stressed that the issues of desertification and land degradation deserve more global policy attention as well as cooperation and coordination among mayors and other stakeholders. It was noted that the implementation of the global agendas is an important requirement for an effective ecological transition. To achieve this, all stakeholders need to be involved, such as states, cities, the United Nations, civil society and local communities. In this context, delegates reaffirmed the central importance of local governments as the governmental entity that is closest to the people.

34. Many participants considered decentralized cooperation as the best principle to pool experiences, develop best practices and reinforce the necessary governance capacities, and urged the development of appropriate and flexible funding mechanisms available to local governments to facilitate the local implementation of the Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals.

35. With respect to the questions “How can we minimize land use and have livable cities?” and “How can we meet daily needs in a sustainable manner?”, interventions emphasized that the ways in which cities are planned, financed, developed, built, governed

and managed has a direct impact on sustainability and resilience that goes well beyond urban boundaries. While optimizing land use, better land-use planning should aim to create multiple benefits for people, soil and nature.

36. Participants noted that sustainable land management, smart growth and sustainable city planning should go hand-in-hand and underlined the need for a legal framework with clear accountability structures enabling action or non-action to be monitored.

37. “We are now borrowing the land on which we live. One cannot forget the urgency of the situation and should act accordingly.” In this respect, the inclusion of local communities and governments is critical for both combating desertification and achieving land degradation neutrality. With this key message, participants unanimously summarized interactive dialogue 2.

Annex II

Declaration of civil society organizations attending the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties

1. We, civil society organizations (CSOs), representing more than 500 CSOs accredited to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), gathered for the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) held from 6 to 16 September 2017 in Ordos, China, hereby express our appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China and its friendly citizens for hosting us in this beautiful city of Ordos, to the UNCCD secretariat for their unwavering support to CSOs, and to the Governments of China, Switzerland and Turkey for their financial support to the Civil Society Organization Panel (CSO Panel) and for enabling significant CSO participation in COP 13.

2. Civil society welcomes decision 5/COP.13 in support of CSO participation in the UNCCD, and in particular the planned renewal of the CSO Panel. This decision recognizes the vital role played by civil society in realizing the objectives of this Convention, and we welcome the contributions of the accredited CSOs from the host country and from around the world that enriched the discourse in Ordos and contributed to the comprehensive outcomes. The CSOs contributed 18 statements in the course of the COP that also reflected the perspectives of affected populations and the spirit of Article 5 (d) of the Convention, which obliges Parties to "facilitate the participation of local populations, particularly women and youth, with the support of non-governmental organizations, in efforts to combat desertification".

3. We endorse the recommendations of the CSO Panel regarding land rights contained in chapter III of document ICCD/COP(13)/15, and note that Article 8 of the Convention requires the inclusion in national action programmes of measures to improve the institutional and regulatory framework of natural resource management to provide security of land tenure for local populations. In this context, we further welcome the inclusion in decision 5/COP.13 of the invitation to Parties to consider the recommendations made by the CSO Panel regarding land rights. In this context, we urge Parties to ensure the full participation of local land users in the rehabilitation and sustainable management of land and, in this context, recall:

(a) That the lack of enforceable land user rights and tenure security is a significant driver of land degradation and migration, and is a triggering factor of conflicts;

(b) The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly its Article 26, stating that indigenous peoples have the right to the lands which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired and that countries shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, and Article 32 referring to the right to free, prior and informed consent;

(c) The General Recommendation No 34 on the rights of rural women of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which obliges Parties to take all necessary measures, including temporary special measures, to achieve the substantive equality of rural women in relation to land and natural resources;

(d) The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, which provide a sound and legitimate framework for good land governance and strengthened land tenure rights.

4. Civil society calls upon Parties to actively promote effective partnerships with CSOs for the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and to support the engagement of local land and natural resources users, particularly women, indigenous peoples, pastoralists and youth in the operationalization of land degradation neutrality (LDN).

5. We therefore welcome the decision to adopt the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework (decision 7/COP.13) and its call on stakeholders to take into account the need for gender-responsive policies and measures, strive to ensure participation of men and women in planning, decision-making and implementation at all levels, and enhance the empowerment of women, girls and youth in the affected areas; and the encouragement to Parties to further enhance the involvement of civil society in the implementation of the Convention and of the Strategic Framework.

6. We call upon all Parties to reaffirm their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including target 15.3 to achieve LDN. In striving to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 15.3, Parties must recognize that land rights have been included in the targets of SDGs 1, 2, 5, 12, 14 and 16, and that in order to holistically address the 2030 Agenda, the interconnected character of all 17 goals must be considered and the ‘leave no one behind’ principle must be adhered to.

7. We therefore invite Parties to integrate the promotion of land tenure security into their national action programmes and in the operationalization of LDN and to adopt and implement the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security to guide their policies related to land tenure security and for the implementation of LDN.

8. Recalling the importance of anchoring science in territories affected by desertification to ensure the better development of scientific research programmes that strengthen local knowledge, especially that of indigenous peoples, the civil society welcomes the adoption of the synthesis report on sustainable land management (SLM) by the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) (ICCD/COP(13)/CST/3), urges Parties to support national and local science-policy interfaces and urges the SPI to interact with scientific networks.

9. We welcome the adoption of the text related to gender equity and urge the Parties to implement the Gender Action Plan of the UNCCD at national level and to monitor and report on the progress of its implementation.

10. The CSOs recognize the valuable role of private funding to achieve LDN targets, but we nevertheless must stress that its participation in financing initiatives under this Convention must adhere to the highest human, social and environmental standards and protect the interests of pastoralists, farmers, indigenous peoples, women and landless peasants. In this context, the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund (LDN Fund) must comply with the highest human, social and environmental standards. The perspective of civil society with regard to the implementation of private-led initiatives and the activities that will be developed by the private sector under the framework of the Convention, particularly those related to the funding of transformative projects for achieving LDN targets, must ensure the engagement of representatives of accredited CSOs. We strongly urge the secretariat to ensure the participation of at least one representative of a CSO accredited to the Convention, to be elected by the CSO Panel, on the Advisory Board of the LDN Fund so as to enable the effective engagement of the CSO community in contributing its expertise to the governance and policymaking processes of the LDN Fund.

11. We are deeply concerned by the potential conflicts of interest that could arise in engaging the private sector in funding mechanisms in this Convention, and we call upon the Parties to ensure that private funding of UNCCD processes is managed in a transparent

manner and with regular and transparent reporting procedures. The participation of the private sector in contributing financial resources towards achieving LDN targets should not be considered as a replacement of public funding, which is fundamental to achieving the goals of the Convention.

12. In conclusion, we congratulate the Parties on the adoption of a sound decision text at COP 13 and call upon the Parties to engage fully and effectively with CSOs in the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, and to ensure the adoption of a decision on land rights under this Convention at COP 14.

Annex III

Declaration from the Sustainable Land Management Business Forum

We, the participants in the Fourth Sustainable Land Management Business Forum held from 11–12 September 2017 in Ordos, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China,

Concerned with the fact that desertification and land degradation continue to be among the most serious challenges commonly faced by the world,

Noting with appreciation the actions taken by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in developing an appropriate approach on land degradation neutrality (LDN),

Acknowledging that the global community has clearly identified and endeavored to address LDN as a crucial target under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Also acknowledging that during the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, President of China Xi Jinping proposed to “develop big data platforms for eco-environmental protection, advocate establishing an international green development alliance of Belt and Road and provide assistance for those relevant countries to address climate change issues”,

Recognizing that the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 15 and target 15.3 requires all stakeholders, governments, civil society and private sector investors to forge strong partnership, and that the right institutional, political and legal frameworks accompanied by economic incentives can allow the global community to achieve LDN,

Also recognizing that the private sector has a unique role to play in developing business solutions and addressing issues relating to desertification and land degradation, thanks to its increasing awareness of social responsibility, its technological know-how and its capacities to develop innovative solutions, as well as its ability to mobilize financial resources and undertake concrete action on the ground,

Taking note of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund (LDN Fund), a first-of-its-kind platform launched during the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13), which has a layered capital structure aimed at bringing together public and private investors to fund triple bottom line projects contributing significantly to LDN,

Noting that success stories are available regarding business operations and market mechanisms for desertification control and ecosystem restoration, such as the Kubuqi Model, the Good Growth Plan, climate smart agriculture, and the Agrobiodiversity Index,

Also noting that COP 11 recognized the Kubuqi International Desert Forum as an important tool and platform for the implementation of the UNCCD and its achievements over the past ten years, as reflected in the Kubuqi Consensus, and *taking note of* other recommendations from the previous Sustainable Land Management Business Forum meetings,

Emphasizing that innovation in policies and institutional mechanisms is crucial for stimulating the private sector, government and local people to forge partnerships in the course of preventing and combating desertification/land degradation and promoting ecosystem restoration in a sustainable manner,

Stressing that sustainable land management (SLM) is important in addressing land degradation and safeguarding biodiversity, increasing agricultural productivity, promoting food security and improving nutrition,

Underlining the role of landscape connectivity conservation as an effective approach for strengthening ecological integrity, preventing species loss and restoring healthy functioning ecosystems,

1. *Commit to:*

(a) Aligning our priorities to include an LDN objective in related research, extension, production, technology transfer, and capacity development programmes and strategies;

(b) Forging and expanding partnerships with governments, academia, investors, businesses and civil society organizations (CSOs) in promoting landscape connectivity as a stepping stone to address land degradation and biodiversity challenges;

(c) Developing, in addition to practical and user-friendly technologies for small farmers, innovative eco-technologies, and promoting their application in efforts for large-scale desertification and land degradation control and for improvements to land productivity and ecosystem protection and restoration;

2. *Recommend that:*

(a) Governments develop incentive policies, legislation and institutional mechanisms, such as favorable taxation and investment and financing mechanisms, to encourage the private sector to invest in long-term programmes for SLM, desertification control and eco-restoration with minimum risk;

(b) The business sector consider, based on the sustainability principle, developing industries with desert distinctions in degraded areas to promote local employment and benefit local people, which will not only help green desertified land, but also contribute to alleviating poverty there;

(c) Civil Society organizations, universities, academia, research and extension organizations and/or programmes with relevance to land management be invited to integrate SLM practices in their policies and programmes and assist with capacity-building and knowledge exchanges;

(d) The business sector and academia work jointly in (i) promoting innovative and emerging technologies for operational uses in monitoring, measuring, and evaluating land degradation, scaling up applications of big data, remote-sensing, unmanned automated vehicles, and Internet as well as the ‘Internet of things’ in SLM; and (ii) developing eco-industries, precision farming and eco-environmental monitoring and reporting;

(e) Actors from the finance and investment community engage in public-private partnership for creating innovative LDN financing solutions;

(f) The business sector, in this connection, be called upon to develop appropriate mechanisms to work closely with United Nations entities and governmental and intergovernmental institutions to help promote capacity development on the green economy and SLM practices in developing countries, in particular in underdeveloped areas, to benefit the local people;

(g) Interested business parties avail themselves of the opportunities provided by the Belt and Road Initiative to work jointly on large-scale desertification prevention and control and land degradation and ecosystem restoration programmes to ensure the landscape connectivity along the Belt and Road regions;

(h) The COP at its thirteenth session and other related forums consider, in connection with the above, reflecting the Kubuqi Model and its successful experiences in large-scale desertification control and ecosystem restoration in the COP 13 report and its Ordos Declaration, and call for sharing and promoting wider applications of the experiences for the benefit of the people along the Belt and Road and elsewhere;

3. *Declare*, in close cooperation with UNCCD institutions, United Nations Environment Programme, the member companies of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and other interested entities, our intention to take an active part in the relevant initiatives and platforms addressing land degradation, including the World Alliance for Desert Eco-Economy initiative, with the aim of forging partnerships in promoting sustainable development specifically, to contribute to:

(a) The exchange and dissemination of experiences, models, information and knowledge on desertification prevention and control and ecosystem restoration;

(b) The promotion of innovative technology development, transfer and services as well as business cooperation for mutual benefits;

(c) The provision of support to capacity development and training for young generations of entrepreneurs;

(d) The encouragement of participation in relevant meetings, such as the Kubuqi International Desert Forum, to share experiences widely on eco-restoration and green economy development.

Annex IV

Declaration of the Youth Forum

Global Youth Initiative for Combating Desertification

Youth in Action for Combating Desertification

We, the youth delegates around the world attending the Youth Forum of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Ordos, China, would like to extend our gratitude to the Government of China for its support of our involvement in combating desertification and land degradation, its generous funding and its hosting of the Youth Forum.

With this Declaration, we intend to put forth our shared vision and build a roadmap towards strengthening young people's engagement in the fight against the desertification impacts of climate change and the unsustainable use of natural resources. We aim to emphasize our commitment, starting from our respective countries, and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular target 15.3 on land degradation neutrality (LDN) by 2030.

I. Background

We are aware that 40% of young people are either unemployed or have poorly paid jobs. Limited education opportunities and poor working conditions make young people more vulnerable to extremist ideologies and hinder countries' growth and their chances of developing sustainably.

We believe that the current economic and education opportunities are not inclusive. Considerably more can be done to promote conservation practices and protect our limited resources. According to the Business and Sustainable Development Commission 2017 report, 71 million jobs could be created in the food and agriculture sector alone, while land restoration strategies will ensure healthy ecosystem production, generating around \$1 trillion a year.

We recall: the Convention text of the UNCCD, underscoring the importance of capacity building among all individuals, especially women and youth, with the cooperation of non-governmental organizations and local organizations. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the need to empower youth and also to recognize and facilitate their agency in implementing the SDGs.

II. The roles of youth

We, the major stakeholders and future leaders of our world, when empowered, have the potential to contribute to and solve the urgent global challenges we are facing.

We, who grew up and continue to grow in a changing world, are fully prepared to confront and adapt to current and future challenges, particularly those concerning social, economic and environmental issues.

We can play a fundamental role in the decision-making process, providing constructive feedback and serving as a bridge between decision-makers and civil society.

We are the new forces to drive change, with fresh ideas, innovative technologies, inventive methods and the means to eradicate poverty and pave the way for a new sustainable economy.

III. The commitments of youth

We acknowledge and value this opportunity to ensure the voices of young people are heard at the COP. We aim to motivate the public by making the SDGs more tangible and relevant from the local perspective, and to inspire people to become positive drivers for the sustainable change in their everyday lives. In order to understand and fully face up to our responsibilities, we have set ourselves the following specific challenges:

- (a) Applying ourselves to pursue ways of catalyzing change within our own spheres of influence (online and offline);
- (b) Acquiring and enhancing our knowledge and technical and vocational skill to contribute to the relevant job markets, particularly those related to land restoration and sustainable land and water resources management;
- (c) Actively participating in relevant youth platforms (online and offline);
- (d) Campaigning and promoting research and policies that support the implementation of SDG 15.3 on LDN;
- (e) Providing constructive feedback and suggestions to all Parties on how better to encourage youth from different regions to take part in land and climate dialogue;
- (f) Designing innovative and creative solutions to contribute to the implementation of LDN;
- (g) Establishing social and professional networks and alliances that promote and support the implementation of LDN in order to address land as a key element to solve climate change issues;
- (h) Actively promoting youth initiatives and the empowerment of young women in the area of sustainable land and water management;
- (i) Getting personally involved in volunteering activities related to conserving land and water resources, and pro-actively participating in and promoting awareness and engagement among our peers on the sustainable restoration and management of degraded environmental resources.

IV. The call for stakeholder support

To meet all the above challenges, we, the global youth, call on all national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations, associations, academia, businesses and Civil societies, including youth-led civil societies, and United Nations agencies to pursue the following commitments:

- (a) **Investing in equal and quality education, both formal and non-formal, for all youth**, particularly young women, and building strong awareness of environmental issues, land and social rights from a young age;
- (b) **Equipping young graduates and high school leavers with knowledge and practical skills**, which are useful for succeeding on the green jobs market, particularly in

the land restoration and conservation of land and water resources sectors. Potential featured activities include: organizing and supporting relevant educational, vocational or technical training and digital technology skill-development, which are directly linked to the job market. This also includes special educational and practical programmes (e.g. afforestation and irrigation techniques and the sustainable use of agriculture inputs) targeting a variety of youth groups;

(c) **Establishing apprenticeship programmes and young innovator programmes that promote the growth of young talent, offering the chance to learn and be creative**, particularly in the area of sustainable land and water resource management. This would encourage and enable young talent to turn ideas into businesses. Low-interest loans, funds and resources for youth programmes could be provided by trade unions, employer organizations and the private sector;

(d) **Investing in and supporting young researchers in producing fresh research and insights, connecting local, national and global knowledge to address the gaps in land issues** by setting up research funds or financing young researchers;

(e) **Investing in the circular and green economy and science and technology, and implementing policies that promote sustainable land and water use and management, for example renewable energies**. This branch of the market is in need of incentives to grow and develop, creating new job openings in these areas;

(f) **Working towards a revival of farming and agriculture-related occupations**, making the agricultural sector more modern and appealing to young people, subsidizing the farming economy, ensuring land access and rights, and providing young people with incentives, expertise and funds to launch new enterprises;

(g) **Sharing knowledge, including indigenous agricultural practices, and consulting with younger people to help analyse problems from a different angle and promote youth involvement in decision-making on environmental matters**. This could be achieved through the organization of regular meetings, workshop seminars and youth conferences at local, national and international level;

(h) **Supporting and facilitating both online and offline spaces/platforms for national and international dialogue, consultations, social media campaigns and volunteering activities**, reaching out to marginalized communities, inviting young people to work together and promoting their roles as advocates and partners in supporting SDG 15.3 on LDN and contributing to building sustainable peace for future generations:

(i) As host country of this Youth Forum, for example, China could be the starting point for such platforms. The Youth Initiative to combat desertification and land degradation will be a platform to promote and facilitate the support of SDG 15.3 among young people in order to voice their ideas to decision-makers;

(ii) United Nations Volunteers and other United Nations agencies could also take this opportunity in China, making use of relevant volunteering projects of the All-China Youth Federation or other similar projects in other regions. Through these initiatives, Chinese and international young volunteers could be mobilized to carry out relevant volunteering service activities related to restoring degraded land and water resources globally;

(iii) Youth involvement could also benefit from academic societies and institutions actively sharing (or disseminating) their research outcomes with young people or youth-led organizations in order to promote the circulation of information and knowledge;

- (iv) Offline facilitation of knowledge and technology transfer, that is, the latest agricultural technologies, will benefit the young people in underprivileged rural communities.

V. Final remarks

Finally, we invite the parties of COP 13 to take steps to implement the outlined recommendations. We call upon the Parties to **include the Youth Initiative in their discussions and take it into consideration in the decision-making process** to ensure that future generations have the tools to effectively confront impending social and environmental issues and the means to protect mother earth.

COP 13 to the UNCCD is a starting point and stepping stone to motivate and engage other youth locally and globally to conserve and restore our limited land resources.

It is not enough to want change: we have to be the change we want to see. Alone we can walk but, together, we can run. As such, unity is highly essential to obtain the stated objectives and we are eager to take the necessary steps to build a more sustainable and fairer future for all. We look forward to 2030 and beyond, where many global challenges will be overcome with the achievement of SDG target 15.3.

Annex V

Documents before the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth session

[English only]

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/COP(13)/1	Provisional agenda and annotations. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/2	Integration of Sustainable Development Goal 15 and related target 15.3 which states: “to combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world”, into the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Report by the Executive Secretary
ICCD/COP(13)/3	The future strategic framework of the Convention. Report by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the future strategic framework of the Convention
ICCD/COP(13)/4	Report on progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy and on the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010–2020). Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/5	Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention – Terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/6	Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/7	Programme and budget for the biennium 2018–2019. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/7/Corr.1	Programme and budget for the biennium 2018–2019. Note by the secretariat. Corrigendum
ICCD/COP(13)/8- ICCD/CRIC(16)/2	Comprehensive multi-year workplan for the Convention (2018–2021) and two-year costed work programme for the Convention (2018–2019). Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/9	Financial performance for the Convention trust funds. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/10	Audited financial statements for the Convention trust funds for the biennium 2016–2017 as at 31 December 2016. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/11	Audited financial statements for the Convention trust funds for the biennium ended 31 December 2015, including the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP (13)/12	Audited financial statements for the Global Mechanism as at 30 September 2013. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/13	Report on the status of contributions to the Convention trust funds for the biennium 2016–2017. Note by the secretariat

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/COP(13)/14	Report of the Evaluation Office. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/15	Participation and involvement of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/16	Participation and involvement of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/17	Accreditation of intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and representatives from the private sector, and admission of observers. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/18	Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Global Environment Facility. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/19	Draft advocacy policy frameworks: Gender, Drought, and Sand and Dust Storms. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/19/Corr.1	Draft advocacy policy frameworks: Gender, Drought, and Sand and Dust Storms. Note by the secretariat. Corrigendum
ICCD/COP (13)/20	Credentials of delegations. Report of the Bureau to the Conference of the Parties
ICCD/COP(13)/INF.1	Information for participants
ICCD/COP(13)/INF.2	Note on the special segment of the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth session. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/INF.3	Status of ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/INF.4	List of participants
ICCD/COP(13)/CRP.1	Overview of gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Convention: 1998–2018
ICCD/COP(13)/CRP.2	Elaborating on the Drought Initiative

Documents before the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its sixteenth session

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/CRIC(15)/7	Report of the fifteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, held in Nairobi from 18 to 20 October 2016
ICCD/CRIC(16)/1	Provisional agenda and annotations. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/8- ICCD/CRIC(16)/2	Comprehensive multi-year workplan for the Convention (2018–2021) and two-year costed work programme for the Convention (2018–2019). Note by the secretariat

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/CRIC(16)/3	Report on the performance of Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies (2016–2017). Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(16)/4	Report by the Global Environment Facility on its strategies, programmes and projects for financing the agreed incremental costs of activities concerning desertification
ICCD/CRIC(16)/5	Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(16)/INF.1	Reporting template for the 2017–2018 reporting process. Note by the secretariat

Documents before the Committee on Science and Technology at its thirteenth session

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/1	Provisional agenda and annotations. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/2	The scientific conceptual framework for land degradation neutrality. Synthesis report by the Science-Policy Interface
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/3	Sustainable land management for addressing desertification/land degradation and drought, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Synthesis report by the Science-Policy Interface
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/4	Rehabilitation, restoration and reclamation measures and practices in degraded lands. Synthesis report by the Science-Policy Interface
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/5	Cooperation with other scientific panels. Report by the Science-Policy Interface
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/6	Review of the Science-Policy Interface and its achievements. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/7	Work programme for the Science-Policy Interface (2018–2019). Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/8	Promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/INF.1	Report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on the Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment
ICCD/COP(13)/CST/INF.2	Compilation of proposals for topics to be considered for inclusion in the Science-Policy Interface work programme 2018–2019. Note by the secretariat

Other documents available at the session

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/COP(12)/20	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twelfth session: proceedings
ICCD/COP(12)/20/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twelfth session: action taken
ICCD/COP(11)/23	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its eleventh session: proceedings
ICCD/COP(11)/23/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its eleventh session: action taken
ICCD/COP(10)/31	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its tenth session: proceedings
ICCD/COP(10)/31/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its tenth session: action taken
ICCD/COP(9)/18	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its ninth session: proceedings
ICCD/COP(9)/18/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its ninth session: action taken
ICCD/COP(8)/16	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its eighth session: proceedings
ICCD/COP(8)/16/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its eighth session: action taken
ICCD/COP(7)/16	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its seventh session: proceedings
ICCD/COP(7)/16/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its seventh session: action taken
ICCD/COP(6)/11	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixth session: proceedings
ICCD/COP(6)/11/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixth session: action taken
ICCD/COP(5)/11	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fifth session: proceedings
ICCD/COP(5)/11/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fifth session: action taken
ICCD/COP(4)/11/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fourth session: action taken
ICCD/COP(3)/20/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its third session: action taken
ICCD/COP(2)/14/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its second session: action taken
ICCD/COP(1)/11/ Add.1	Report of the Conference of the Parties on its first session: action taken
