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Assessment of Implementation

Strategic objectives 1 to 5

Preliminary analysis – strategic objective 4: To generate global environmental benefits through effective implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Note by the secretariat

Summary

By decision 7/COP.13, the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

This document contains the synthesis and preliminary analysis of information submitted by country Parties on strategic objective 4 (SO 4) of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework: to generate global environmental benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD. It analyses one progress indicator, namely trends in abundance and distribution of selected species, from a global perspective and provides additional analysis from subregional and regional perspectives where possible. Furthermore, the document contains an analysis of national voluntary targets relevant to SO 4 and a compilation of additional indicators in use at national level.

The document offers some conclusions on the status of activities relating to SO 4 (baseline perspective) and some recommendations for consideration by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

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List of abbreviations

CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LDN	land degradation neutrality
NMED	Northern Mediterranean
PRAIS	Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division

I. Introduction

1. By decision 7/COP.13, the COP of the UNCCD adopted the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework. Strategic objective 4 (SO 4) of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework aims to generate global environmental benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD.

2. Indicators used for reporting on the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework are those identified by Parties in decision 22/COP.11. Specifically, the progress indicators (and associated metrics) for SO 4 are:

(a) trends in carbon stocks above and below ground (metrics: soil organic carbon stock); and

(b) trends in abundance and distribution of selected species (metric: Red List Index).

3. Trends in carbon stock above and below ground is a multi-purpose indicator used to measure progress towards both SO 1 and 4. A synthesis and preliminary analysis of information on this indicator is contained in document ICCD/CRIC(17)/2.

4. Concerning trends in abundance and distribution of selected species, the metric originally adopted in decision 22/COP.11 (i.e. the Global Wild Bird Index) was subsequently reviewed to ensure its alignment with the global indicator framework for the SDGs and the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This review was undertaken in line with the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework which states that indicators for SOs should be reviewed and fine-tuned, as necessary and appropriate, in consideration of the reporting system/indicators for the SDGs and with reference to the follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Rio conventions and other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements in order to improve their synergetic implementation and avoid duplication.

5. The review concluded that the alignment requirement would be more effectively met with an alternative metric for this indicator, known as the Red List Index. The Red List Index is a measurement of change in aggregate extinction risk across groups of species and is based on genuine changes in the number of species in each category of extinction risk on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species.¹ It is used to determine the trends in biodiversity status and is the basis for SDG indicator 15.5.1.² It also serves as one of the indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.³

6. Unlike SO 1, countries were not provided with national estimates of this metric based on available data sources through the PRAIS portal. However, in order to facilitate national reporting, the UNCCD reporting manual indicated suitable data sources that could be used by countries in the absence of or to complement national data.⁴ The recommended data source was:

¹ The Red List Index value ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 = The maximum possible contribution to the global index (i.e. all species in the region are classified as extinct); and 1 = The minimum contribution to the global index (i.e. all species in the region are classified as least concern; biodiversity loss has been halted).

² <<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-15-05-01.pdf>>.

³ <<https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-28-en.pdf>>.

⁴ <https://prais.unccd.int/sites/default/files/helper_documents/2-Manual_EN_1.pdf>.

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) Statistical Services Branch SDG indicators database and metadata repository for indicator 15.5.1⁵

7. This document contains the synthesis and preliminary analysis of information submitted by country Parties on SO 4. It analyses the progress indicator and associated metric from a global perspective and provides additional analysis from subregional and regional perspectives where possible. Furthermore, the document contains an analysis of national voluntary targets relevant to SO 4 and a compilation of additional indicators in use at national level.
8. The document offers some conclusions on the status of activities relating to SO 4 (baseline perspective) and some recommendations for consideration by the CRIC.

II. Red List Index

9. A total of 138 country Parties reported information on the Red List Index, representing 72.4 per cent of global land area (see table 1). Of these, just over a third provided numeric Red List Index values, another third provided the names of specific Red List Index species or groups of species, while the remaining countries reported neither a value nor species details.⁶

10. Quantitative analysis has therefore been focused on the data from the 51 country Parties (representing 39.2 per cent of global land area) that reported numerical Red List Index values. The values reported by country Parties are available in table 2; the values for the latest reported year can be viewed in figure 1).

11. The metadata for the Red List Index provides guidance for interpreting trends which country Parties were encouraged to consider.⁷ Because the Red List Index value ranges from 0 (all species are categorized as ‘extinct’) to 1 (all species are categorized as ‘least concern’), the value of the index indicates how far the set of species has moved overall towards extinction. Thus, the Red List Index allows comparisons between sets of species in both their overall level of extinction risk (i.e. how threatened they are on average), and in the rate at which this risk changes over time. A *downward* trend over time in the Red List Index means that the expected rate of future species extinction is worsening (i.e. the rate of biodiversity loss is increasing). An *upward* trend means that the expected rate of species extinction is abating (i.e. the rate of biodiversity loss is decreasing), and a *horizontal* line means that the expected rate of species extinction remains the same, although none of these cases mean that biodiversity loss has stopped. An upward Red List Index trend would indicate that progress is being made on SO 4, whereas both downward and horizontal trends would suggest the need for concern and potential action.

12. Forty-nine of the 51 country Parties that reported numerical data for the Red List Index reported two or more years of data, allowing an analysis of trends. In the latest reported year, the reported Red List Index ranged from 0.34 to 1.00, including eight country Parties (16 per cent of those reporting trends) with moderate to strong downward trends, 40 (82 per cent) with slight downward or flat trends (referred to as ‘horizontal’) and one (two per cent) with a moderate upward trend (see table 2). The histograms in figure 2 help illustrate this distribution in terms of the general direction of change (downward) and the interannual rate of change. This distribution can also be viewed geographically (see figure 3).

⁵ <<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/?indicator=15.5.1>>.

⁶ The high variability in reporting approaches, at least in part, was due to challenges faced in obtaining values representing all species in a country for one or more years.

⁷ <<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-15-05-01.pdf>>.

13. The direct drivers reported by country Parties to explain downward trends in the Red List Index are primarily deforestation, over-exploitation of vegetation, urbanization, improper crop management and the group of any other drivers (a compilation of country Party-nominated drivers) (see table 3). The direct drivers reported as being associated with an upward trend in the Red List Index were cited as deforestation, over-exploitation of vegetation,⁸ the group of any other drivers and improper crop management⁹ (see table 3). Nearly all suggested indirect drivers were cited as influencing downward trends in the Red List Index with population pressure the most common, followed by poverty, land tenure, governance and education¹⁰ (see table 4). Indirect drivers influencing upward trends in the Red List Index include population pressure, poverty, governance and education (see table 4).

14. Country Parties were also requested to report on hotspots and brightspots related to biodiversity and the Red List Index. Globally, 105 hotspots with a downward trending Red List Index and 40 brightspots with an upward trending Red List Index were reported (see table 5). The potential for further analysis of this dataset was limited because countries were not directly requested to provide information on the area or the extent of hotspots and brightspots.

III. Voluntary targets related to strategic objective 4

15. Country Parties were requested to provide information on voluntary targets they have set to improve Red List Index trends in accordance with specific national circumstances and development priorities. In order to facilitate the assessment of the submissions toward this open-ended question, content analysis of the reported text from each country Party was conducted. This allowed the thematic organization of the reported voluntary targets according to their relationship to one of the 17 SDGs. In total, seven themes were identified corresponding to seven of the 17 SDGs (table 6).

16. In total, 135 country Parties reported 296 national and subnational voluntary targets related to trends in species abundance set by reporting country Parties (SO 4) (see table 6). Of these, 86 voluntary targets (29.1 per cent of total submitted targets) corresponded to 'land management', 82 (27.7 per cent) to 'nature conservation' and 60 (20.3 per cent) to 'biodiversity', making these the most common themes reported by Parties as a voluntary target to achieve SO 4. Also reported were voluntary targets associated with 'awareness and mainstreaming' (29 targets, 9.8 per cent) and 'sustainable cities and communities' (23 targets, 7.8 per cent). 'Poverty reduction strategies' and 'water management' were reported in eight targets (2.7 per cent) each.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

17. The core of this analysis addresses country Parties reporting on indicators used at national level for monitoring efforts intended to lead to an upward impact on trends in abundance and distribution of selected species, thereby generating global environmental benefits through the effective implementation of interventions. It is based on qualitative analysis of reported data on the Red List metric from 138 country Parties, representing 72.4 per cent of global land area, and quantitative analysis of 51 of the country Parties (representing 39.2 per cent of global land area) that reported numerical Red List Index values.

⁸ Over-exploitation of vegetation = over-exploitation of vegetation for domestic use.

⁹ Improper crop management = improper management of annual, perennial, scrub and tree crops.

¹⁰ Education = education, access to knowledge and support services.

18. Notable observations resulting from the analysis of data reported for SO 4:

(a) An assessment of the latest reported year by country Parties revealed a range of Red List Index scores of 0.34 to 1.00 (ranging from greatest to least concern).

(b) The majority of reporting country Parties reported slight (82 per cent) or moderate to strong (16 per cent) downward trends in the Red List Index; only one country reported upward trends.

(c) The most common direct drivers reported by country Parties as leading to both downwards and upwards trends in the Red List Index were deforestation, over-exploitation of vegetation, urbanization and improper crop management, suggesting that sustainable land and forest management can directly influence the abundance and distribution of selected species. Nearly all indirect drivers were cited as influencing downward trends in the Red List Index with population pressure the most common, followed by poverty, land tenure, governance and education, suggesting the importance of an enabling environment to the success of interventions.

(d) Country Parties reported on more hotspots than brightspots for the Red List Index, however further analysis was limited because countries were not directly requested to provide information on the location, area or extent of hotspots and brightspots.

(e) In total, 135 of the reporting country Parties have set 296 national and subnational voluntary targets related to trends in species abundance set by reporting country Parties (SO 4). Three quarters of these corresponded thematically to 'land management', 'nature conservation' and 'biodiversity' objectives.

(f) The analysis of the Red List Index results underscores its potential to serve as a metric for a progress indicator focused on monitoring trends in abundance and distribution of selected species. This approach helps ensure synergies between UNCCD SO 4, Aichi Targets 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 14, and SDG target 15.5 to reduce the degradation of natural habitats and protect threatened species, all of which employ this metric.

19. Parties at CRIC 17 may wish to consider these conclusions and the following recommendations with a view to initiating early consultations on a draft decision to be forwarded to COP 14.

20. Parties may wish to:

To support efforts to generate global environmental benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD

(a) Encourage the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD, in collaboration with relevant international partners, and supported through scientific review by the Science-Policy Interface of the UNCCD, to develop guidance for LDN initiatives, which encourages land use planning integrating municipal, agriculture and conservation planning in order to navigate trade-offs and optimize the spatial distribution of interventions within the framework of LDN.

(b) Also encourage the UNCCD secretariat and the GM, in collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and financial and technical partners, to promote projects and programmes designed to synergistically and simultaneously achieve multiple benefits in a way that achieves targets set in the context of Nationally Determined Contributions, Aichi Targets, and LDN targets.

For continued work towards improved SO 4 indicator/metric data sets

(c) Further encourage the UNCCD secretariat to improve reporting procedures and systems in order to enhance the quality and comparability of SO 4 indicator/metric data sets as well as interoperability with other UNCCD indicator data and ancillary data through the following refinements:

(i) Prefilling SO 4 reporting templates with UNCCD-recognized indicator/metric data from international sources to allow this default data to be confirmed by country Parties or replaced with national data, as appropriate;

(ii) Ensuring that the recording and reporting of hotspots and brightspots is geographically based to allow locations and areas to be assessed in conjunction with indicator data, and that open source support tools such as Trends.Earth¹¹ can be tailored to support hotspot and brightspot analysis by country Parties.

¹¹ Trends.Earth is a QGIS plugin developed by Conservation International:
<<http://trends.earth/docs/en/>>.

Annex

[English only]

Tables and figures

I. Introduction

1. This annex contains the tables and figures relevant to the parent document “Preliminary analysis – strategic objective 4: To generate global environmental benefits through effective implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification” prepared for the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

2. The tables and figures herein are presented under section headings that mirror those found in the main document and are numbered according to their appearance in the main document. Each main section heading within this annex is separated into subsections containing the tables relevant to that section and then the figures, where relevant.

II. Red List Index

Table 1
Country Parties that reported on the Red List Index

<i>Red List Index Reporting</i>	<i>Count</i>
Reported a numeric Red List Index value	51
Reported on specific species or provided other information	48
Reported neither a value nor a species	39
Total	138

Table 2
**Red List Index (RLI) for reporting nations showing initial and final reporting years
with respective RLI, estimated trend and rate of change**

Region	Country	Earliest year	Earliest		Latest year	Latest RLI	RLI		Rate of change
			RLI				difference	Trend in RLI	
Africa	Benin	2000	0.91035		2015	0.9100	-0.0004	Horizontal	-0.00002
	Burkina Faso	2000	0.99111		2018	0.9891	-0.0020	Horizontal	-0.00011
	Comoros	2000	0.83797		2018	0.7607	-0.0773	Downward	-0.00429
	Lesotho	2016	1		2018	1.0000	0.0000	Horizontal	0.00000
	Malawi	2000	0.80529		2018	0.8063	0.0010	Horizontal	0.00006
	Mali	2000	0.98606		2018	0.9817	-0.0044	Horizontal	-0.00025
	Namibia	2000	0.96769		2016	0.9664	-0.0013	Horizontal	-0.00008
	Nigeria	2000	0.87822		2018	0.8799	0.0017	Horizontal	0.00009
	Rwanda	2000	0.84706		2015	0.8489	0.0018	Horizontal	0.00012
	Swaziland	2000	0.81898		2018	0.8184	-0.0006	Horizontal	-0.00003
	Togo	2000	0.8545		2018	0.8544	-0.0001	Horizontal	-0.00001
	Uganda	2000	0.802		2017	0.7490	-0.0530	Downward	-0.00312
	Zimbabwe	2000	0.79624		2015	0.7900	-0.0062	Horizontal	-0.00041
Africa (total)									-0.00062
Asia	China	2004	0.51		2017	0.6900	0.1800	Upward	0.01385
	Cook Islands	1994	0.65		2016	0.6300	-0.0200	Horizontal	-0.00091
	Jordan	2000	0.96455		2015	0.9618	-0.0028	Horizontal	-0.00018
	Malaysia	2000	0.82674		2015	0.7048	-0.1219	Downward	-0.00813
	Mongolia	2000	0.95622		2018	0.9452	-0.0110	Horizontal	-0.00061
	Myanmar	2000	0.85741		2018	0.8428	-0.0146	Horizontal	-0.00081
	Oman	2000	0.93		2017	0.8900	-0.0400	Horizontal	-0.00235
	Palau	2000	0.89		2015	0.7300	-0.1600	Downward	-0.01067
	Papua New Guinea	2008	0.85		2008	0.8500	0.0000	-	-
	Philippines	2000	0.72613		2018	0.6436	-0.0826	Downward	-0.00459
	Qatar	2007	0.87		2015	0.8400	-0.0300	Horizontal	-0.00375
	Tajikistan	2000	0.98505		2018	0.9843	-0.0007	Horizontal	-0.00004
	Uzbekistan	2000	0.97877		2018	0.9692	-0.0096	Horizontal	-0.00053
Asia (total)									-0.00156
LAC	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2000	0.87213		2015	0.8628	-0.0094	Horizontal	-0.00062
	Brazil	2000	0.91222		2018	0.9007	-0.0116	Horizontal	-0.00064
	Chile	2000	0.825		2018	0.7610	-0.0640	Downward	-0.00356
	Dominican Republic	2011	0.74403		2017	0.7348	-0.0093	Horizontal	-0.00155
	Guyana	2000	0.93		2017	0.9200	-0.0100	Horizontal	-0.00059
	Haiti	2000	0.75388		2015	0.7250	-0.0288	Horizontal	-0.00192
	Jamaica	2000	0.75		2018	0.7000	-0.0500	Downward	-0.00278
	Mexico	2001	0.64		2010	0.6100	-0.0300	Horizontal	-0.00333
	Paraguay	2000	0.9512		2015	0.9491	-0.0021	Horizontal	-0.00014
	Peru	2000	0.72727		2018	0.7126	-0.0147	Horizontal	-0.00082
	Saint Lucia	2000	0.88191		2015	0.8507	-0.0312	Horizontal	-0.00208
	Uruguay	2015	0.9		2015	0.9000	0.0000	-	-
LAC (total)									-0.00164
NMED	Albania	2010	0.8716		2015	0.8592	-0.0124	Horizontal	-0.00248
	Cyprus	2010	0.98325		2015	0.9833	0.0000	Horizontal	0.00000
	Israel	2015	0.7171		2018	0.7122	-0.0049	Horizontal	-0.00164
	Turkey	2000	0.88123		2015	0.8764	-0.0049	Horizontal	-0.00032

NMED (total)								-0.00111
CEE	Armenia	2006	0.84813	2015	0.8446	-0.0035	Horizontal	-0.00039
	Belarus	2000	0.948	2018	0.9700	0.0220	Horizontal	0.00122
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2011	0.90337	2018	0.9036	0.0002	Horizontal	0.00004
	Georgia	2000	0.88229	2017	0.8580	-0.0243	Horizontal	-0.00143
	Latvia	2000	0.98866	2015	0.9879	-0.0008	Horizontal	-0.00005
	Montenegro	2000	0.858	2018	0.8140	-0.0440	Horizontal	-0.00244
	Republic of Moldova	1978	0.5	2015	0.3400	-0.1600	Downward	-0.00432
	Russian Federation	2013	0.96	2016	0.9600	0.0000	Horizontal	0.00000
Ukraine	2007	0.942332	2017	0.9448	0.0025	Horizontal	0.00025	
CEE (total)								-0.00091
Global								-0.00115

Notes: LAC = Latin America and Caribbean, NMED = Northern Mediterranean, CEE = Central and Eastern Europe

Table 3

The number of times direct drivers were listed by country Parties as having a downward or upward impact on the Red List Index.

<i>Trend</i>	<i>Deforestation</i>	<i>Improper management of annual, perennial, scrub and tree crops</i>	<i>Urbanization</i>	<i>Over-grazing</i>	<i>Over-exploitation of vegetation for domestic use</i>	<i>Improper soil management</i>	<i>Release of airborne pollutants</i>	<i>Disturbance of the water cycle</i>	<i>Discharges</i>	<i>Industrial activities</i>	<i>Any other</i>
Downward trend in the Red list Index	21	16	17	11	20	10	3	3	2	8	16
Upward trend in the Red List Index	12	8	5	8	11	3	1	2	2	6	9
Total	33	24	22	19	31	13	4	5	4	14	25

Table 4

The number of times indirect drivers were listed by country Parties as having a downward or upward impact on the Red List Index.

<i>Trend</i>	<i>Population pressure</i>	<i>Poverty</i>	<i>Governance, institutional settings and policies</i>	<i>Labour availability</i>	<i>Land tenure</i>	<i>Education, access to knowledge and support services</i>	<i>War and conflict</i>	<i>Any other</i>
Downward trend in the Red list Index	27	15	13	5	15	13	4	7
Upward trend in the Red List Index	12	10	10	0	4	7	3	6
Total	39	25	23	5	19	20	7	13

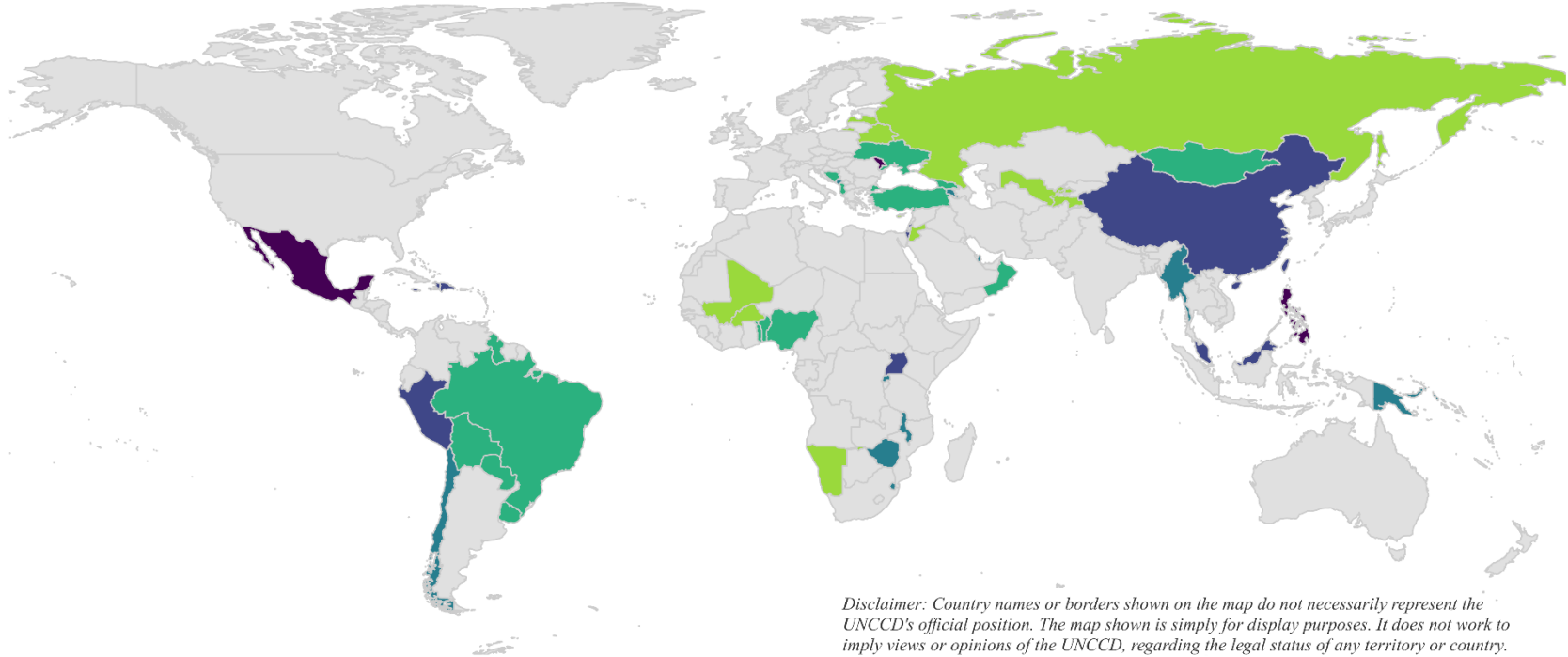
Table 5

Reported hotspots and brightspots related to trends in abundance and distribution of selected species

<i>Region</i>	<i>Brightspots</i>	<i>Hotspots</i>
Africa	22	48
Asia	11	33
LAC	3	18
NMED		3
CEE	4	3
Total	40	105

Notes: LAC = Latin America and Caribbean, NMED = Northern Mediterranean, CEE = Central and Eastern Europe

Figure 1
Red List Index value for the latest year reported by country Parties that reported a numerical value for this indicator.



Notes: The Red List Index value ranges from 0 (all species are categorized as 'extinct') to 1 (all species are categorized as 'least concern'), thus darker colours are associated with greater concern.

Figure 2
Histograms of the absolute change in the Red List Index as the difference between the earliest and latest reported years (left) and the rate of change per year for country Parties that reported numerical values for multiple years (right)

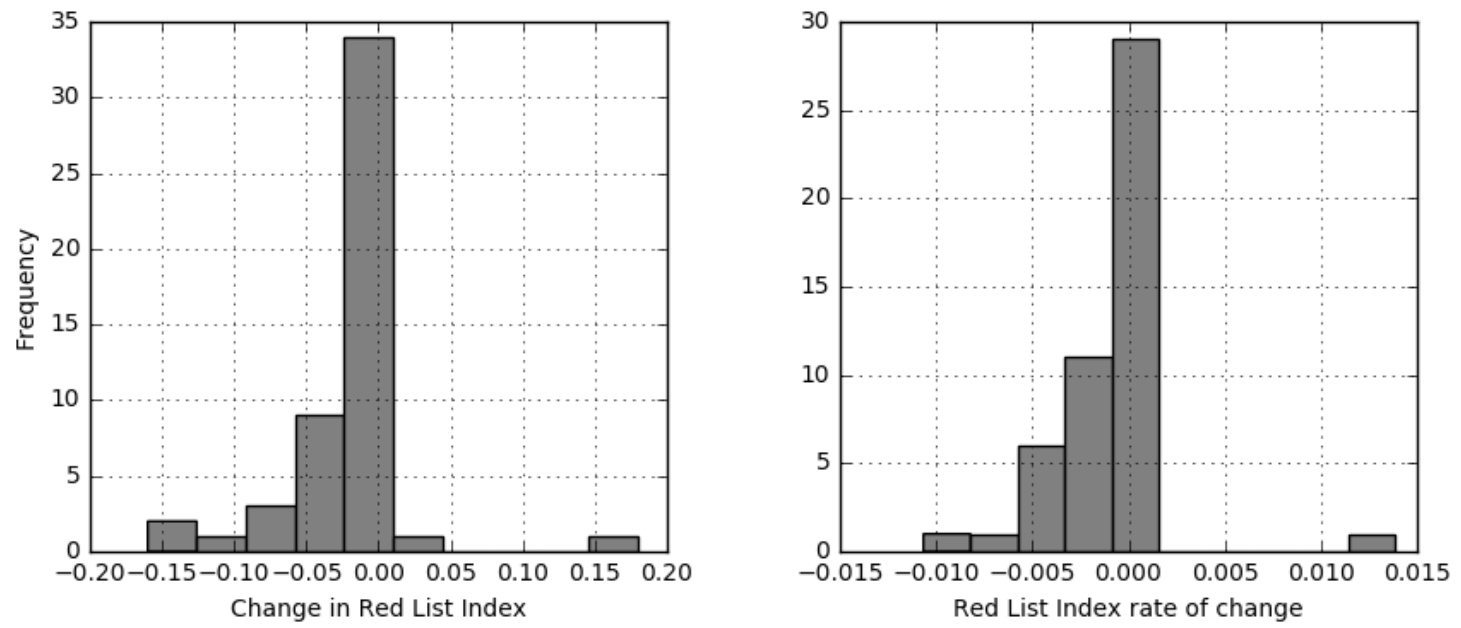
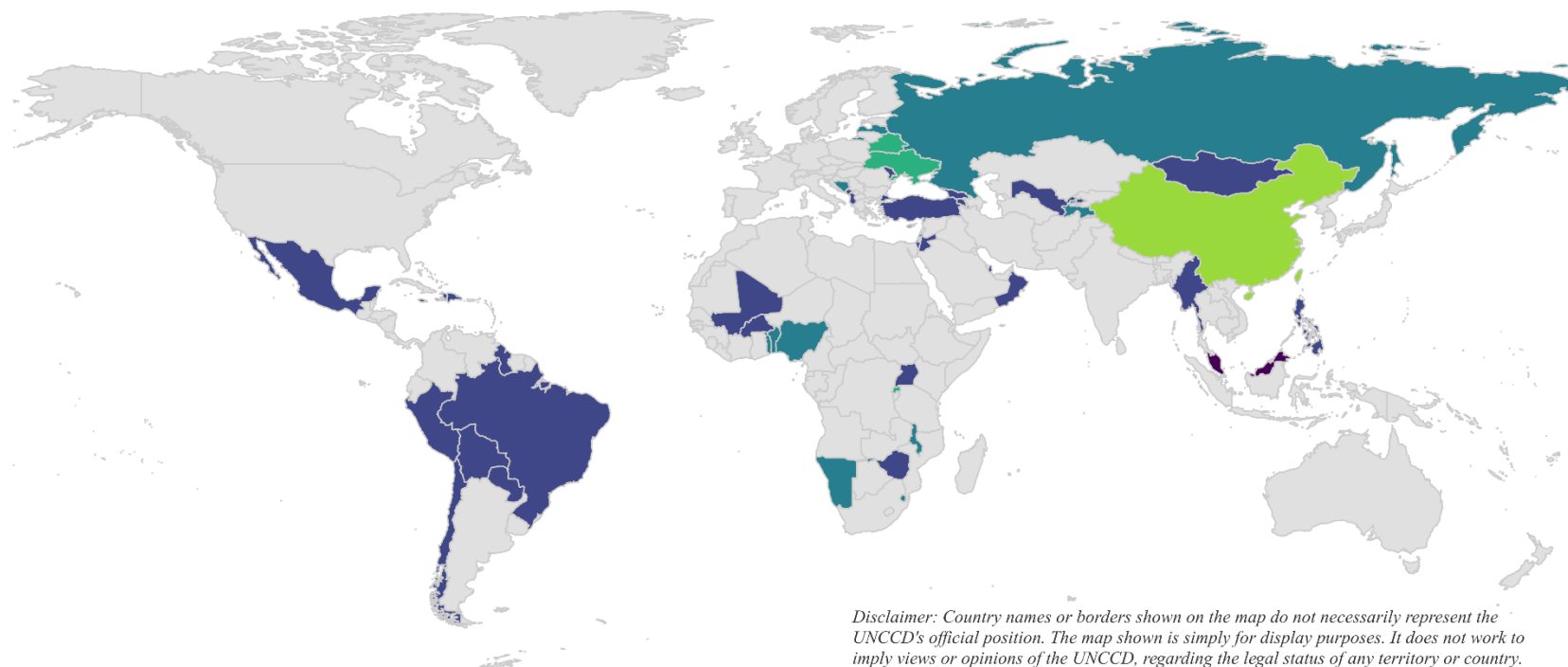


Figure 3

The global distribution of trends in the Red List Index calculated from the earliest year to the latest year reported by country Parties



Disclaimer: Country names or borders shown on the map do not necessarily represent the UNCCD's official position. The map shown is simply for display purposes. It does not work to imply views or opinions of the UNCCD, regarding the legal status of any territory or country.

Red List trend



<math>< -0.005</math>



-0.005 to -0.0001



-0.0001 to 0.0001



0.0001 to 0.005



> 0.01



Unreported

Notes: key numbers reflect the annual rate of change in the Red List Index over reported years for each country.

III. Voluntary targets related to strategic objective 4

Table 6

Voluntary targets related to trends in species abundance set by reporting country

Parties

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Africa</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>LAC</i>	<i>NMED</i>	<i>CEE</i>	<i>Global</i>
Awareness and mainstreaming	3	3	17	1	5	29
Biodiversity	9	25	17	2	7	60
Land management	44	21	16		5	86
Nature conservation	33	13	17	4	6	82
Poverty reduction strategies	6	1	1			8
Sustainable cities and communities	9	4	5	1	4	23
Water management	1	2	3			8
Total	105	69	76	8	27	296

Notes: LAC = Latin America and Caribbean, NMED = Northern Mediterranean, CEE = Central and Eastern Europe