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Interfacing science and policy, and sharing knowledge

The Science-Policy Interface, the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, and the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices

The Science-Policy Interface, the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, and the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices

Note by the secretariat

Summary

By its decision 19/COP.13, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to extend the mandate of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) up to the end of the sixteenth session of the COP and asked the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology to define the staged renewal of SPI membership. Furthermore, decision 20/COP.13 requested the secretariat to continue to facilitate the dissemination of relevant knowledge and best practices through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.

This document provides a report on the renewal of SPI membership and the overall modalities of the SPI, as well as on the further development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub and the accessibility of best practices on sustainable land management (SLM).

Furthermore, this document contains suggestions on improving the knowledge base on SLM technologies and approaches, through alignment with their contribution to the other Rio conventions.

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I. Background

1. By its decision 23/COP.11, the Conference of the Parties (COP) established a Science-Policy Interface (SPI) to facilitate a two-way science–policy dialogue and ensure delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice on desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) to all interested Parties. Following an external assessment of the work of the SPI, by its decision 19/COP.13, the COP decided to continue the SPI and to extend its current mandate, as defined in decisions 23/COP.11 and 19/COP.12, up to the end of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) in 2023.
2. By its decision 19/COP.13, the COP also decided to renew SPI membership using a rotating system to ensure the continuity of the work of the Science-Policy Interface and requested the Bureau of Committee on Science and Technology (CST), with assistance from the secretariat, to define the process for the staged renewal of SPI membership, and revise the SPI terms of reference accordingly. By the same decision, the COP also requested the secretariat to facilitate the communication between the SPI and the science and technology correspondents of Parties, and to mobilize resources for the effective functioning of the SPI.
3. A synthesis of the outcomes of the current work of the SPI is contained in documents ICCD/COP(14)/CST/2, ICCD/COP(14)/CST/3 and ICCD/COP(14)/CST/4.
4. Chapter II of this document provides a report on the practices and working modalities for the SPI in 2018 and 2019, including the staged renewal of the SPI (as reflected in the revised terms of reference).
5. Following decision 21/COP.10, decision 24/COP.11, decision 20/COP.12, and decision 20/COP.13, and in line with the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018), the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP) was developed aiming to improve the brokering of scientific and technical information from and to institutions, Parties and other stakeholders. A pilot for the SKBP was launched in 2014, which was rebranded as the UNCCD Knowledge Hub in 2016.
6. The rebranding of the SKBP as the UNCCD Knowledge Hub was part of the rebranding exercise which consolidated multiple UNCCD websites and tools into a single website and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub. The Knowledge Hub underpins the UNCCD website, providing the background information and scientific foundation for the main messages on the website. The result has been a unified brand and a single point of access to all UNCCD efforts to provide knowledge to end users.
7. The UNCCD Knowledge Hub has created the opportunity to integrate best practices and decision support tools with a stronger focus on solutions and technologies (applied science). The setup of the Knowledge Hub provides the flexibility to efficiently adapt the structure to ensure the Knowledge Hub meets the possible future needs of UNCCD stakeholders in sharing success stories, lessons learned and best practices related to their implementation activities.
8. By its decision 20/COP.13, the COP requested the secretariat to continue the expansion and enhancement of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, providing access to knowledge sources of partners in order to facilitate the dissemination of relevant knowledge to all stakeholders.
9. Part III of this document provides an overview of the development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, including the recent integration of the UNCCD-led Drought Toolbox.
10. Following decision 15/COP.10, which requested the secretariat to identify recommended databases for best practices previously reported through PRAIS (performance review and assessment of implementation system), the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) was selected as the primary recommended database for best practices on sustainable land management (SLM) technologies, including adaptation. Furthermore, and following decision 17/COP.11, an agreement was signed between the secretariat and WOCAT to effectuate this.
11. Since 2014, the UNCCD secretariat and WOCAT have cooperated on the dissemination of best practices on SLM with the aim of enabling UNCCD stakeholders to

effectively share their knowledge and experiences. In 2018, the UNCCD Evaluation Office commissioned an evaluation of the cooperation between the UNCCD secretariat and WOCAT with the aim of generating an independent, evidence-based assessment of the results achieved through the cooperation.¹ Among other things, the evaluation report recommended to continue the cooperation with WOCAT on SLM best practices.

12. By its decision 20/COP.13, the COP encouraged Parties to continue submitting cases of relevant best practices in order to increase the knowledge base on SLM. In the same decision, the COP also requested the secretariat to continue the expansion and further enhancement of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, facilitating UNCCD stakeholders in sharing success stories, lessons learned, and best practices related to their implementation activities.

13. By its decision 8/COP.13, the COP also requested the secretariat to make scientific knowledge available to stakeholders in the Convention through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, aimed at, inter alia, scaling up SLM practices and increasing the knowledge and scientific and technical skills of stakeholders. Furthermore, by its decision 9/COP.13, the COP requested the secretariat to build on and strengthen collaboration with other United Nations entities and the Rio conventions secretariats to support drought risk mitigation measures.

14. In the UNCCD-led Drought Toolbox, which is integrated in the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, drought risk adaptation and mitigation measures are linked to best practices in SLM from the WOCAT database and other sources. In 2018, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted voluntary guidelines for the design and effective implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster reduction, while the Climate Action Summit in New York, to be hosted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in September 2019, includes a nature-based solutions (NbS) track, focusing on, inter alia, land-based ecosystems and smart agriculture solutions.

15. Chapter IV of this document provides an overview of the cooperation between UNCCD and WOCAT, and the availability of best practices on SLM. It also addresses the relation between SLM and emerging new concepts of Ecosystem-based Adaptation and Nature Based Solutions

16. Chapter V of this document provides conclusions and recommendations.

II. Practices and working modalities for the Science-Policy Interface in 2018 and 2019

17. In accordance with decision 19/COP.13, the Bureau of the CST defined the process for the staged renewal of SPI membership, revised the SPI terms of reference accordingly² and adopted these in its meeting on 7 December 2017. The renewal of SPI membership using a rotating system requires the exceptional term extension of no more than eight SPI members by two years. Ultimately, the terms of five serving SPI members and three observers were extended exceptionally for the biennium 2018–2019, as recommend by the prior Bureau of the CST at its meeting on 5 September 2017.

18. To renew the SPI, recruitment processes were opened in parallel between 7 November to 4 December 2017, including:

- (a) A global call for the selection of independent scientists, to which 122 applications were received from 57 different countries;
- (b) A global call for the selection of observer organizations, to which 12 applications were received; and
- (c) Five regional calls to identify and nominate a scientist to represent each region.

¹ See also document ICCD/COP(14)/12: “Report of the Evaluation Office. Note by the secretariat”.

² <https://knowledge.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/SPI%20Terms%20of%20Reference_110717.pdf>.

19. In its meeting of 7 December 2017, applications received for these calls were evaluated and ranked, as per the modalities of selection agreed by the Bureau of the CST, leading to the selection of six new independent scientists and two new observers. These new members/observers, together with five new scientists nominated by the regions, completed the membership of the SPI. Based on the revised terms of reference of the SPI, and in accordance with decision 23/COP.11, paragraph 4, and its Corrigendum, as amended by decision 19/COP.13, paragraphs 2–4, the membership of the SPI is now comprised of:

- (a) The five members of the Bureau of the CST;
- (b) Five scientists, one nominated by each region;
- (c) Ten independent scientists selected by the Bureau of the CST through an open call, taking into account regional and disciplinary balance; and
- (d) Five observers with at least one from a relevant civil society organization, one from a relevant international organization and one from a relevant United Nations organization.

20. The Bureau of the CST noted the complexity for regions to simultaneously, in parallel processes, recruit scientists for the global calls for (a) independent scientists and (b) scientists to represent each region. It thus requested the secretariat explore the option of a single call for identifying global independent scientists as well as scientists to represent regions so that both global and regional candidates could be drawn from a common pool of applications. The secretariat agreed to explore options to be discussed at the fourteenth session of the CST.

21. Also, at its meeting on 7 December 2017, the Bureau of the CST adopted a code of conduct, conflict of interest policy and a communications strategy for the SPI.³

22. The SPI is co-chaired by the Chair of the Bureau of the CST and an independent scientist elected by the members of the SPI who is not part of the Bureau of the CST. This election took place on 15 February 2018 at the seventh meeting of the SPI.

23. The practices and modalities of work of the SPI during the 2018–2019 biennium centred on working groups and meetings. Members and observers joined one or more out of three SPI working groups for each SPI work programme sub-objective and each of six SPI coordination activities with other scientific mechanisms, as defined in decision 21/COP.13. These working groups were guided by two co-leaders and at least one advisor from an observer organization. These working groups met virtually on a regular basis and face-to-face during dedicated working sessions that were central to four full meetings of the SPI: the seventh meeting of the SPI (15–16 February 2018), the eighth meeting of the SPI (10–12 October 2018), the ninth meeting of the SPI (25–27 February 2019) and the tenth meeting of the SPI (to take place on 31 August 2019).

24. The working groups developed a preliminary approach and action plan for their work, leading to concept notes which were submitted to the secretariat for review and for approval of the allocation of resources for these activities. Following the guidance provided in decision 19/COP.12, paragraph 2, these concept notes identified the most optimal way forward (e.g. commissioning an individual or group of experts, organizing expert meetings and/or encouraging the organization of regional meetings by regional scientific institutions or networks) to address the knowledge requirements.

25. Over the course of the biennium 2018–2019, the SPI produced three technical reports and associated science-policy briefs,⁴ which contributed to the key messages and policy options detailed in document ICCD/COP(14)/CST/2 and document ICCD/COP(14)/CST/3. Although not requested as deliverables under the SPI work programme, the terms of reference for the SPI encourages members and observers to develop scientific publications building upon the assessment work of the SPI. Over the course of the biennium 2018–2019, current and former SPI members and observers contributed to 14 peer-reviewed publications, which were published in indexed scientific journals as well as 4 other peer-reviewed publications.

³ <https://knowledge.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/SPI%20Communications%20Strategy_110117_0.pdf>.

⁴ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/science-policy-interface/spi-publications>>.

A number of these were part of a special issue dedicated to land degradation neutrality (LDN) in the scientific journal *Environmental Science & Policy*.⁵ These publications are listed in the annex to this document.

26. The SPI contributed to and cooperated with six other international scientific panels and bodies dealing with DLDD issues, including the scientific peer review of thematic assessments and other major reports produced by these scientific mechanisms (a total of eight different reviews). Where requested by Parties in decision 21/COP.13 and decision 22/COP.13, the SPI conducted additional analyses of key messages of these reports relevant for the UNCCD, leading to the policy proposals detailed in document ICCD/COP(14)/CST/4. During this biennium, the SPI, working with the secretariat, also established more formal relationships with these scientific mechanisms, as requested by Parties in decision 19/COP.13.

27. The secretariat worked to facilitate communication between the UNCCD and other stakeholders on matters related to the SPI and its scientific partners over the course of the biennium 2018–2019. This included raising awareness of national focal points, science and technology correspondents and the roster of experts on scientific peer review opportunities open to experts from all countries and engaging these and other stakeholders with knowledge in and experience with land degradation neutrality in an online survey in November–December 2018, which contributed to the conclusions and recommendations in document ICCD/COP(14)/CST/2. The secretariat also worked with the SPI to launch the UNCCD Science to Policy Blog, which has been designed for scientists, experts, practitioners, policy-makers and journalists to share their insights, expertise and ideas with other UNCCD stakeholders.⁶

28. Through these practices and modalities of work, the SPI has responded to all the recommendations of an external assessment detailed in document ICCD/COP(13)/CST/6 and further documented in the report of the UNCCD Evaluation Office (document ICCD/COP(14)/12).

III. Dissemination of relevant knowledge through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub

29. The UNCCD Knowledge Hub, which was launched at the fifteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, is aimed at, inter alia, scaling up SLM practices and increasing the knowledge and scientific and technical skills of stakeholders in the Convention. It has been developed as a single platform to fulfil the knowledge-sharing needs of all UNCCD stakeholders by linking the content of various knowledge partners and integrating the knowledge tools and products developed by the SPI (including the Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality) and various other UNCCD initiatives.

30. The Knowledge Hub underpins the UNCCD website, providing the background information and scientific foundation for the main messages on the website.⁷ The result has been a unified brand and a single point of access to all UNCCD efforts to provide capacity, knowledge and data to end users.

31. Currently the Knowledge Hub consists of the following parts:

(a) All SPI products, which are now presented in an interactive way, enabling the various components of SPI knowledge products to be easily linked to the thematic information and relevant other sections of the Knowledge Hub;

(b) The UNCCD E-Library, with regularly updated access to relevant publications;

⁵ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/science-policy-interface/spi-publications>>.

⁶ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/unccd-science-policy-blog>>.

⁷ See also document ICCD/COP(14)/4: “Report on progress in the implementation of the UNCCD communication plan and the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010–2020)”.

- (c) The Capacity Building Marketplace, which promotes capacity-building opportunities offered by stakeholders from around the world;
- (d) Best practices on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in cooperation with WOCAT;
- (e) The Global Land Outlook (GLO);
- (f) Key information on the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) target -setting process;
- (g) All relevant country information, including national action programmes (NAPs) and a new section on LDN targets (including a summary of the voluntary LDN targets adopted by countries, the national LDN report, and the LDN country commitment) and the LDN country profiles (for countries that produced one);
- (h) Databases with knowledge- sharing systems as reported by country Parties in the UNCCD reporting process;
- (i) The roster of experts nominated by country Parties; and
- (j) The UNCCD Science to Policy Blog, which is designed for scientists, experts, practitioners, policy-makers and journalists to share their insights, expertise and ideas with other UNCCD stakeholders. The blog is also a way for the UNCCD to reach out to the general public and promote specific issues of interest.

32. The thematic approach of the Knowledge Hub allows for interlinkages between these different knowledge products. For example, it uses the SPI report “SLM Contribution to Successful Land-based Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation” as a knowledge tool to provide easy access to SLM practices from the WOCAT database and other sources.

33. In 2019 the Knowledge Hub also launched the UNCCD-led Drought Toolbox, incorporating existing parts of the Knowledge Hub and providing access to tools developed by and with partners. The Drought Toolbox has been implemented in support of the Drought Initiative, in close collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the National Drought Mitigation Center of the University of Nebraska, the UN Environment-DHI Centre on Water and Environment and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).⁸

34. The Drought Toolbox is designed around the following three modules, in alignment with the structure of the DRAMP (Drought Resilience, Adaptation and Management Policy) framework:⁹

- (a) Drought monitoring and early warning;
- (b) Drought vulnerability assessment; and
- (c) Drought risk mitigation measures.

35. The Drought Toolbox contains databases with tools, best practices, methods, evidence, datasets and knowledge that countries can deploy to mitigate the impacts of drought. These are made accessible with the help of a simple decision support tool, implemented in the form of an online Questions and Answers module.

36. In collaboration with the other partners, the UN environment-DHI Centre on Water and Environment led the development of a tool focusing on drought monitoring and early warning systems, integrated in module one of the toolbox. It provides easy access to a large number of freely available spatial datasets that are updated near-live.

37. The existing structure of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub enabled the secretariat to develop and integrate the Drought Toolbox in a cost-effective way, enabling synergies between the various knowledge products that are already available and those foreseen to be developed in the future. The knowledge products that are currently being developed by the

⁸ See also document ICCD/COP(14)/16 “Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Drought”.

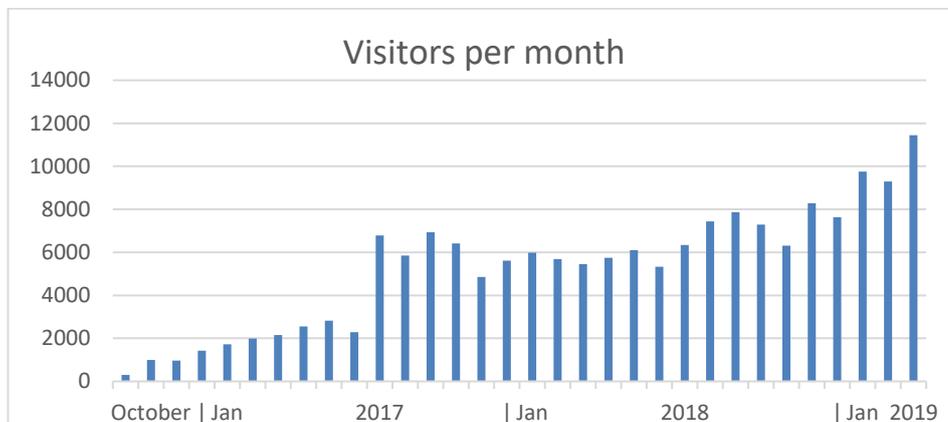
⁹ As contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/19.

SPI in relation to drought, for example, can also contribute to the Drought Toolbox as well as to other sections of the Knowledge Hub.

38. Since its launch in 2016, the number of unique visitors to the Knowledge Hub has increased to about 10,000 per month.¹⁰

Figure 1

Number of unique visitors per month



IV. Accessibility of best practices on sustainable land management

39. Knowledge of SLM practices plays a central role in providing practical guidance for on-the-ground solutions in relation to many topics covered by the UNCCD Knowledge Hub and has been emphasized in many COP decisions related to interfacing science and policy and sharing knowledge. Currently, SLM is featured prominently on the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, and is linked to and supports various UNCCD-related topics. Further work might be needed to ensure alignment with similar solutions and initiatives proposed under the other Rio conventions.

40. For sharing knowledge about SLM, the UNCCD secretariat has cooperated with WOCAT since 2014. As part of this cooperation, WOCAT implemented a new database for SLM practices, built on the template which was revised based on feedback received from Parties at COP 13.

41. In 2017 and 2018, the UNCCD secretariat has invited all UNCCD focal points to update the SLM practices previously reported through PRAIS, which are now included in the WOCAT database, and provided assistance to countries upon request. As of May 2019, the WOCAT knowledge base contains 1,969 SLM practices from 131 countries, as reported by 392 WOCAT users (these include 1,065 SLM technologies, 461 SLM approaches and 443 PRAIS practices). The database was accessed 53,420 times by visitors from 193 different countries since its launch in August 2016.¹¹

42. Following the recommendations by an external evaluation¹² of the cooperation between the UNCCD secretariat and WOCAT, the secretariat intends to extend this cooperation, focusing on the role of WOCAT in enabling Parties to exchange knowledge on SLM in a structured way.

43. Decision 8/COP.13 stipulates that making scientific knowledge available through the Knowledge Hub should be aimed at, among other things, scaling up SLM practices and increasing the knowledge and scientific and technical skills of stakeholders in the Convention. The SLM practices in the WOCAT database form a substantive contribution to the overall

¹⁰ Estimates provided by Google Analytics: Unique users per month for <http://knowledge.unccd.int>. Individuals that browse the site multiple times per day or month only get counted as one unique visitor. Numbers are estimates as provided by Google Analytics.

¹¹ Source: WOCAT <http://qcat.wocat.net>, May 2019.

¹² See also document ICCD/COP(14)/12: “Report of the Evaluation Office”.

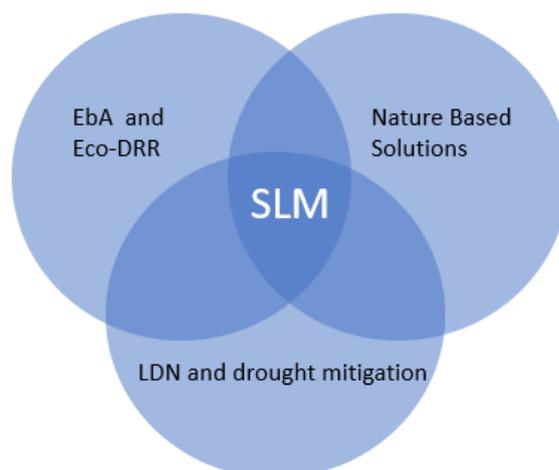
body of knowledge on SLM, which is made available to all UNCCD stakeholders through the Knowledge Hub.

44. Furthermore, by its decision 9/COP.13, the COP requests the secretariat to build on and strengthen collaboration with other United Nations entities and the Rio convention secretariats to support drought risk mitigation measures. In the UNCCD-led Drought Toolbox, which is part of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, the best practices from WOCAT are featured under the third pillar on drought risk mitigation measures (among practices, examples and other knowledge provided by other partners, such as FAO and WMO).

45. Through knowledge products of the SPI, the cooperation with WOCAT and other sources, SLM features prominently in the UNCCD Knowledge Hub. However, further work might be needed to ensure coherence in approaches with the other Rio conventions and other relevant partners, and specifically with ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) and nature-based solutions (NbS), in the context of the CBD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Figure 2

Sustainable land management potentially contributes to land degradation neutrality and drought mitigation, ecosystem-based adaptation, ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction, and nature-based solutions



46. At its fourteenth session in November 2018, the Conference of the Parties to the CBD adopted the voluntary guidelines for the design and effective implementation of EbA and Eco-DRR¹³ defined as holistic approaches that use biodiversity and ecosystem functions/services to manage the risks of climate-related impacts and disasters. The voluntary guidelines contain a framework for mainstreaming EbA and Eco-DRR in development and sectoral plans, including land use, in both rural and urban contexts.

47. In addition, under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, the UNFCCC secretariat was requested to compile information on ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation. These are now compiled in a database now included in the Adaptation Knowledge Portal¹⁴ and periodically documented in UNFCCC synthesis reports, which document the contribution of EbA initiatives to climate change mitigation by reducing net emissions from ecosystem degradation and by enhancing carbon sequestration.¹⁵

¹³ CBD COP decision 14/5 <<https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-05-en.pdf>>.

¹⁴ See <<https://unfccc.int/topics/resilience/resources/adaptation-databases>>.

¹⁵ See: Adaptation planning, implementation and evaluation addressing ecosystems and areas such as water resources, FCCC/SBSTA/2017/3.

48. In December 2018, by its decision 18/CMA.1,¹⁶ the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement included NbS to climate change adaptation among the information Parties should provide about their adaptation actions under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement.

49. Ecosystems-based approaches to disaster risk reduction are also embraced in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 under paragraphs 28(d) and 30(n).¹⁷

50. In addition, the Climate Action Summit¹⁸ will be hosted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York in September 2019, which includes an NbS track, focusing on, inter alia, forest- and land-based ecosystems, smart agriculture and food systems solutions.¹⁹ The NbS track will be led by China and New Zealand and supported by the United Nations Environment Programme.

51. The NbS track is one of nine interdependent tracks identified as having high potential to curb greenhouse gas emissions and increase global action on adaptation and resilience, therefore contributing to the overall objective of boosting ambition and rapidly accelerating action to implement the Paris Agreement. A Chair’s summary will capture the initiatives and commitments showcased at the Summit. The Summit proposals are expected to be furthered by the United Nations system and are being fed into the process leading up to the twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 25) and beyond.

52. Under the work programme for the biennium 2018–2019, the UNCCD SPI developed a report titled “Realising the Carbon Benefits of Sustainable Land Management Practices: Guidelines for the Estimation of Soil organic Carbon in the Context of Land Degradation Neutrality Planning and Monitoring”, a synthesis of which is contained in document ICCD/COP(14)/CST/2. The report emphasizes that the primary instrument for achieving LDN is through SLM approaches and technologies, and aims to provide practical guidance to support the development of SLM interventions to maintain or enhance soil organic carbon (SOC) stocks.

53. SLM technologies have the potential to contribute to multiple benefits. SLM plays a central role in achieving LDN and can contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (and the post-2020 biodiversity framework) as well as, inter alia through SOC and NbS to climate change adaptation, to the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national adaptation plans of UNFCCC country Parties.

54. Noting that SLM, EbA, Eco-DRR and NbS share a number of common objectives and elements, exploring and documenting what is in common would contribute to realizing the synergies among the Rio conventions, particularly if SLM technologies and best practices can be aligned between the land-based solutions promoted under EbA, Eco-DRR and NbS within the processes of the UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC.

55. The UNCCD secretariat could work with various knowledge partners from the UNFCCC, CBD and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub to achieve that this shared vision is reflected in the body of knowledge on SLM, inter alia through ensuring there is coherence and alignment in the way these solutions are categorized and promoted through the UNCCD Science-Policy instruments and Knowledge Hub.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

56. Having considered the reports in this document, the progress made on the development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub and on the dissemination of best practices

¹⁶ See: FCCC/PA/CMA/2018/3/Add.2 Decision 18/CMA.1 – Annex Modalities, procedures and guidelines for the transparency framework for action and support.

¹⁷ <https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf>.

¹⁸ <<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/>>.

¹⁹ Source: Information Note on the 2019 Climate Action Summit of the Secretary-General <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/assets/pdf/Information_Note_Climate%20Summit_20Mar2019.pdf>.

on SLM, the CST may wish to recommend the following elements for consideration by the COP, in which the COP would:

(a) Note with appreciation the good performance of the SPI in implementing its 2018-2019 work programme and the significant progress made by the SPI toward achieving the objectives that were set for it;

(b) Also note with appreciation the work done by the secretariat on developing and maintaining UNCCD knowledge-sharing services, brokering scientific and technical knowledge, and interfacing science and policy through, inter alia, the provision of easy access to the knowledge developed by the SPI and through the further development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub;

(c) Acknowledge the continuing efforts by the secretariat and WOCAT in promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of SLM best practices;

(d) Request the Bureau of the CST to refine the SPI renewal procedures so that all applicants to a single call for new members could be considered in the process of identifying and selecting global independent scientists as well as in the regional processes for identifying and nominating one scientist to represent each respective region;

(e) Request the secretariat to continue the mobilization of resources for the effective functioning of the SPI;

(f) Request the Secretariat to continue the expansion and further enhancement of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub to facilitate the dissemination of relevant knowledge to all stakeholders;

(g) Request the secretariat to work with other Rio conventions and relevant partners to ensure coherence and alignment in the way EbA, Eco-DRR, NbS and SLM are categorized and promoted through the UNCCD science-policy instruments and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub;

(h) Encourage Parties and invite experts nominated by country Parties and other stakeholders to continue to share information on knowledge-sharing systems, recent publications and other relevant DLDD/SLM information through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub;

(i) Encourage Parties and invite other stakeholders to continue submitting cases of relevant best practices in order to increase the knowledge base on SLM;

(j) Invite developed country Parties and other countries in a position to do so to support the activities of the SPI; and

(k) Invite Parties and financial and technical institutions to support the maintenance, expansion, and further enhancement and development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.

Annex

Peer-reviewed publications co-authored by one or more Science-Policy Interface member or observer resulting from the work of the SPI²⁰

[English only]

I. Referenced journal articles

1. **Akhtar-Schuster, M.**, L.C. Stringer, A. Erlewein, **G. Metternicht**, S. Minelli, U. Safriel, and S. Sommer. 2017. Unpacking the concept of land degradation neutrality and addressing its operation through the Rio Conventions. *Journal of Environmental Management* 195(1):4-15: <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2016.09.044>>.
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4. ²³Collantes, V., K. Kloos, P. Henry, A. Mboya, T. More, and **G. Metternicht**. 2018. Moving towards a twin-agenda: Gender equality and land degradation neutrality. *Environmental Science & Policy* 89:247-253. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2018.08.006>>.
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6. ²³**Kapović Solomun, M., N. Barger**, A. Cerda, S. Keesstra, and M. Marković. 2018. Assessing land condition as a first step to achieving land degradation neutrality: A case study of the Republic of Srpska. *Environmental Science & Policy* 90:19-27. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2018.09.014>>.
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9. ²³Chasek, P., **M. Akhtar-Schuster**, B.J. Orr, A. Luise, H. Rakoto Ratsimba and **U. Safriel**. 2019. Land degradation neutrality: The science-policy interface from the UNCCD to national implementation. *Environmental Science & Policy* 92:182-190. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2018.11.017>>.

²⁰ Names of current or former members of the SPI are in bold.

²¹ These publications are part of the special issue on LDN in the Elsevier journal *Environmental Science & Policy*.

²² This publication has been listed among the most downloaded articles from *Environmental Science & Policy* for 2017, 2018 and the first 90 days of 2019.

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11. ²³**López Santos, A.**, J.A. Torres González, A. Meraz Jiménez, J. Sosa Ramírez, G. Peña Uribe, O. Valdivia Martínez, M.Á. García Marín, J.L. González Barrios, J.R. Hernández Salgado, and J.G. Arreola Ávila. 2019. Assessing the culture of fruit farmers from Calvillo, Aguascalientes, Mexico with an artificial neural network: An approximation of sustainable land management. *Environmental Science & Policy* 92:311-322. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2018.11.015>>.
12. ²³**Cowie, A.**, C.M. Waters, F. Garland, S. Orgill, A. Baumber, R. Cross, D. O'Connell, and **G. Metternicht**. 2019. Assessing resilience to underpin implementation of Land Degradation Neutrality: a case study in the rangelands of western New South Wales. *Environmental Science & Policy* 100:37:46. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2019.06.002>>.
13. ²³Gilbey, B. **J. Davies, G. Metternicht**, and C. Magero. In Press. Taking Land Degradation Neutrality from concept to practice: Early reflections on LDN target setting and planning. *Environmental Science & Policy*. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2019.04.007>>.
14. ²³**von Maltitz, G.**, J. Gambiza, **K. Kellner**, L. Lindeque, T. Rambau, B. Kgope. In Press. Experiences From The South African Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Process. *Environmental Science & Policy*.

II. Other peer-reviewed publications

15. Summary of the Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality. Annex 1 of the *Global Land Outlook* (2017). <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/glo/publication/annex-1-scientific-conceptual-framework-land-degradation-neutrality>>.
16. Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (2018). <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/publication/checklist-land-degradation-neutrality-transformative-projects-and-programmes>>.
17. Land Degradation Neutrality: A scientific conceptual framework, Part VI: Solutions. Chapter in: *World Atlas of Desertification* (2018). <https://wad.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/atlas_pdf/6_WAD_Solutions.pdf>.
18. Where do we stand on achieving Land Degradation Neutrality? Chapter in: *A Better World: Actions and commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals*. Volume 4: Life on Land.
19. **López Santos, A.** 2019. *Uso y manejo sostenible de suelos. Fundamentos y procedimientos prácticos selectos enfocados al autoaprendizaje y la enseñanza guiada*. 1ra ed. Ed. Universidad Autónoma Chapingo: Texcoco, Méx., Mexico 204 p.

III. Special issue on implementing land degradation neutrality: From policy challenges to policy opportunities for national sustainable development in the journal of Environmental Science and Policy

20. The publisher of climate and sustainability journals for Elsevier has offered promotional access (free of charge) to the entire Special Issue on LDN in the journal *Environmental Science & Policy* for a limited **amount** of time (6 months), beginning in mid-August 2019. In addition, the RELX Group Sustainable Development Goals Resource Centre has also agreed to host the Special Issue on LDN on its platform: <<https://sdgresources.relx.com>>.