

Decision 3/COP.12

Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets into the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Intergovernmental Working Group report on land degradation neutrality

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) (Rio+20) contained in *The future we want*, notably paragraphs 205–209 which, inter alia, stress that desertification, land degradation, and drought are challenges of a global dimension,

Also recalling that affected areas under article 1, paragraph (h), of the Convention means: “arid, semi-arid and/or dry sub-humid areas affected or threatened by desertification”,

Further recalling the particular conditions of the Regional Implementation Annexes to the Convention,

Recalling decision 22/COP.11,

Also recalling article 6 of the Convention,

Further recalling decision 8/COP.11 creating an Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) as a “follow-up to the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)”, specifically on outcomes related to LDN,

Welcoming the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the outcome document *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which includes Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15: “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”, and target 15.3: “By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world”,

Noting that paragraph 55 of that outcome document reads: “The Sustainable Development Goals and targets are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies. It is important to recognize the link between sustainable development and other relevant ongoing processes in the economic, social and environmental fields”,

Recalling that in striving to achieve SDG target 15.3, it is also important to address wider elements of the 2030 Agenda, including, inter alia, ending poverty and hunger, tackling inequality, empowering women and stimulating economic growth,

Also recalling the commitments made by national governments on DLDD issues and the recognized need for joint action within the international community,

Recognizing the unique role of the UNCCD in addressing DLDD in affected areas, and the importance of these efforts to Parties to the UNCCD in addressing SDG target 15.3 at the national and subnational level,

Also recognizing that while the Convention will make a significant contribution to achieving LDN, the full implementation of SDG target 15.3 will require contributions from other bodies and agencies and the Convention should therefore seek to work cooperatively with other bodies in a partnership to that aim,

Acknowledging that SDG target 15.3 addresses, inter alia, the objective of the Convention and provides a basis for discussion on future actions and programmes to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD, respecting the scope of the Convention,

Also acknowledging that striving to achieve LDN would significantly contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development via the rehabilitation, restoration, conservation and sustainable management of land resources, and that this could potentially involve the development of national targets,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the IWG contained in part two of document ICCD/COP(12)/4;
2. *Endorses* the IWG science-based definition of LDN as follows: “Land degradation neutrality is a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems”;¹
3. *Recognizes* that for the purpose of the scope of this Convention, this definition is intended to apply to affected areas as defined in the text of the Convention;
4. *Decides* that striving to achieve SDG target 15.3 is a strong vehicle for driving implementation of the UNCCD, within the scope of the Convention;
5. *Invites* Parties to:
 - (a) Formulate voluntary targets to achieve LDN in accordance with their specific national circumstances and development priorities, taking into account the list of options for operationalizing LDN at the national level as outlined by the IWG;
 - (b) Use the monitoring and evaluation approach adopted in decision 22/COP.11, including the progress indicators as listed in the annex to this decision, where reliable data is available pursuant to paragraph 7 of that decision and taking into consideration national circumstances and, as needed, add additional indicators to monitor, evaluate and communicate progress towards achieving the LDN target;
 - (c) Explore options on how to integrate the voluntary LDN targets in their NAPs as part of their overall discussion on the implementation of the SDGs;
 - (d) Promote the use of LDN targets and projects and other SLM initiatives as an effective vehicle for mobilizing additional sustainable financing and responsible and sustainable investments that address DLDD issues;
6. *Encourages* developed country Parties to actively support the efforts of developing country Parties in promoting SLM practices and in seeking to achieve LDN, by providing substantial financial resources, facilitated access to appropriate technology and other forms of support;

¹ The IWG definition of LDN is included here as contained in document ICCD/COP(12)/4 as amended and with the deletion of the text in square brackets.

7. *Also encourages* developed country Parties and *invites* other countries in a position to do so, multilateral financial institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, and technical and financial institutions to:

(a) Provide scientific, technical and financial assistance to help affected country Parties requesting assistance to set and achieve LDN targets as well as to implement SLM practices and LDN initiatives;

(b) Establish equitable partnerships that encourage responsible and sustainable investments and practices by the private sector, which contribute to achieving LDN that supports the health and productivity of the land and its people;

8. *Further encourages* Parties requesting assistance to include this request for support in their priorities in discussions with bilateral, multilateral and other donors, based on their national development plans or strategies;

9. *Directs* the secretariat of the UNCCD, as the lead organization for DLDD, to take the initiative and invite other relevant agencies and stakeholders such as United Nations agencies, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to seek cooperation to achieve SDG target 15.3;

10. *Requests* the secretariat and appropriate UNCCD bodies, within the scope of the Convention, to:

(a) Develop options for scaling up and scaling out successful LDN initiatives and other SLM practices;

(b) Explore how they could further develop partnerships with other organizations to provide scientific and technical support to the Parties by, inter alia, developing a 'user guide' for implementing LDN at the country level;

(c) Develop guidance for formulating national LDN targets and initiatives, including the identification, development and implementation of policy reforms, investment and incentive mechanisms, and capacity-building initiatives to address DLDD;

(d) Make options available to Parties for the integration of national LDN targets and initiatives in their NAPs;

(e) Further develop, keep under review and facilitate, including through pilot projects, the use of the UNCCD indicator framework as a contribution to the monitoring, evaluation and communication of progress towards the national LDN targets;

(f) Improve the effectiveness of collaboration with the other Rio conventions and other partners at national and, as appropriate, subnational levels to support the implementation and monitoring of LDN targets and initiatives;

11. *Also requests* the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, in consultation with the Executive Secretary, to develop options for increasing incentives and financial support, including assisting in the possible creation of an independent LDN fund, to be made available for the full realization of LDN initiatives;

12. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth session on progress made in implementing this decision.

*12th plenary meeting
23 October 2015*

Annex

Progress indicators for strategic objectives 1–3²

- Trends in population living below the relative poverty line and/or income inequality in affected areas
- Trends in access to safe drinking water in affected areas
- Trends in land cover
- Trends in land productivity or functioning of the land
- Trends in carbon stocks above and below ground
- Trends in abundance and distribution of selected species

² These progress indicators were agreed in decision 22/COP.11.