

Decision 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

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decision 3/COP.12,

Also recalling 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 Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3, it is also important to address wider elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including, inter alia, ending poverty and hunger, tackling inequality, promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, and stimulating economic growth,

Also recalling the usefulness of the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on the follow-up to the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)¹ and subsequent decision 3/COP.12, which endorses the IWG science-based definition of land degradation neutrality 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”,

Recognizing that for the purpose of the scope of the Convention, this definition is intended to apply to affected areas as defined in the text of the Convention,

¹ Document ICCD/COP(12)/4.

Recalling that decision 3/COP.12 states that striving to achieve Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3 is a strong vehicle for driving implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), within the scope of the Convention,

Acknowledging that land degradation neutrality contributes to the implementation of the Convention and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by improving the living conditions and resilience of affected populations and ecosystems services while providing local, national, regional and global benefits,

Also acknowledging that action to achieve land degradation neutrality as set out in Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3 can deliver multiple benefits and that land degradation neutrality has the potential to act as an accelerator for achieving a number of Sustainable Development Goals and as a catalyst for attracting sustainable development financing and climate finance to implement the Convention,

Recognizing that, while the Convention is making a significant contribution to combating desertification/land degradation and drought and achieving land degradation neutrality, the full implementation of Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3 will require contributions from other bodies and agencies,

Also recognizing that the UNCCD secretariat, as the lead organization addressing desertification/land degradation and drought, has successfully taken the initiative and invited other relevant agencies and stakeholders, such as United Nations agencies, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector, to collaborate to achieve Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3,

Recalling decision 3/COP.12, which invites Parties to formulate voluntary targets to achieve land degradation neutrality in accordance with their specific national circumstances and development priorities, taking into account the list of options for operationalizing land degradation neutrality at the national level as outlined by the Intergovernmental Working Group,

1. *Invites* Parties that formulate voluntary targets to achieve land degradation neutrality to:

(a) Ensure that their land degradation neutrality targets and the activities to achieve these targets are directly linked to their national Sustainable Development Goal agendas and create leverage and synergies with their countries' climate and biodiversity agendas, ideally through joint programming of the three Rio conventions, at the national level and with the full engagement of relevant stakeholders;

(b) Use the monitoring and evaluation approach adopted in decision 7/COP.13, including the progress indicators therein, where reliable data is available and taking into consideration national circumstances and, as needed, add additional indicators to monitor, evaluate and communicate progress towards achieving the land degradation neutrality target;

2. *Also invites* all Parties and multilateral and bilateral partners to scale up and facilitate effective financing for combating desertification/land degradation and drought, achieving land degradation neutrality, and advancing the implementation of the Convention in reference to decision 14/COP.13;

3. *Further invites* all Parties to enhance the implementation of the Convention and Sustainable Development Goals by:

(a) Fostering national-level synergies among the three Rio conventions;

(b) Strengthening national-level coordination and cooperation among those responsible for addressing desertification/land degradation and drought, socioeconomic development, finance, food and water security, agriculture, environment, etc., as appropriate;

(c) Seeking to leverage the cross-cutting benefits of sustainable land management in national-level policies and programmes relating to poverty reduction, food and water security, agriculture, environment, finance, etc., as appropriate;

(d) Engaging all relevant stakeholders.

4. *Requests* the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and appropriate UNCCD bodies, including the Science-Policy Interface, within their respective mandates, to:

(a) Continue to develop partnerships to support the implementation of the Convention and land degradation neutrality, taking note of, as appropriate, the Changwon Initiative, the Ankara Initiative and other complementary initiatives, to provide scientific and technical support to the Parties by, inter alia, developing guidance for leveraging the implementation of the Convention and land degradation neutrality, identifying project opportunities and connecting respective partners for the further development of implementation initiatives, including transformative land degradation neutrality projects and programmes, promoting gender responsive approaches in line with the Gender Action Plan² found in decision 30/COP.13, and providing advisory support for nationally accredited institutions to the climate finance and other sustainable development finance institutions;

(b) Contribute to the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will address Sustainable Development Goal 15, among others, by engaging with and, as appropriate, facilitating participation in regional meetings and other activities leading up to the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and providing inputs, including a potential submission in consultation with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, with the aim of highlighting countries' progress towards the implementation of the Convention and, as appropriate, the achievement of their voluntary land degradation neutrality targets;

5. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth session on the implementation of this decision.

*10th plenary meeting
15 September 2017*

² Contained in document ICCD/COP(13)/19.