



United Nations

ICCD/CRIC(18)/8



Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.: General
28 June 2019

Original: English

Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

Eighteenth session

New Delhi, India, 3–12 September 2019

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Development and promotion of activities for targeted capacity-building to further the implementation of the Convention

Report on the development and promotion of activities for targeted capacity-building to further the implementation of the Convention

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

At its thirteenth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted decision 8/COP.13 on capacity-building, bearing in mind the importance and need for capacity-building for the implementation of the UNCCD in general, and specifically its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, as well as the facilitating role the implementation of the UNCCD must play for the efficacious implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This decision mandates the secretariat to implement concrete actions to facilitate this capacity-building process.


This document reports on the activities implemented by the secretariat in its efforts to comply with the stipulations of decision 8/COP.13. It also contains conclusions and recommendations which the COP may wish to consider in its deliberations on possible future actions to support capacity-building within the framework of the UNCCD.

* The present report was submitted after the deadline due to constraints in documentation processing.

GE.19-11036(E)



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I. Introduction

1. By its decision 8/COP.13, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) mandated the secretariat, within available resources to:

(a) Continue targeted capacity-building to support the implementation of the Convention, including land degradation neutrality (LDN) by Parties. And, to do so in cooperation with Parties and relevant intergovernmental organizations, as well as the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders;

(b) Also continue fostering partnerships to facilitate capacity development for, inter alia, national drought preparedness planning, drought early warning, risk and vulnerability assessments, mitigation of enhanced drought risk and the impacts of sand and dust storms (SDS);

(c) Further develop and promote tools for cost-effective capacity-building under the Convention, including, inter alia, the Capacity Building Marketplace (CBM) and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub;

(d) Develop and strengthen partnerships to build the required capacities to mainstream gender in the implementation of the Convention in order to enhance the role of women and youth in combating desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) and increase the resilience of the women vulnerable to DLDD; and

(e) In cooperation with partners, make scientific knowledge and best practices available for stakeholders in the Convention through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, aimed at, inter alia, scaling up sustainable land management (SLM) practices and increasing the knowledge and scientific and technical skills of stakeholders in the Convention.

2. Through this decision, the COP further stipulated that the secretariat is to report on the implementation of this decision at its fourteenth session (COP 14).

3. In keeping with the stipulation outlined in point 2 above, this document details the activities being carried out by the secretariat in fulfilment of its mandate as given by decision 8/COP.13. It also outlines some of the challenges faced in the implementation of these activities, thereby providing additional information which Parties may use in their deliberations when determining the additional actions necessary in the area of capacity-building to support the implementation of the Convention.

II. Targeted capacity-building to support implementation

4. The COP, having considered the general need for capacity-building to facilitate the UNCCD implementation process, decided in paragraph 1 (a) of decision 8/COP.13 that the secretariat should continue targeted capacity-building to support the same, including to support the achievement of LDN by Parties, and to do this with Parties and all other relevant stakeholders. This section of this report outlines the actions taken by the secretariat to implement the stipulations of paragraph 1 (a) and the achievements resulting from the same.

A. General support for targeted capacity-building

5. For the period under review, the secretariat, the Global Mechanism (GM) and other partners undertook and continue to undertake several activities to facilitate targeted capacity-building. These activities are detailed below.

1. Improving the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification internship programme

6. The secretariat, realizing the need to offer more opportunities for young professionals and university graduates to be trained in disciplines relating to the UNCCD process, has expanded its internship programme, including through direct collaboration with several

universities. For the period under review, more than 50 interns were trained under the UNCCD Capacity-Building Office. Interns were also accepted at all other units of the secretariat and also at the GM. The overriding majority of these interns were able to find professional placements in various institutions dealing with issues of land and the environment and/or sustainable development upon completion of their internship.

2. Targeted capacity-building through outreach

7. During the biennium under review, the secretariat undertook a massive outreach programme targeting schools and universities to educate students about what they can practically do to enhance UNCCD implementation. This outreach programme involved lectures, expositions and exhibitions, as well as inviting young professionals to observe the workings of the secretariat. Additionally, the secretariat organized a photo, essay and video competition which, in all cases, saw participation by youths from more than 80 countries around the world. Other exhibitions were held on special occasions such as at the Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) Global Festival of Action, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice 48, and on World Day to Combat Desertification, with a specific focus on the theme of capacity-building. Admittedly, due to the expensive cost of travel, all of this practical face-to-face outreach was done with learning institutions mostly in Germany where the secretariat is based.

3. Targeted capacity-building through e-learning

8. The secretariat has paid great attention to using e-learning as a major way of providing targeted capacity-building. For the period under review, six new e-learning courses were directly developed by the UNCCD Capacity-Building Office, including one which provided training in both English and Spanish to facilitate the most recent reporting process. The secretariat is currently working on six additional courses to be launched later this year or early in 2020. By using its CBM and the new UNCCD e-learning platform (see section III), Parties and other interested stakeholders are given access to other relevant capacity-building e-learning materials provided by agencies such as the World Bank (WB), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), by universities and other learning institutions, and by CSOs. These opportunities are currently provided in English, Spanish and French.

4. Face-to-face targeted capacity-building

9. In order to facilitate the 2018 reporting process by strengthening the capacities of reporting entities, particularly affected country Parties, the secretariat and GM organized a series of regional workshops along with other partners including UNEP, and with the support of the GEF. These exercises were aimed at providing reporting entities with the knowledge, skills and other capacities necessary to enable them to fulfil all the requirements of the reporting process. These training exercises were held for all annexes of the Convention. Further information can be found in document ICCD/CRIC(18)/6.

10. In keeping with decision 22/COP.11, significant progress has been made in the pursuit of methodological harmonization in the development of default national estimates for UNCCD land-based progress indicators while simultaneously building the technical capacity of Parties to verify or replace default national estimates using data sourced/computed nationally/locally while using a common underlying methodology. This was facilitated by the standardized automation of agreed algorithms in open-source tools/plugins such as Trends.Earth, developed by Conservation International in consultation with the UNCCD secretariat.

11. The majority of country Parties used default data to report on the land-based progress indicators, underscoring the utility, suitability and need for data prepared in a globally consistent manner, lowering the barriers to reporting for many countries.¹ In addition, country

¹ ICCD/CRIC(17)/2).

Parties indicated their use of Trends.Earth, which enabled national adaptation of default data to official country boundaries as well as the introduction of national datasets while employing the same methods, classes and underlying algorithms that had been used to calculate the default data. In this way, the majority of countries, whether through the direct use of default data or through analysis of national data within Trends.Earth, reported on the UNCCD progress indicators in a methodologically harmonious way.

12. The first UNCCD Capacity Building Training Fair was held in Georgetown, Guyana immediately prior to the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 17). This fair, which was mainly for National Focal Points (NFPs) and Science and Technology Correspondents (STCs), but also saw wide participation from many CSOs, was focused on creating, developing and strengthening capacity to support UNCCD implementation in the four focal areas of the secretariat's present work, namely:

- (a) Gender matters for LDN;
- (b) Perspectives on LDN implementation;
- (c) Drought preparedness; and
- (d) Resilience to SDS.

13. The concrete aim of this fair was to give participants practical knowledge that they may use for a more efficient implementation of the UNCCD.² NFPs and STCs from more than 100 country Parties participated in these exercises with representatives from more than 25 CSOs. This training was organized and delivered with the cooperation and collaboration of the Government of the Republic of Guyana as well as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), UNEP, FAO, GEF secretariat, Green Climate Fund (GCF) secretariat, African Development Bank (AfDB), West African Development Bank (BOAD), UNDP, Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT). Substantive financial support was provided by the Soil Leadership Academy.

14. A special training session was organized in collaboration with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Caribbean Partnership for Initiative Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) secretariat. At this training, NFPs and representatives of CSOs from the Caribbean subregion were trained in various aspects of the UNCCD process at the global, regional, subregional and national levels.

15. Through cooperation and collaboration with the CSO Fundación Argeste, the secretariat supported the hosting of a major capacity-building exercise in Pontevedra, Spain.

16. The secretariat organized a series of lectures at various universities through its Capacity-Building Office where students were introduced to the UNCCD process in general and to such key issues as indicators for measuring LDN. Lectures were held at universities including the University of Cologne, Germany, LUMSA University, Italy, the Centre International de Formation Européenne (CIFE) and Wageningen University, Holland.

17. The secretariat conducted capacity-building events for journalists, mostly back-to-back with key UNCCD major events. These included a one-day media workshop held in Guyana, Georgetown in preparation for CRIC 17. Fourteen participants attended, including three sponsored from the region. Three other workshops were envisioned as this report was being written. A one-day international media workshop is planned to take place in Ankara, Turkey between 16–19 June 2018, with a one-day thematic training session, a field trip and three-day science workshops at the International Soil Congress. A two-day capacity workshop for 30 journalists in India and the Southern Asia Region (ARC) is planned to take place in July and a one-day workshop, two weeks of thematic briefings and a field trip are planned during COP14. Journalists sponsored for the events undergo a rigorous competitive selection process designed to attract journalists with a clear interest in covering this subject

² For more information, see paragraphs 19, 25 and 35.

that are either very good writers or potentially good trainers. Submissions for these processes show that many of the journalists interested in covering the subject have weak writing skills. The lack of dedicated resources and the need to ensure a return on the investment in the sponsored candidates favours experienced journalists who often come from the same countries or regions. Media networks, such as the Earth Journalism Network, have developed the capacities of many developing country journalists to report on climate change and biodiversity processes.

18. The second UNCCD Capacity Building Training Fair is scheduled to coincide with CRIC 19. All Parties and CSOs accredited to the UNCCD shall be invited to attend this exercise which, building on the experience gained from the first exercise, will tentatively focus on capacity-building in the following areas:

- (a) The Green enterprise Training Programme;
- (b) Drought (practical application of the Drought Toolbox); and
- (c) Gender and concrete ways of mainstreaming gender issues.

19. In collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Turkey through the Ankara Initiative, the secretariat is organizing two face-to-face capacity-building exercises for Annex I Parties. These exercises will be held in late 2019 in the Republic of Turkey with a focus on the issues of achieving LDN, mitigating drought and land ownership rights and gender.

B. Supporting Parties to achieve land degradation neutrality

20. The GM of the UNCCD and the secretariat supported countries in achieving LDN through the LDN Target Setting Programme (TSP), including support for the development of LDN transformative projects and programmes (TPP), as outlined in document ICCD/CRIC(17)/3. Capacity-building activities executed under the LDN TSP included:

(a) The preparation of key technical guidelines supporting countries in LDN target setting and implementation, such as “LDN – A Technical Guide”,³ the “Achieving LDN at the Country Level: Building Blocks for LDN Target Setting” brochure,⁴ the “Methodological Note to Set National Voluntary LDN Targets Using the UNCCD Indicator Framework”⁵ and the “Checklist for LDN TPP”,⁶

(b) The organization of global, regional and topic-specific webinars to build the necessary capacities of the LDN TSP country delivery teams, as well as to promote knowledge-sharing among participant countries on the LDN TSP building blocks, i.e. leveraging LDN, assessing LDN, setting voluntary LDN targets and associated measures and achieving LDN;

(c) The maintenance of the LDN TSP website,⁷ providing all key technical documents (see above) as well as the final LDN TSP country reports and country commitments to achieve LDN;⁸

(d) The organization of more than 300 consultative meetings with more than 11,000 participants in some 90 countries to discuss LDN-related matters and to identify LDN baselines, targets and associated measures;

³ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/publication/ldn-target-setting-technical-guide>>.

⁴ <<https://www.unccd.int/publications/achieving-land-degradation-neutrality-country-level-building-blocks-ldn-target-setting>>.

⁵ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/publication/ldn-methodological-note>>.

⁶ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/access-capacity-policy-support-technology-tools/checklist-land>>.

⁷ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/access-capacity-policy-support-technology-tools/checklist-land>>.

⁸ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/home/country-information/countries-with-voluntary-ldn-targets>>.

(e) The organization of backstopping missions to support national LDN processes in most countries committed to setting voluntary LDN targets and developing LDN TPP concept notes;

(f) The organization of a training session on “LDN – Achieving LDN targets through TPPs” in November 2018 to the benefit of BOAD (Lomé, Togo) staff. This training included sessions on: the LDN conceptual framework, synergies with related issues including the Rio Conventions and SDGs, LDN target setting – results and lessons learned, LDN TPPs and LDN funding opportunities. The format was an interactive learning event facilitating the provision of state-of-the-art information on LDN and experience-sharing among participants. Such training will be replicated in each region in partnership with key stakeholders, such as the AfDB in Africa and the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization in Asia;

(g) The organization of the UNCCD Capacity Building Training Fair at CRIC 17 in January 2019 on the “Perspectives of LDN”, including sessions on the LDN Scientific Conceptual Framework, stakeholder engagement, LDN response hierarchy, LDN mainstreaming and LDN resource mobilization and implementation;

(h) The organization of capacity-building workshops, together with UN Women and the IUCN, to provide technical advice on integrating gender issues into LDN transformative projects and strengthening capacities of country Parties to integrate gender issues into the implementation of the UNCCD. Three capacity-building workshops took place in (i) Saint Lucia, for the development of an LDN transformative project in the Caribbean, targeting GCF funding, (ii) the Philippines, and (iii) Zambia for LDN transformative projects targeting GEF funding. More than 100 participants, including CSOs and women’s farmers groups, benefitted from the capacity-building workshops on how to include the gender perspective in the LDN project cycle; and

(i) The organization of an interactive session at CRIC 17 on “Progress made in setting LDN targets and advancing towards LDN implementation”. During the session, countries were informed of the achievements of the LDN TSP and ongoing efforts by countries and partners to achieve the LDN targets through the development of LDN TPPs. During the discussions, countries also welcomed the achievements of the LDN TSP with appreciation and highlighted the importance of: (i) creating an enabling environment for LDN implementation, including the integration of LDN into integrated land use planning; (ii) involving all relevant national stakeholders in LDN implementation; and (iii) increasing capacity-building efforts in the design of LDN TPP.

21. These targeted capacity-building activities have enabled 84 countries (as of 30 May 2019) to validate voluntary LDN targets and laid the foundation for the development of 12 concept notes for LDN TPPs and two fully-fledged project documents.

III. Partnerships to facilitate capacity development

A. Development of partnerships to enhance targeted capacity-building

22. In keeping with the stipulations of decision 8/COP.13, paragraph 1, particularly subparagraph (d), on partnership building and working with partners to facilitate capacity-building, the secretariat strengthened its work with existing partners and through existing partnerships while working on securing new partners and partnerships, both through formal agreements, where possible, and through practical actions where such agreements proved challenging or unnecessary to conclude. In this regard, the secretariat has significantly strengthened its cooperation and collaboration with several pre-existing partners, including Fundación Argeste, the CARICOM Caribbean PISLM, the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation and the Governments of the Republics of Korea and Turkey, through the Changwon and Ankara Initiatives respectively.

23. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation on capacity-building has been signed with the CIFE. And, as this report was being written, five more MoUs were under consideration for signature by partners including the University of Cologne (Germany) and Wageningen University (Holland). It must be noted that the secretariat has

established and is strengthening its cooperation with many partners without resorting to the formal signing of MoUs or letters of agreement. The hosting of the first UNCCD CapacityBuilding Training Fair is a very clear example of such cooperation. More than 90 per cent of the 25 or more partners, including international agencies and community-based organizations, that cooperated and collaborated with the UNCCD have no formal agreement with the secretariat.

24. The secretariat Capacity-Building Office's expansion of its face-to-face outreach programme and the expansion of the CBM, as well as the creation of the new e-learning platform, have all allowed the secretariat to work with many more partners, albeit informally, that is without the need to sign MoUs or official letters of agreement. Through these initiatives, the UNCCD is building partnerships in various ways, including working with learning institutions such as universities and schools, institutions and agencies that offer capacity-building to support UNCCD implementation, such as the FAO, the WB and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and share the online training offered by CSOs.

25. The secretariat has established a partnership with the Group on Earth Observations initiative through which additional measures will be taken to develop and promote capacity-building in order to support country Parties in their efforts to achieve LDN.⁹

B. Fostering partnerships to facilitate capacity development for national drought preparedness planning, early warning, risk and vulnerability assessments

26. In collaboration with the FAO and WMO, the secretariat and the GM organized a Training Fair session on drought on the margins of CRIC 17 in January 2019, held in Georgetown, Guyana.¹⁰

27. The UNCCD, together with the WMO, FAO, Global Water Partnership (GWP) and UNEP-Danish Hydraulic Institute (DHI) organized a validation workshop of the Drought Toolbox in Antalya, Turkey from 2 to 4 May 2019 with participation of delegates from 15 countries¹¹ involved in the Drought Initiative. The selection of countries was based on regional representation and the progress in the development of National Drought Plans (NDP). The specific objectives of the exercise included: (a) testing the scope and functionality of the Drought Toolbox; (b) gathering feedback to refine the toolbox before the eventual launch at the COP; (c) planning the up-scaling of the "early warning and monitoring" pillar of the toolbox; and (d) also planning the dissemination strategy.

28. The implementation of the Drought Initiative is benefitting from the support of many partners. For example, the FAO organized a consultation meeting on strategic partnerships for carrying out the Drought Initiative at the FAO Headquarters in Rome in April 2018. The meeting saw the creation of the Drought Initiative Working Group that includes the WMO, FAO, GWP, National Drought Mitigation Centre (NDMC) of the University of Nebraska, UNCCD, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNEP-DHI Centre.

29. GWP Eastern Africa supported the exercise through contributing case studies, guidance documents and tailored analysis for Ethiopia and Sudan in the development of their NDP. GWP's multi-stakeholder platforms (Country Water Partnerships) in the countries were mobilized to contribute to the consultative meetings of the various partners.

30. The Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP) in Central and Eastern Europe, together with the Drought Management Centre for South Eastern Europe

⁹ Further information can be found in ICCD/COP(14)/5.

¹⁰ Further relevant information is available in document ICCD/COP/14/16.

¹¹ Africa: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa. Asia: Cambodia, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey (host), Uzbekistan, Vietnam. Latin America and the Caribbean: Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada. Central and Eastern Europe: Moldova.

collaborated with the UNCCD NFPs and the UNCCD Drought Initiative consultants in Macedonia, Serbia and Moldova.

31. The Union for Mediterranean (UfM), the UNDP and the Inter-American Development Bank supported the implementation of the Drought Initiative. While the UfM funded the development of NDPs in Jordan and Mauritania, the UNDP funded Iran, Somalia and Morocco's NDP development.

32. The secretariat collaborated with the FAO in the framework of the Global Framework for Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and leads a working group on "drought preparedness" with members including the WMO, FAO, GWP, UNESCO, the International Water Management Institute, the International Water Youth Network and the National Drought Mitigation Center in the United States. The first international forum on WASAG was held in Praia, Cape Verde, from 19 to 22 March 2019. The forum identified practical and innovative solutions to address water scarcity in agriculture as outlined in the Praia Commitment.¹²

33. The GWP/WMO-led IDMP¹³ in West Africa organized multi-stakeholder consultations in Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger in collaboration with the GWP Country Water Partnerships, the UNCCD NFPs and the UNCCD national consultants. The aim of these meetings was to enable the drought stakeholders to provide technical contributions to the development of the NDPs and share technical expertise and experiences from national, regional and global perspectives.

34. The secretariat also collaborated with partners including United Nations agencies, institutions and country Parties in organizing meetings and workshops, including, inter alia, in the Water for Food International Forum at the WB in Washington, D.C. (January 2018), the annual World Water Week in Stockholm (August 2018) and the European Drought Observatory/Global Drought Observatory annual meeting in Stresa, Italy (May 2019).

35. Furthermore, the secretariat represented the UNCCD on the steering committees at the IDMP and WASAG for various processes and events and provided UNCCD inputs to technical workshops on drought and sustainable water management. The above-mentioned representations and the partnerships resulted in both raised awareness about the Drought Initiative and an opportunity for important partnerships to support the development of the Drought Toolbox and national drought planning process.

C. Fostering partnerships to mitigate the impacts of sand and dust storms

36. The secretariat's partnership building to facilitate capacity development in this area is focused on practical actions, including the co-organization of training sessions and workshops and the development of training materials and modules. In January 2019, the UNCCD organized a global Capacity Building Training Fair in Georgetown, Guyana immediately prior to CRIC17. SDS formed part of the modules covered during this training event.

37. The secretariat collaborated with United Nations entities, including the UNEP and WMO in the development of a technical compendium for SDS. The aim of the compendium is to provide information and guidance on how to assess and address the risks posed by SDS, and plan actions to combat the same. Building on the compendium, the secretariat will develop training modules and e-learning materials on SDS risk management in collaboration with these partners.¹⁴

¹² <<http://www.fao.org/land-water/events/ws-forum/prai-commitment/en/>>.

¹³ <<http://www.droughtmanagement.info/>>.

¹⁴ Further information is available in document ICCD/COP(14)/17, paragraph 36.

D. Fostering partnerships to build capacities to mainstream gender in the implementation of the Convention

38. To implement the UNCCD Gender Action Plan on gender equality and women's empowerment and to build the required capacities to mainstream gender in the implementation of the Convention, the secretariat and the GM have paid great attention to strengthening collaboration with several organizations and institutions, including the IUCN and UN Women.¹⁵

IV. Further developing and promoting tools for cost-effective capacity-building

39. Paragraph 1 (c) of decision 8/COP.13 mandates the secretariat to continue developing and promoting tools for cost-effective capacity-building under the Convention. This section of the present report outlines the actions taken in this regard and the results achieved from those actions.

A. Developing and promoting e-learning tools

40. E-learning has proven to be one of the most cost-effective measures employed by the secretariat in its efforts to enhance, promote and strengthen capacity-building. For the period under review, the secretariat continued and furthered its use of this tool by undertaking the following steps:

(a) Revising and enhancing the content of four e-learning courses aimed at strengthening and improving the capacities of NFPs, accredited CSOs and the public at large;

(b) Developing and offering to NFPs, national reporting officers and other reporting entities a major e-learning course specifically focused on building capacities to facilitate the 2018 reporting process;

(c) Also developing four new e-learning courses on the UNCCD;

(d) Making the capacity-building training to support the reporting process at the first UNCCD Capacity Building Training Fair available online to give access to the public at large;

(e) Providing access to a minimum of 15 new e-learning opportunities each month via the CBM;

(f) Completing the development of a new e-learning course for each of the four modules covered during the first UNCCD Capacity Building Training Fair; and

(g) Employing social media to drive the use of the e-learning tools and products available on the various UNCCD platforms by Parties and other stakeholders.

41. In addition to the actions listed above, the UNCCD secretariat has established a new e-learning platform. This new tool is focused solely on providing e-learning opportunities to foster capacity-building in order to enhance the implementation of the Convention. This platform hosts all e-learning courses offered by the secretariat as well as those offered by other stakeholders when directly related to the UNCCD process. The platform is easily navigable, free of charge, varied and interactive. It has been integrated into the CBM and is connected to other relevant e-learning platforms.

¹⁵ For more information, see document ICCD/COP(14)/18.

B. Further development of the Capacity Building Marketplace

42. Further fulfilling its direct mandate given in paragraph 1 (c) of decision 8 /COP. 13, the secretariat continues to develop and promote the CBM. For the period under review, the following actions were realized:

- (a) A comprehensive review, redesign and relaunch of the CBM;¹⁶
- (b) An increase in the offers made in all three languages (English, French and Spanish) with a minimum of 15 new offers posted daily;
- (c) Use of the CBM to promote major capacity-building events, such as expositions, visits to learning institutions and various capacity-building competitions;
- (d) Use of the CBM to promote capacity-building opportunities offered by stakeholders from around the world;
- (e) Link-up of the CBM and the opportunities it offers with new clientele through very aggressive use of social media;
- (f) Use of the CBM as a major tool in the training of interns, research students and young professionals;
- (g) Invitations to the public at large to make use of all the services offered via the CBM; and
- (h) A study of the option to make offers in Russian.

43. The CBM is also used to host the e-learning course on reporting and now hosts the new UNCCD e-learning platform. It continues to provide opportunities for all those involved in capacity-building offers to do so free of charge. It has become a key mechanism of non-formalized cooperation and collaboration between the secretariat and many stakeholders involved in capacity-building for improved implementation of the Convention and continues to be the key resource of the secretariat used by those seeking assistance in the area of capacity-building.

C. The Knowledge Hub

44. The UNCCD Knowledge Hub, which was launched at CRIC15 in Nairobi in 2016, 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, facilitating the knowledge sharing needs of all UNCCD stakeholders by linking the content of various knowledge partners, as well as integrating the knowledge tools and products developed by the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface (SPI) and various other UNCCD initiatives.

45. Currently, the Knowledge Hub contains all SPI products in an integrated manner; databases with knowledge sharing systems as reported by country Parties in the reporting process, the Roster of Experts, best practices on SLM in cooperation with WOCAT and relevant country information.

46. The Knowledge Hub also features the e-Library, with regularly updated access to relevant publications, and the CBM. The thematic approach of the Knowledge Hub allows interlinkages to be created between these different knowledge products, e.g. by using the SPI report on “SLM Contribution to Successful Land-based Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation” to provide easy access to SLM practices from the WOCAT database. Following the workshop that validated the Drought Toolbox, the Knowledge Hub will launch this Toolbox later in 2019, incorporating and providing access to tools developed by and with partners.

47. The Knowledge Hub underpins the UNCCD website, providing the background information and scientific foundation for the main messages on the website. The result has

¹⁶ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/cbm/capacity-building-marketplace>>.

been a unified brand and a single point of access for all UNCCD efforts to provide capacity, knowledge and data to end users.¹⁷

V. Conclusions and recommendations

48. While the secretariat, with the assistance of partners and other stakeholders, was able to implement parts of its mandate as given by the COP in decision 8/COP.13, the question is, however, whether enough has been done and whether more needs to be done if there is to be truly effective capacity-building within the UNCCD process. This links up with the question of adequate resources to ensure true effectiveness within the capacity-building programme. In this regard, below are some of the conclusions and recommendations the COP may wish to consider as regards furthering the capacity-building process.

A. Conclusions

49. More can and should be done as regards capacity-building to facilitate the implementation process. This is especially true for (a) face-to-face training; (b) building partnerships, particularly of a less formal nature; (c) broadening the capacity-building programme to include many more areas relevant to the UNCCD process; (d) focusing on capacity-building in support of synergies within the framework of the UNCCD, climate change, biodiversity and the overall sustainable development agenda; and (e) paying more attention to the involvement of learning, training and research institutions.

50. The secretariat should pay even more attention to the issue of working with partners and through partnerships. This is essential if meaningful targeted capacity-building is to take place and have the required effect. Working with others at all levels, i.e. global, regional subregional, national and local, is essential for the success of the UNCCD capacity-building enterprise.

51. While there has been a favourable balance between distance and face-to-face training for the period under review, efforts should be made to increase the possibilities of the latter as the results seem to be better, generally speaking, and a reasonable amount of developing affected country Parties still face some challenges around internet accessibility at the local level.

52. While a favourable amount of work has been done with universities and other learning institutions, there is a real need for more work at this level, especially as regards the UNCCD issues becoming part of the land/environment/sustainable development curricula of the universities.

53. The capacity-building process needs greater support at the regional and subregional levels. This is important not only to develop the link between the national and global levels, but also to strengthen cooperation among the Parties of the various Annexes of the Convention as a key and necessary step to fostering greater targeted capacity-building.

54. Many more efforts need to be made by Parties at the national and local levels, for it is at these levels that capacity-building must be most effective if it is to have a real and lasting impact.

55. Much more focus should be placed on institutional capacity-building, especially in affected developing countries and more so the Small Island Developing States and least developed countries.

¹⁷ Further information on the Knowledge Hub and best practices is provided in document ICCD/COP(14)/CST/5, "The Science-Policy Interface, the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices, and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub".

56. There is a real need to encourage greater involvement of youths and young professionals in the COP, CRIC and CST processes. This will, inter alia, expose them to the workings of the UNCCD process at the international level.

B. Recommendations

57. Taking into consideration the substantive content of this report and the conclusions drawn from the same, the COP may wish to consider the recommendations outlined below:

58. Requests the GM and the secretariat of the UNCCD, in collaboration with relevant partner agencies, to continue supporting capacity-building efforts on LDN implementation with a particular focus on LDN monitoring and the effective development of LDN TPP.

59. Urges Parties to undertake the following actions:

(a) To use, as appropriate, the online Drought Toolbox to strengthen their capacity to enhance preparedness for drought and provide an appropriate response to drought; and

(b) To continue pursuing a proactive approach to drought by implementing their NDPs based on the following three key pillars: (i) comprehensive drought monitoring and early warning systems; (ii) complete vulnerability assessments for sectors, populations and regions vulnerable to drought; and (iii) implementation of drought risk mitigation measures.

60. Invites the secretariat, GM and appropriate UNCCD institutions and bodies, including the SPI, within their respective mandates:

(a) To foster collaboration and an institutional leadership role on drought impact mitigation activities by building on existing partnerships with, but not limited to, the WMO, FAO, UNESCO, UNEP, NDMC and UN-Water, and establishing new partnerships; and

(b) To conduct online training for UNCCD Drought Toolbox users through e-learning courses via an e-learning platform and live training sessions in addition to physical training workshops.

61. Requests the secretariat and GM work with partners and, on the request of Parties, facilitate the development of suitable training materials for journalists and the identification and/or provision of the trainers; and collaborate with relevant media networks, as appropriate.

62. Encourages Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to develop and implement specific capacity-building programmes to facilitate a more efficacious implementation of the Convention in particular in the areas of:

(a) Gender matters for LDN;

(b) Perspectives on LDN Implementation;

(c) Drought Preparedness; and

(d) Resilience to SDS.

63. Also encourages Parties and other stakeholders to provide more support for capacity-building at all levels, including support for accredited CSOs which are involved in and/or need capacity-building to facilitate their greater and more effective contribution and participation in the implementation process.

64. Requests the secretariat to further strengthen and deepen the partnership process, both formal and informal, to support the capacity-building process.

65. Also requests the secretariat to, within available resources, promote more face-to-face capacity-building exercises, including the further development of the UNCCD

Capacity Building Training Fair to be held at every intersessional CRIC beginning at CRIC 19.

66. Further requests the secretariat look into the possibility of developing a joint internship programme with the secretariat of the UNFCCC.
