



Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

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Interim report of the intergovernmental working group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD

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effective policy and implementation measures for addressing
drought under the UNCCD**

Report by the intergovernmental working group

Summary

The intergovernmental working group is taking stock of existing frameworks, including partnerships on drought preparedness and response, and is considering options for policy, advocacy and implementation measures to address drought under the Convention.

Over 70 international organizations, stakeholders and Parties to the UNCCD, have made electronic submissions to the IWG on: (a) policy, implementation and institutional coordination frameworks and implementation measures for addressing drought under the Convention; and (b) barriers, challenges, opportunities and implementation measures in preparing for, responding to and recovering from drought.

This interim report summarizes initial progress made until 20 October 2020 relating to the confirmation of the working group members and the design and launch of their review and consideration of the submissions and other relevant material. The analysis, findings and recommendations described in this report do not represent the final views of the IWG, which will be presented in its report to the COP at its fifteenth session (COP 15).

Three full group meetings, four coordinating committee meetings, a larger number of task group meetings as well as team-writing and reviewing activities have been held online.

Important questions for discussion by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention where the IWG could benefit from input and guidance of Parties concern:

- Any preliminary comments on the overall direction taken and options under discussion;
- Guidance concerning themes requiring further consideration for better substantiation of the options and next steps, so as to facilitate decision-making at COP 15; and
- Encouragement or facilitation of follow-up and further input to be made to the IWG by the Parties and other agencies, with the facilitation and support of the secretariat.



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I. Introduction

1. Effective drought preparedness and integrated drought management are among the largest economic, humanitarian and ecological challenges of our time. With reference to the UNCCD, Resolution 72/220 of the United Nations General Assembly called upon “Parties to the Convention to enhance and support the preparation of drought preparedness policies on, inter alia, early warning systems, vulnerability and risk assessment, as well as drought risk mitigation measures.” The Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted decision 7/COP.13 to include mitigation of the effects of drought as a strategic objective in the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework (see box below).

Box 1

The UNCCD strategic objective on drought

Strategic objective 3: To mitigate, adapt to, and manage the effects of drought in order to enhance resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems

Expected impact 3.1: Ecosystems’ vulnerability to drought is reduced, including through sustainable land and water management practices.

Expected impact 3.2: Communities’ resilience to drought is increased.

2. By decision 29/COP.13, Parties further agreed to implement a drought initiative that would focus on drought preparedness and the reduction of vulnerability and risk.

3. Decision 23/COP.14 established an intergovernmental working group (IWG) on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD. This decision also expressed the Parties’ appreciation for progress achieved through the implementation of the Drought Initiative that has provided support to Parties to develop plans for drought preparedness, regional advocacy and capacity-building. Box 2 provides additional information about the timeline leading up to this decision.

4. In accordance with decision 23/COP.14, the terms of reference of the intergovernmental working group are to take stock of and review the existing policy, implementation and institutional coordination frameworks, including partnerships, on drought preparedness and response and to consider options for appropriate policy, advocacy and implementation measures at all levels for addressing drought effectively under the Convention, in the context of a wider holistic and integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and enhancing the resilience of communities and ecosystems. The IWG is requested to present its findings and recommendations to Parties for their consideration at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15).

5. Decision 23/COP.14 also specified that the IWG would analyse the submissions by Parties, international organizations and stakeholders on: (a) policy, implementation and institutional coordination frameworks and implementation measures for addressing drought under the Convention; and (b) barriers, challenges opportunities and implementation measures as well as preparing for, responding to, and recovering from drought. The UNCCD secretariat administered a survey questionnaire on these topics and received more than 70 submissions to inform the ongoing work of the IWG. Although the advertised window for submission has closed, Parties and other partners are continuing to send their submissions to the secretariat, and all will be considered.

6. The IWG is asked to prepare an interim report for consideration by the Parties at the nineteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), which is the purpose of this document. Specifically, the present report describes the establishment of the IWG and the questions and issues under review. The IWG is reviewing and refining a listing of possible options for consideration over the coming months. The substantive findings and recommendations from the consideration of these and other options are not part of this interim report but will be reported to the COP at its fifteenth session.

7. Figure 1 illustrates the approach of the IWG and its current status. The IWG will build upon the work of four task groups to examine synergies and linkages among the issues developed within the task groups and refine the priorities for action. This could help the IWG identify gaps and recommend additional options for increasing the effectiveness of the UNCCD directly or in partnership/collaboration with others. Building on the stock-take and review, the IWG must consider and report comprehensively at COP 15 on the options for appropriate policy, advocacy and implementation measures at all levels.

Box 2

Milestones preceding the creation of the intergovernmental working group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD

2013:

- High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (Geneva)
- Integrated Drought Management Programme (World Meteorological Organization and the Global Water Partnership)
- Capacity Development Initiative on National Drought Management Policies

2015:

- 2015–2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Third United Nations Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction)
- Paris Agreement (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties)
- Sustainable Development Goal 15.3 (strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world)

2016:

- Africa Drought Conference (Windhoek, Namibia)

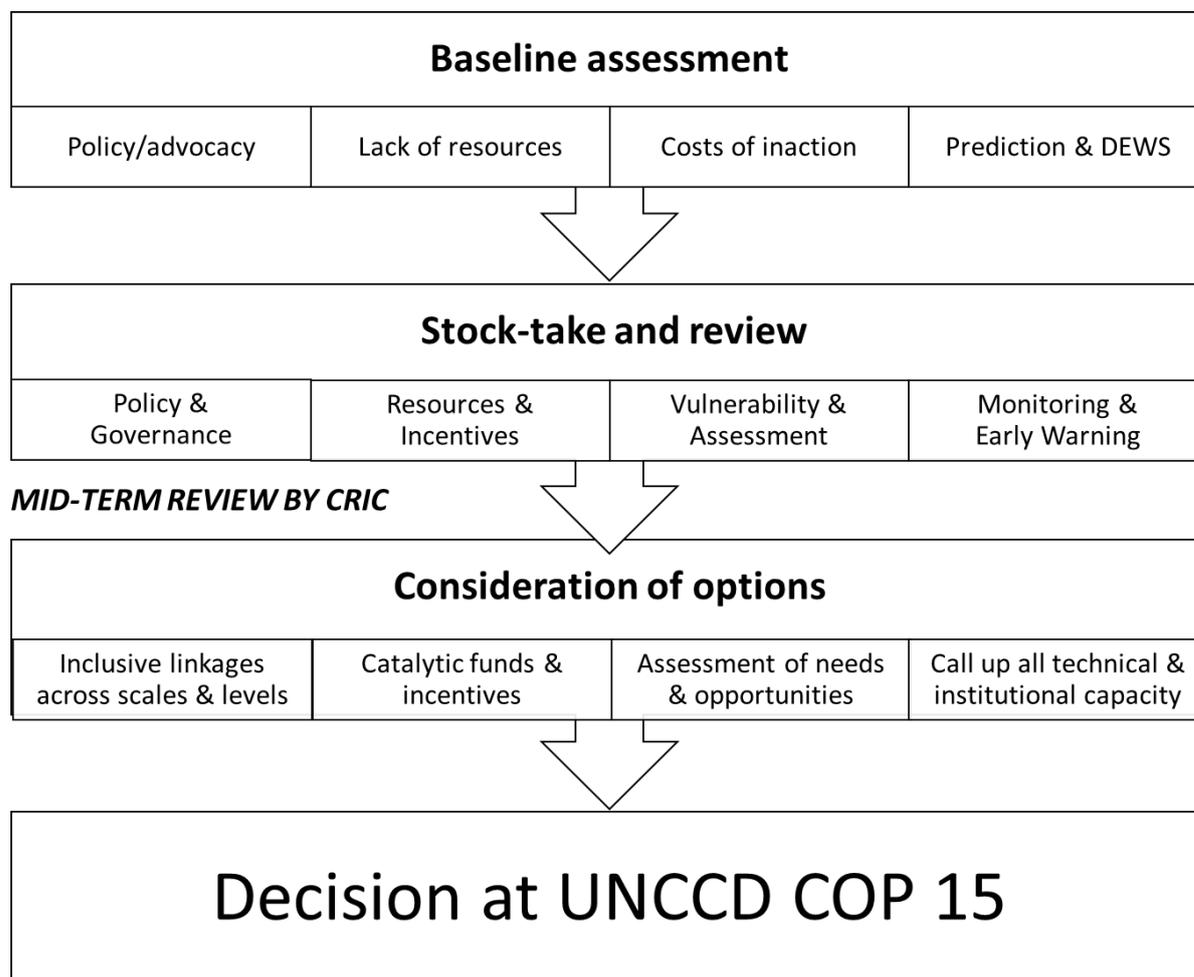
2017:

- Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD at its thirteenth session (COP 13) establishes Drought Initiative and strategic objective on drought
- Latin America and the Caribbean Drought Conference (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Plurinational State of Bolivia)

2019:

- Establishment of the intergovernmental working group at COP 14

Figure 1
Intergovernmental working group on drought: Where are we now and where are we headed?



Note: DEWS= drought early warning systems

8. The next section of this report describes the context for the IWG assessment of integrated drought management. Section III then explains how the IWG was established and how it functions. Sections IV-VII briefly present the initial progress made by four task groups. Actions for the IWG to complete its programme of work and report it to COP 15 are outlined in section VIII.

II. Global context for integrated drought management

9. The terms of reference of the IWG require that it work in the context of a wider holistic and integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and enhancement of the resilience of communities and ecosystems. The work of the IWG is running in parallel as a precursor to enable global commitments to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the achievement of the Paris Agreement, including the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to mitigate and adapt to climate change (particularly the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP)). The IWG is carrying out its work at the same time as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) is preparing a Special Report on Drought.

10. There are numerous interlinkages (between people, agencies and emerging science) throughout all these processes and the work of the IWG. Additional linkages are developing

across the global agendas for one HEALTH and for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.

11. The international community faces a wide and constantly multiplying range of short-term crises and emergencies coupled with long-term threats. Within the field of disaster risk management, drought risk is arguably among the best understood and potentially most tractable hazards, such as when communities are enabled by effective policies and partnerships to manage their ecosystems and resource needs. Even so, the design, adoption and implementation of mitigation strategies that are appropriate to changing local conditions still present challenges in any part of the world. Knowledge-sharing can play an important role to accelerate and transfer solutions.

12. While drought is a naturally occurring phenomenon, it is linked to the larger challenge of water scarcity, in which human actions can determine drought exposure and vulnerability. With improved decision-making and implementation, these aspects of drought risk might be readily prevented and reversed. Some aspects of drought risk reduction may be more amenable to change than the other, broader risks of climate change. Human societies and decision-makers have options to slow down, neutralize and alleviate the growing risks and impacts of drought through effective implementation of drought policy and partnerships. For instance, planning to address land degradation neutrality (LDN) in drought-affected regions can boost resilience to drought. With effective policy, implementation and partnerships, reducing vulnerability and exposure to drought does not need to take decades.

13. IWG work is informed by growing awareness of the related effects of climate change. The visible slow onset of deepening exposure and vulnerability to drought is sometimes mistakenly considered to be just another aspect of the global climate change threat. This is because drought and climate are related, and because drought risks are sometimes amplified by climate change. However, drought is an independent and autonomous phenomenon that predates and co-exists with climate change. The risk of drought is fundamentally different and distinct from that of global climate change. Much of the deepening exposure and vulnerability to and risk of drought is directly and immediately caused by human actions on the ground in ways and with time scales distinct from other aspects of climate change.

14. Decision 29/COP.13 to launch the Drought Initiative and its subsequent work on drought policy advocate the use of the three-pillared framework of integrated drought management. This framework guides a shift from reactive approaches to drought (focusing on crisis response) to a proactive approach that emphasizes reduction (or elimination) of drought risks, such as through sustainable land and water management practices.¹ Specifically, decision 29/COP.13 invites the Parties to pursue a proactive approach on integrated drought management in the process of developing national drought policies based on the three key pillars of national drought policy:

- (a) Implementing comprehensive drought monitoring and early warning systems;
- (b) Completing vulnerability and impact assessments for sectors, populations and regions vulnerable to drought; and
- (c) Implementing drought preparedness and risk mitigation measures.

IWG will examine integrated drought management through this lens.

15. The onset (or threat) of drought can halt or reverse progress towards sustainable development especially for the most vulnerable. Disasters themselves and the crisis management approaches that they trigger can cause lasting damage. For instance, crisis management approaches can derail land-use planning and related processes of governments, authorities and local communities to achieve sustainable development.

16. On the other hand, disruptive changes during emergency situations as well as risk mitigation measures can also strengthen existing partnerships and institutions. Finding new ways to overcome barriers and threats can create new opportunities. In many parts of the world, the same community-level institutions and partnerships that routinely stand up to

¹ See <https://catalogue.unccd.int/1211_03EP_UNCCD_SPI_2019_Report_2.pdf> and other documents published since the 2013 High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy.

drought are the ones in place to deal with other arising threats. There have been many positive changes emerging through proactive and successful responses to crises, for example the current pandemic and the global climate crisis narratives. The positive power of thoughtfully constructed crisis narratives can mobilize communities, enable action and overcome inaction to address global existential threats.

17. The stock-taking and assessment by the IWG must acknowledge and celebrate successes where they have already been achieved by the international community. The recommendations by the IWG should support the community's collective resolve to do more together, by promoting, however possible, a greater sense of collective empowerment, universal social responsibility, well-being and togetherness among all members of society, especially youth.

III. Establishment of intergovernmental working group and organization of its work

18. Decision 23/COP.14 specified that the IWG will consist of a maximum of 30 representatives nominated by the respective regional groups on the basis of nominations by national governments, plus up to 15 experts nominated by the secretariat in consultation with the COP Bureau. Once appointed, individuals nominated as regional representatives or as experts have equivalent rights and responsibilities as IWG members. Following the appointment of 15 regional representatives (plus 3 alternates) and 15 expert members, the IWG met virtually, by video conference, for the first time on 26 March 2020.² The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic precluded a planned three-day, in-person workshop in Brussels and may prevent other in-person events.

19. During their first meeting, IWG members affirmed their selection of Dr. Gunilla Björklund of Sweden as chair and Dr. Gaius Eudoxie of Trinidad and Tobago as vice-chair. The members also reviewed a compilation of over 70 submissions and a scoping paper prepared by the secretariat, which described much of the historical context for the work of the IWG.³

20. A subsequent virtual meeting of the IWG (28 April 2020) led to the formation of four task groups with a specific topical focus for each. Each IWG member was assigned to one task group and leads and co-leads were appointed for each of the task groups. A coordinating committee was formed consisting of the IWG chair and vice-chair together with the eight leads and co-leads. To promote active communication and collaboration among task groups, all IWG members are invited to participate in the meetings of the coordinating committee and of all four task groups, as their individual circumstances permit.

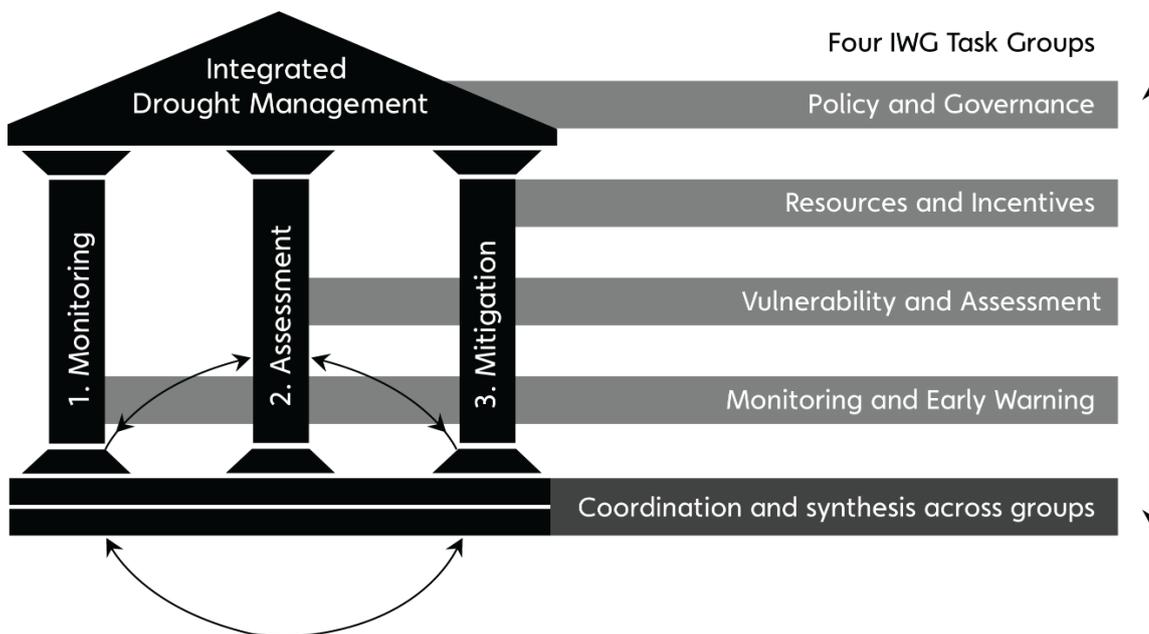
21. The IWG designed its programme of work and the organization of its four task groups to align with the 'three-pillar' approach to integrated drought management (see figure 2). This clarifies the relationships between successful drought management as the overarching goal, which is supported by the three pillars of policy and implementation, including: mitigation, preparedness and response measures (pillar 3). The design of these measures should be informed via assessments of impacts, vulnerability and risks (pillar 2). These assessments should in turn draw information from systems for monitoring the relevant effects in exposed communities and ecosystems (pillar 1). The formation of these four specialized task groups allows the IWG to undertake its work in the context of a holistic and integrated approach to drought management and disaster risk reduction.

² The names of the 30 members of the IWG plus 3 alternates are listed at:

<https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/30%20IWG%20members%20for%20drought_final%203003%20-%20UPDATED%201.pdf>.

³ <<https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2020-10/Assessment%20on%20the%20Submissions%20of%20Drought-%20Policy%2C%20Implementation%20Frameworks%20and%20Tools.pdf>>.

Figure 2:
Alignment of intergovernmental working group work programme with the three-pillar Integrated Drought Management framework⁴



22. The focus of the first of these task groups is strengthening institutions and governance for addressing drought effectively under the Convention. A task group addressing policy and institutional perspectives for risk mitigation and response (referred to here as the **Policy and Governance Task Group**) is led by Ms. Skumsa Ntshanga and co-led by Dr. Michael Brüntrup.

23. A second critical aspect of drought preparedness and risk mitigation to be highlighted by the IWG is the need for more, and more effectively deployed, financial resources, both domestic and international, along with economic incentives for risk mitigation and response. A task group addressing economic tools and financing instruments (referred to here as the **Resources and Incentives Task Group**) is led by Mr. Luca Perez and co-led by Dr. Roger Pulwarty.

24. The effective design of policies and programmes for implementation should be informed by an assessment of the needs for them. The task group addressing drought impact, vulnerability and risk assessment (referred to here as the **Vulnerability and Assessment Task Group**) is led by Ms. Sara-Jade Govia and co-led by Mr. Abduvokhid Zakhadullaev.

25. A task group addressing drought monitoring and early warning systems (referred to here as the **Monitoring and Early Warning Task Group**) is led by Dr. Mark Svoboda and co-led by Mr. Robert Stefanski.

26. This interim report was prepared by the IWG, led by a writing team of IWG members Dr. Caroline King-Okumu and Dr. Ted Horbulyk. The secretariat provided invaluable advice and support throughout. At the third virtual meeting of the IWG (5 October 2020), IWG members reviewed a draft of this interim report and subsequently approved its submission following proposed revisions.

27. The next four sections of this interim report introduce, in turn, the approach and early progress of each of the IWG task groups, starting from broad issues of potential policy reform (with the Policy and Governance Task Group) through to the specifics of drought monitoring (with the Monitoring and Early Warning Task Group).

⁴ Adapted by the IWG from <<http://www.droughtmanagement.info/pillars>>.

IV. Strengthening drought policy and governance

A. Scope and focus of the Policy and Governance Task Group

28. The broad objective of this task group is to review and propose policy, advocacy, legal and other reforms, with a special focus on institutions and governance. This work could also include issues of communication, public awareness, education, capacity development and international cooperation. The group is considering the challenge that Parties face to connect policies and implementation measures across levels—from the global to the community and ecosystem levels that are targeted by the Convention.⁵ Related issues are the extension of inclusive governance within communities, the effective functioning of the UNCCD gender advocacy framework and the inclusion of youth.

29. The linkages between levels (i.e. local, provincial, national, regional and global levels) and the linkages within different governmental levels (e.g. across sectoral ministries and departments) are also critical to effective policy, implementation and institutional coordination. This is important because sometimes taking action to mitigate drought risks or resolve conflicts requires decisions that are politically difficult within countries. In these cases, a higher-level interest and profile can provide the additional scrutiny and “push” that may be needed for decision-makers (nearer to the ground in areas where action is needed) to take the necessary preventive actions for the achievement of the common good.

30. This task group is also responsible for the consideration of options to strengthen the global institutional partnership to mitigate drought risks as reflected in the Convention. Various reform options were considered at COP 14, such as including additional commitments, agreements or declarations by the Parties alongside additional technical, policy and financing instruments.⁶

B. Institutional coordination frameworks and the context of a wider, holistic and integrated approach

31. IWG work on UNCCD measures takes place in the broader context of ongoing discussion on the reform of the United Nations as a whole and financing for development. Humanitarian agencies play a critical role in drought response and the disaster risk reduction community plans for drought in the context of a multi-hazard, holistic approach. Much valuable insight can be gained from coordination with these discussions and consideration of how they should inform thinking about next steps. The IWG can develop approaches by which the international community can come together most effectively to address a shared challenge.

32. There are also important interlinkages with the work and processes of the other Rio conventions in particular, and with environmental conventions in general. The IWG review is taking place alongside a broader global stock-take that is underway for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. For countries addressing integrated drought management, there may be considerable synergies with the NWP, which was undertaken by the UNFCCC and a group of about 360 partners⁷ and with the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage. The other Rio conventions have created and explored various institutional measures to bring their Parties together in pursuit of their shared agendas. These include informative experiences in the creation of protocols, intergovernmental panels and other high-level processes.

33. Other processes and frameworks that run parallel and are interlinked with UNCCD work on drought include the SDGs, which have identified targets, institutional custodians of

⁵ The strategic objective emphasizing communities is stated in the introduction to this report [Strategic Objective 3].

⁶ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-08/ICCD_COP%2814%29_INF.3-1914121E.pdf>.

⁷ <<https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/nairobi-work-programme-on-impacts-vulnerability-and-adaptation-to-climate-change>>.

data, and processes for voluntary national review and capacity-building. The UNDRR process is another critical policy framework that overlaps with and complements UNCCD work on drought risk mitigation. The UNDRR Special Report on Drought in its Global Assessment Report (2021, in preparation) also aims to take stock of progress made by governments and other stakeholders in achieving the outcome, goals and targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁸

C. Progress made in the review of existing policy, implementation and partnerships

34. The submissions received from stakeholders and Parties describe some of the linkages between the local, provincial, national, regional and global levels, and the linkages within each governmental level, as found in the current policy frameworks. The submissions also describe some external support and partnerships. Most submissions do not comment directly on how international policies and partnerships are helping to strengthen these frameworks.

35. In addition to these submissions, 26 national drought plans have been published on the UNCCD website,⁹ and more are under development or still unpublished.

36. A brief review of these country submissions and drought plans indicates that many of them describe governance and policy processes taking place within countries to guide effective policy, implementation and partnerships. Community and ecosystem-level institutions are often mentioned, and in some cases, policy and implementation processes for reaching and including them are outlined. Gender-responsive approaches are sometimes considered, but the inclusion and mobilization of youth receive less attention.

37. Early reviews identified a number of national challenges such as inadequate inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; insufficient data; challenges in communicating drought early warning systems (DEWS) information; and inconsistent application of the three-pillar approach. At international level, there are limitations to inter-agency coordination, including among United Nations agencies.

38. The review of country submissions and drought plans provides less information on policy, implementation and partnerships at the international and regional levels. Given the scope and ambitions of the group, this is an important gap in the available material collected so far.

D. Preliminary discussion of options for appropriate policy, advocacy and implementation measures at all levels for addressing drought effectively under the Convention

39. The group has discussed a variety of tools to enhance political commitment at the global level on drought issues. Some members expressed interest in the possibility of recommending a legally binding instrument on land and drought that could include both developed and developing countries. This would require clearer definition of common goals for drought risk reduction, based on reducing aspects of exposure and vulnerability that could be directly associated with land and water management. This topic has been raised as one of interest to some IWG members, while other members expressed major concerns, and no consensus has yet been reached about the relative importance of this issue.

40. The secretariat sought the advice of the Law Division of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on legal and other institutional options that the IWG may wish to consider in light of the practices of other multilateral environment agreements. In response, the Law Division provided an information note to inform ongoing IWG work on such topics as legally binding and non-legally-binding options, and on the possibility of negotiating an instrument outside the UNCCD framework. This note also examines financial

⁸ <https://www.preventionweb.net/files/72909_gar2022conceptfinal.pdf>.

⁹ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox/page/drought-planning>>.

mechanisms under protocols to treaties or conventions as well as “financial arrangements” created under non-binding legal instruments.

41. Important options at the regional and subregional levels include the strengthening of networks for coordination, capacity-building, knowledge development and technology transfer, including exchange of information and best practices. In some regions, there may be options to establish drought collaborative centres at regional level, while in others there is a need to better understand how well the existing regional and subregional centres are already working.

42. Drought preparedness planning could be strengthened through implementing existing internationally adopted guidelines for governance. This could increase the engagement of communities, local authorities, government departments, ministries and other stakeholders at different levels, particularly the local level (e.g. the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security). Governance can also be strengthened through inclusive drought preparedness planning processes and the availability of sufficient funds and mandates for communities to plan, discuss, merge (with higher-level elements) and implement the plans at local level. Often, particularly at local level, there are disconnects, such that either the funds, mandates and processes, or the necessary configuration of them, are not sufficiently clear and available to the communities that need them.

E. Next steps for the Policy and Governance Task Group

43. Further review of the submissions received and the development of appropriate case studies to illustrate the stock-take will likely help clarify key issues.

44. The group is considering the potential for reform of various institutions (from local to global) and will further refine and elaborate this work. This would involve consideration of the scope for heightened commitment at international level and the steps that could be needed to build consensus. There might be a need for further consideration of quantifiable targets for specific inputs, activities or outcomes, and of how their establishment would lead to substantive changes relative to the status quo. These questions might be informed by case studies and reflections on progress and barriers encountered and overcome through other global processes. Consideration of these examples could include the particular strengths and differentiated approach of the UNCCD, with its emphasis on land-based issues, support from community-level actors, and the immediate concerns of the most-affected Parties, communities and ecosystems.

45. Further consideration of interlinkages with the broader external processes identified above and strengthened coordination with the other task groups will be important aspects of the work of this task group going forward.

V. Targeting resources and incentives

A. Scope and focus of the Resources and Incentives Task Group

46. The broad objective of this task group is to review and discuss risk mitigation and response measures for integrated drought management, with a particular focus on economic tools and financing mechanisms. This includes a role for innovative financing mechanisms and incentives that can affect risk behaviour of all relevant stakeholders.

47. The group discussed the need for enhanced investment for drought resilience that should focus on (i) reducing drought risk, exposure and vulnerability to mitigate losses; (ii) reducing economic uncertainty and stimulating economic activity; and (iii) achieving co-benefits (e.g. achieving the triple dividend of resilience).¹⁰

¹⁰ <<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10103.pdf>>.

48. While there is a vast body of available experience and literature on the benefits of investing in mitigative action for drought risk reduction and resilience-building, investment decisions are often still favouring response and crisis management instead of preventive action. In order to scale up investments, there is need for: (i) business cases for investments in preparedness and resilience (as opposed to humanitarian response); (ii) better assessment of the relative cost of action versus cost of inaction (i.e. to assess the effects of mitigation and response measures and compare them to the costs of avoidable drought damage); and (iii) a suite of economic and financial tools to support action on the ground, not only official development assistance (ODA), but also and more importantly, domestic financial flows (public and private).

49. The group is particularly interested in the economic incentives that drive the engagement of stakeholders to support the private sector in sustainable land management (SLM) (see box 3). Effective policies can incentivize individual and collective behaviour, e.g. through the valuation of land and water resources (including soils, forests, cropland, terrestrial biodiversity, and other natural, artificial and human-affected ecosystems), and systems of payment for the conservation or use of other ecosystem services. Where there is a price to be paid by private individuals for increasing others' exposure to drought through the depletion of critical water resources, for example, this can encourage conservation and generate funds to compensate land managers who are able to conserve and recharge reserves.¹¹

Box 3

Boosting the effects of financial resourcing by aligning economic incentives

With respect to financial and economic tools, an appropriate policy mix is required to:

- (a) Encourage changes in behaviour (of individuals, corporations, government, or of society at large) (e.g. financial incentives to switch to drought-tolerant production systems and economic development strategies);
- (b) Compensate losses of affected populations so as to avoid a spiraling poverty trap (e.g. universal or needs-based transfers to promote social welfare and equity and reduce suffering, and/or to offset the macroeconomic contraction associated with widespread or persistent drought events);
- (c) Provide a flow of financial capital that can enable beneficial investments to be made and/or that promote the smooth functioning of commodity markets, especially in economies where financial and credit markets are already constrained without the added stress of droughts.

With respect to incentives for behavioural change, the following are examples of measures to be promoted through various financial and economic incentive mechanisms that could support investments by individuals, enterprises and societies, and their synergy and integrity with:

- (a) Better land and soil management for agricultural, forestry (or agro-forestry) and pastoral moisture management including installation and use of dam and diversion infrastructure;
- (b) Better water (including soil water) management including increased economic efficiency of water use (including water pricing, water reuse and water quality protection/enhancement) and interventions such as conjunctive water use and appropriate solar pumping of groundwater;
- (c) Better crop and livestock management, including crop (and variety) selection, irrigation regimes and cultivation practices, and crop rotations;

¹¹ <<https://www.gefio.org/>>, <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/>> and <<https://www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/af-terg-who-we-are/>>.

(d) Diversification of at-risk communities to alternative or supplementary (part-time and full-time) livelihoods and food supplies;

(e) Stabilization of food prices and prices in markets for key production inputs in times of e.g. (anticipated) natural disasters.

Demonstrating such schemes might call upon case studies of effective examples using such tools (e.g. Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program, the Caribbean experience with index insurance).

50. The group is concerned with existing UNCCD financing mechanisms and instruments and flows of intended catalytic financing directed through international programmes and bilateral partnerships. Since their overall size is likely to remain small in comparison to flows of private finance, there is a need to consider how catalytic effects on systemic risk are best achieved through effective policy and partnerships. This can include the strategic use of catalytic funds to leverage particular types of private investment and "crowding in" additional funds from other sources.¹²

B. Institutional coordination frameworks enabling a holistic and integrated approach

51. The World Economic Forum (WEF), among other entities, regularly assesses (within the framework of water scarcity) the extent of drought risks and their significance to the global economy.¹³ Where available, such studies can provide an important statement of the case for drought risk management as well as a broader picture of financial flows and risks. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, among other entities, tracks some of the relevant development assistance flows that currently support humanitarian responses to drought and investments in SLM, including drought preparedness and response. The effectiveness of some of these multilateral and bilateral flows of financial assistance is evaluated through dedicated evaluation systems designed to accompany the international financing mechanisms.

52. Even where focus is on international financial flows, there is an important role to be played by national monitoring and evaluation systems capable of continuous operation in a manner that is sensitive to local economic conditions and to the estimated values attached to various changes in drought risk. With regard to UNCCD technical support to countries that have developed validated national drought plans, there are clearly expressed and documented needs of Parties for assistance in developing national capacity for effective monitoring and assessment of drought programming.

53. The wider international development and climate change communities are already grappling with many questions related to the returns on investment of effective policies and implementation for addressing drought under the UNCCD. The IWG can assess those processes that already consider the effectiveness of financial flows, especially at the regional or global level, including the relative roles of ODA and private finance.

54. This task group can learn from other global processes that review the funding of environmental and social gains related to drought risk, including work on green finance and corporate social responsibility. Relevant sources may include the Dasgupta Independent Review on the Economics of Biodiversity¹⁴ the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform

¹² Baietti. 2017. "Crowding-in Private Finance in World Bank Water and Sanitation Operations: A How to Guide for World Bank Task Teams." World Bank, Washington, DC; available at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/fr/169121506073918027/pdf/Crowding-in-Commercial-Finance-in-World-Bank-Water-and-Sanitation-Operations-A-How-to-Guide-for-World-Bank-Task-Teams.pdf>.

¹³ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/human-fingerprinting-drought-rainfall-africa-asia-america/>.

¹⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882222/The_Economics_of_Biodiversity_The_Dasgupta_Review_Interim_Report.pdf.

on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,¹⁵ work on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity;¹⁶ and related efforts by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).¹⁷ Much of this work has direct relevance for the valuation of drought risk mitigation via its effects on ecosystem services and human well-being described in section VI.

C. Progress made in the review of existing policy and implementation

55. Developed countries made a number of submissions to the IWG concerning their support for international partnerships addressing drought. This material considers not only the total volume of financial assistance provided, but also its effectiveness and the substantive technical cooperation programmes that are supported. Although there is little submitted information on regional financing and cooperation frameworks, there appears to be potential for illustrative case studies, such as on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative in the Horn of Africa or other national-level case studies on funds established in Antigua and Barbuda, Australia and Kenya.

56. As yet, the multilateral financing mechanisms and agencies have not been directly involved in the review. There may be relevant evaluation reports produced by the independent office of evaluations of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank, among other entities, that refer to their financing of drought risk reduction.

57. With regard to existing policy and implementation, including partnerships with the private sector, one Party (Senegal) has highlighted in a submission the extent to which their land degradation neutrality planning incorporates drought risk mitigation. The group noted that this includes attention to highly relevant value chain and trade issues. Similarly, a green levy is used in Trinidad and Tobago, which is payable by corporations and stored in a green fund for environment-based projects. In Trinidad and Tobago, a revision of agricultural incentives will include water-use efficiency.

D. Preliminary discussion of options for appropriate policy, advocacy and implementation measures at all levels for addressing drought effectively under the Convention

58. The salient options focus on the available scope for better-functioning financing mechanisms and business cases to unlock more effective allocations of national budgets to integrated drought management within affected countries. During preliminary discussions, a view was expressed that such options could also encourage developed countries to improve the level and targeting of their national budgeting for international cooperation to strengthen global institutions and accelerate technical exchange on drought management. Options might include the establishment of drought preparedness funds at the community and regional levels as well as the national and global levels. These steps would require establishing a suitable economic business case for such action, acknowledging the wide variability in expected costs and returns across drought locations (see section VI).

59. Economic stimulus actions demonstrate the extent to which enlightened economic development planning can be designed to change incentives for the private sector. Additional de-risking that focuses on various forms of insurance and underwriting measures for integrated drought management could encourage increased investment in drought reserves and sustainable land and water management practices in drought-prone areas. This might involve national governments working with insurance providers, banks and private financial

¹⁵ <<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3237392>> and <<https://ipbes.net/global-assessment/>>.

¹⁶ <<http://www.teebweb.org/wp-content/uploads/Study%20and%20Reports/Reports/Ecological%20and%20Economic%20Foundations/TEEB%20Ecological%20and%20Economic%20Foundations%20report/TEEB%20Foundations.pdf>>.

¹⁷ <<https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>>.

institutions or with other groups of commercial water users and/or associated energy users and utility companies.

60. A challenge that is also common to other areas of climate and environmental financing is how to work from the identification of specific needs and opportunities to designing “bankable” projects that private funders could use to finance investments in integrated drought management. Creating a pipeline of bankable investments may require capacity-building through technical advisory services and might rely upon innovative financing mechanisms, potentially including blended finance and various forms of insurance and reinsurance.

61. Given the focus of the group on the engagement of the private sector and incentives for drought risk mitigation, economic instruments are an important set of tools for the group to explore. These include the design and use of various forms of markets, property rights and insurance products, alone or in combination with innovative regulatory changes, including, for example, payment for ecosystem services and multi-part water-pricing regimes. Establishing these systems is a technical challenge – especially in areas where resource monitoring systems would be needed. In light of this, there may be a need for technical support to local and national governments, both to design effective systems and mechanisms and to ensure sufficient technical capabilities for monitoring their effects on natural resources (see also sections VI and VII).

E. Next steps for the Resources and Incentives Task Group

62. The group has identified the scope for case studies (still to be defined) to be elaborated, focusing on global, national and subnational funding models and mechanisms. Questions concern how governments can provide incentives for communities and private sector actors to implement integrated drought management and manage and regulate drought risk mitigation and response measures. The group will continue to develop its thinking and approach to these issues over the coming months.

63. The group will further consider (as part of its stock-take) the current gaps by taking into consideration the available body of evidence on the effectiveness of current economic instruments and financing mechanisms. Relevant information from the World Bank and global funds such as the GEF and Green Climate Fund could be reviewed with support from the Secretariat and from the financing institutions. Some of these sources may examine options for engagement of the private sector. For example, the GEF is already exploring a draft private sector engagement strategy, and WEF recently developed the New Nature Economy report series.¹⁸

64. Questions about the effectiveness of aid and development assistance generally hinge on comparisons of the incremental economic gains to society at large compared to their incremental costs. These comparisons generally employ a broader set of measures than would be used to assess the expected profitability of private investments that target drought risk reduction. Quantitative estimates of social gains/losses must use probabilistic predictions of drought events occurring in the future. The climate change and disaster risk reduction communities are already engaging with the challenges of generating valid estimates. They also face the practical requirements to collect baseline data and define a valid counterfactual scenario against which to measure change attributable to specific interventions.¹⁹

65. Decision 23/COP.14, which called for the creation of the IWG, also requested the Global Mechanism (GM) to undertake related actions. The GM is asked to identify potential and innovative financing instruments based on clearly identified added value for addressing

¹⁸ <<https://www.weforum.org/reports/new-nature-economy-report-series>>.

¹⁹ See discussions in:

<http://iedafrique.org/IMG/pdf/wp_evaluation_economique_des_benefices_trees_des_investissements.pdf>, <<https://www.alnap.org/help-library/the-economics-of-resilience-to-drought-in-ethiopia-kenya-and-somalia>>, <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6850620/>> and <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40321165/economics_advantage.pdf/bb2525f4-0c2f-4ea6-9201-e1e14c0e8725>.

drought, such as, but not limited to, insurance products, bonds and microfinance, and to make available related information and guidance for facilitating Parties' access to these instruments. The IWG will coordinate with the GM on this work.

66. Concerning the discussion of business cases for larger and more effective economic and financing measures, this task group will work with the Vulnerability and Assessment Task Group. This will help focus attention on how the broad range of assessment work by the countries could feed into clearly targeted economic cases to boost the effective financing of integrated drought management actions.

VI. Addressing vulnerability and assessment

A. Scope and focus of the Vulnerability and Assessment Task Group

67. The broad objective of this task group is to review how assessments of the impacts, vulnerability and risks of drought are used to inform people about effective policies, implementation and partnership programmes. This can involve proactive needs assessments to guide the targeting of actions. It can also include retrospective evaluations of changing impacts, vulnerabilities and risks after policy and implementation actions (or inaction). Where assessments are carried out iteratively, starting from a well-established baseline, they can shed light on the effectiveness of specific policy and financial strategies by showing what made a positive difference in mitigating drought risks and what did not. This can improve understanding of how to achieve additional improvements.

68. Each country has its own particular context and approach to the assessment of its drought risks, impacts and vulnerabilities. The UNCCD, via its Drought Toolbox,²⁰ Science-Policy Interface (SPI) and Committee on Science and Technology (CST), provides generic guidance and best practices to help countries with this.^{21,22} This guidance and technical support seeks to assist and encourage countries to assess the breadth of factors that contribute to drought impacts, vulnerability and risks. It also offers tools and approaches to improve the inclusiveness of assessments.

69. During the coming reporting cycle, the UNCCD proposes collecting a set of global impact indicators in line with its strategic objective on drought. These assessments are to be based on effective monitoring. Through its Drought Initiative, the UNCCD provides material support to boost the inclusive design of the ongoing national assessment and planning processes.

70. A high-level assessment should translate the multi-faceted understanding of impacts, vulnerabilities and risks into a coherent decision-oriented assessment of drought risks at global level. This IWG task group can take a first step toward this objective by assessing current policies, implementation and partnerships. In particular, the task group can review the extent to which these practices are able to inform decision-making at all levels, and the task group can consider additional options to increase their effectiveness.

B. Institutional coordination frameworks and holistic and integrated approach

71. Assessing vulnerability to drought is becoming a critical part of global, national and local development planning in drought-affected regions. The IPCC periodically assesses vulnerability and impacts of a range of climate change-related hazards, including effects on the occurrence and severity of droughts.

²⁰ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox/solutions/risk-assessment/2414>>.

²¹ <<https://www.unccd.int/publications/drought-impact-and-vulnerability-assessment-rapid-review-practices-and-policy>>.

²² <<https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2019-09/190906%20UNCCD%20drought%20resilience%20technical%20guideline%20EN.pdf>>.

72. UNDRR also periodically carries out relevant assessments, as does WEF. Post-disaster needs assessments are conducted to inform the design of disaster relief and recovery programming. A number of global inventories (acknowledgedly incomplete) of drought and other disaster risks are also available (e.g. EM-DAT (Emergency Events Database)). These are useful to support the identification of potential impacts that should be considered during vulnerability and risk assessments. Additional relevant work on the risk assessment takes place in the private sector, including the WEF Global Risks Report and the work of insurance companies and other private-sector financing institutions who bear or transfer associated financial risks.

73. At country level, 26 national drought plans published by the Parties so far on the UNCCD website²³ each systematically list relationships between the drought plan and other relevant policy frameworks and assessment processes at national and subnational level. These include linkages to national plans and programmes for adaptation and mitigation of climate change and to relevant regional and international initiatives, institutions and processes.

C. Progress made in the review of existing policy and implementation including partnerships

74. So far, UNCCD focal points from Botswana, Senegal, Sudan and the United States of America have already volunteered information to the IWG on their assessments of vulnerability to drought. The task group collected more information from both Afghanistan and Uzbekistan with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Furthermore, the group identified additional relevant case studies in the published literature.^{24, 25} However, it is noticeable that relatively few of the country submissions to the IWG so far have indicated the routine use of assessment processes involving vulnerable communities and ecosystems. This may be because no specific question was addressed yet to the Parties by the IWG on this point.

75. The task group identified a need to review the national drought plans in more detail and also consider other national plans and project documents that present approaches to assessment. The SPI Working Group on integrated land use planning is developing a framework through which land-based natural capital accounts are linked to LDN reporting.

76. The Drought Toolbox includes a recent rapid review of practices and policy recommendations for drought impact and vulnerability assessments,²⁶ which presents case studies from Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Kenya and Mexico. It also includes a review of literature from various other countries. These case studies could also be developed further. IWG has identified additional methodological guidance and examples that can be added to the toolbox including a useful guide published by the Urban Land Institute²⁷ and a US Climate Resilience Toolkit,²⁸ which offers additional insight. There is an opportunity to provide additional insight on how drought impact, vulnerability and risk assessments can more effectively guide economic decision-making.

²³ <<https://knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox/page/drought-planning>>.

²⁴ <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2019.100062>>.

²⁵ <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-016-1043-y>>.

²⁶ <<https://www.unccd.int/publications/drought-impact-and-vulnerability-assessment-rapid-review-practices-and-policy>>.

²⁷ <<https://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/ULI-A-Guide-for-Assessing-Climate-Change-Risk-final.pdf>>.

²⁸ <<https://toolkit.climate.gov/steps-to-resilience/assess-vulnerability-risks>>.

D. Preliminary discussion of options for appropriate policy, advocacy and implementation measures at all levels for addressing drought effectively under the Convention

77. A high-level assessment process could be proposed for use by the UNCCD or to augment the work of other agencies (e.g. IPCC, UNDRR and WEF). The objective would be to ensure that risk mitigation opportunities associated with land, ecosystems and marginalized communities are more effectively mapped and taken into consideration. Marginalized communities that depend on ecosystems in arid, semi-arid and highly water-stressed lands (including mega-cities and densely populated urban regions) should receive particular attention when considering the economic aspects of drought and in designing the assessment process. This may suggest reformulation of the holistic scope and objectives of the assessment process.

78. If there were to be a high-level global economic assessment that could support recommendations for institutional strengthening and improved economic and financing measures under the UNCCD, then such an economic assessment should be designed to build upon the base provided by the national-level impact vulnerability and risk assessments. It should also feed back into them, guiding and strengthening them in the process. The regional economic communities might be expected to play a key role in such a process.

79. There is an apparent need to boost the consideration of land-climate interactions and the systemic effects of land degradation in deepening exposure, vulnerability and drought risk (and vice versa). A key question is how to translate land-use management changes into changes in the level of drought risk, exposure, vulnerability and impacts, including economic impacts. Following the identification of assets that are vulnerable to drought, margins of adjustment and relevant mitigative actions could be identified. The focus would initially be on the incremental changes in the value of assets that can be attributed to changes in drought policy and implementation.

80. The assessment of land-climate interactions and land degradation would likely involve a concerted effort to boost the inventory and mapping of drought impacts, exposure and vulnerability. The economic assessment of these drought impacts, vulnerability and risks could build on the work of the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative, the United Nations System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and the World Bank Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services partnership. Such efforts should foster apparent synergies with the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity highlighted in section V. Key steps would include (i) intensive local-scale validation of assessment methods through application and review; and (ii) feedback of insights to global assessment processes. The objective would be to integrate these processes and methods with national economic development planning and fiscal systems in a manner that becomes self-sustaining.

E. Next steps for the Vulnerability and Assessment Task Group

81. The IWG will undertake a survey of focal points' information and experiences to be explored with the focal points during the CRIC workshop and preceding regional consultations. The purpose is to supplement the information that was reviewed by the IWG on the use of drought impact, vulnerability and risk assessments to inform policies and implementation and shed light on their effectiveness. The task group will inform itself about the use of drought impact vulnerability and risk assessments in the NDCs, proposals to climate funds and drought plans developed under the Drought Initiative. There is scope to explore stronger linkages between other agencies and UNCCD work on LDN. All of these steps could shed light on relevant thinking, policy frameworks, processes and tools available at national and subnational level.

82. The secretariat will provide additional support to the IWG to investigate existing arrangements at regional level, including regional meetings and existing or proposed regional programmes and centres. The secretariat will also continue outreach to regional economic communities and other relevant institutions. These efforts will supplement the task group's continued review of national and subnational policies, implementation and partnerships.

83. To refine the consideration of options, the task group will further interrogate and substantiate the option to create a high-profile periodic process linking local assessments of drought impacts, vulnerability and risks within a global assessment framework. This requires determining whether or not there might be valid and well-informed support for recommending or prioritizing high-level economic assessments of drought risk that could also incorporate community and ecosystem-level interests and input within a global conceptual approach. Such an approach, if pursued, might require identification of specific progressive steps that could be agreed at COP 15.

VII. Improving drought monitoring and early warning systems

A. Scope and focus of the Monitoring and Early Warning Task Group

84. The broad objective of this task group is to review and discuss options for drought monitoring and early warning systems in a manner that is sensitive to drought-smart sustainable land management (DSL²⁹) in specific local and regional contexts.

85. Moving from a reactive to a proactive approach to addressing drought raises the opportunity to invest in actions such as drought monitoring and DEWS. Proactive DSLM can buffer ecosystems and communities against drought so that temporary deficiencies in available water need not escalate to humanitarian or ecological disasters. However, most existing DEWS currently in place must be better aligned with the objective to achieve and monitor DSLM. DEWS are designed to trigger early responses to droughts under national drought policies and plans. More work is needed to align the existing DEWS to enable and evaluate preparedness against drought risks through DSLM.

86. Where investments are made to improve SLM under the UNCCD, effects are observed locally by individual resource users who are affected. Unfortunately, effects and processes taking place at system level are not often monitored, and this information is not transferred effectively to decision-makers. Therefore, improved use of monitoring systems to diagnose the needs and opportunities for preventive investments in DSLM under the UNCCD is essential. These systems should underpin all other aspects of integrated drought management described in other sections of this report. The objective is to improve national assessments of risk and vulnerability, inform the design of mitigation policy and financing responses and enable decision-makers to track the effectiveness of their investments over time.

87. The group bases its work on its members' understanding and engagement with the relatively sophisticated monitoring systems that have already been in operation in some developed countries for many years. The group members are also keenly aware that new technologies such as mobile apps have significant potential to revolutionize the nature of drought monitoring systems, and natural resource monitoring more broadly. These technologies are particularly widespread in some parts of the drought-affected developing world. Therefore, it is entirely possible that a well-coordinated collective effort by the international community could massively improve current natural resource and drought monitoring systems over the very near term. Seizing this opportunity should be an essential part of wider efforts toward achieving inclusive green economic growth and recovery and leaving no one behind in achieving the SDGs.

B. Institutional coordination frameworks and the wider, holistic and integrated approach

88. Each country needs to develop and use its own drought monitoring system, indicators and indices. At COP 14, Parties agreed³⁰ to establish a global monitoring system through which Parties will report every four years on progress made toward strategic objective 3.

²⁹ <https://catalogue.unccd.int/1211_03EP_UNCCD_SPI_2019_Report_2.pdf>.

³⁰ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-08/ICCD_COP%2814%29_CST_7-1910576E.pdf>.

Following the recommendations of the SPI, the monitoring framework will include the following three levels of common indicators and indices:

- (a) Level 1: Simple drought hazard indicator – focused on climate/meteorology;
- (b) Level 2: Simple drought exposure indicator – such as population exposed; and
- (c) Level 3: Comprehensive drought vulnerability indicator – likely a composite of the physical, social, economic and environmental factors contributing to community and ecosystem vulnerability to drought.

89. The task to coordinate these systems strategically and integrate them among the existing relevant global monitoring frameworks remains a major one. The Global Framework for Climate Services is key in coordinating global climate monitoring systems. The World Meteorological Organization is also developing a Global Multi-hazard Alert System.³¹ Regional platforms, including the Famine Early Warning Systems Network and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, also collect and analyse relevant information on drought hazards and impacts on the ground. There is an opportunity for coordination with the LDN reporting systems established under the UNCCD and SDG 15 and the Group on Earth Observations' LDN process. The CRIC and CST are creating a platform (known as Trends.Earth) and a set of associated good practice guidelines for Parties to achieve this. The Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network is a regional platform for drought monitoring and early warning. One of the intended deliverables of this initiative is the forecasting of socioeconomic impacts in key sectors, such as food, water, energy and health. These examples suggest progressive alignment towards other essential monitoring and modelling frameworks, such as those that involve global hydrological monitoring, ecological monitoring systems and economic monitoring and accounting systems, including the SEEA.

90. The Integrated Drought Management Programme³² brings together numerous partner institutions to offer information and advice concerning the use of indicators and systems to monitor drought hazards, exposure, vulnerability and impacts. It does this in order to mitigate the effects of drought through national drought management policies and plans. The goal of the programme is to enable countries to manage drought risks better. Resources on the three pillars are available online and via a help desk and drought management library.³³ This is connected to the Drought Toolbox and a data portal developed by the UNEP-DHI Partnership – Centre on Water and Environment with support from the GEF. These Internet resources also connect to other online data portals³⁴ and country-driven monitoring systems operated by FAO as custodian for several relevant SDGs (2 and 6); by the World Bank as custodian of SDG 1; and by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

C. Progress made in the review of existing policy, implementation and partnerships

91. Based on the initial review of submissions received by the IWG, it appears that significant capacity-building work is still needed to achieve the shift from monitoring triggers for responsive relief actions toward more advanced preventive actions that will promote sustainable development outcomes.

92. Discussions so far promote a focus on the diligent monitoring of the intensity, areal extent and impacts of drought on ecosystems and communities. Also, there can be greater focus on all the associated coordination and communication challenges. Important questions concern how best to serve needs at the sectoral, basin and local levels. Many of these questions are routinely raised within the climate change community. However, due to its land-oriented processes, a UNCCD-led approach to drought monitoring should bring a distinctive perspective to these questions and could be expected to foster more ground-based

³¹ <<https://www.wmo.int/gmas/>>.

³² <<https://www.droughtmanagement.info/>>.

³³ <<https://www.droughtmanagement.info/find/library/>>.

³⁴ <<http://www.fao.org/land-water/water/drought/drought-toolbox/en/>>.

DEWS. These could offer more practical answers and entry-points, enabling better engagement at all levels.

D. Preliminary discussion of options for appropriate policy, advocacy and implementation measures at all levels for addressing drought effectively under the Convention

93. Better monitoring is key. There appears to be a large potential gain from progressively aligning and boosting global systems for monitoring the systemic effects of land and ecosystem management in mitigating drought effects on ecosystems and communities.³⁵ It is also important to understand land-climate interactions and enhance hydrological, ecological and economic modelling systems that can enable better visualization and use of global climate information in downscaled formats (as championed under the UNFCCC). Better tools and associated monitoring systems could translate meteorological forecasts into hydrological, ecological, economic and social drought impact and risk scenarios that will make more practical sense to land users and decision-makers.

94. There is an apparent imbalance between resources for meteorological monitoring (relatively more) and resources for monitoring land and ecosystems to evaluate preparedness against drought risks through DSLM (relatively scarce). This is especially so in least developed countries. Policy, advocacy and implementation measures under the UNCCD could accelerate the development of the necessary ground-based monitoring systems for the hydrological, ecological and socioeconomic aspects of drought. This would require investment not only in technical capacities and infrastructure, but also in governance, stakeholder engagement and communication processes in-country via the relevant community-level institutions.

95. Much of the in-country investment must come from stakeholders and affected countries. The international community could provide objective facilitation, technical support and additional resources, along with convening power and platforms to promote success. Therefore, the group reaffirms and underlines the major need and opportunity for knowledge exchange, technology transfer and capacity-building, both in person and online, as already agreed by the Parties at COP 14. This is in line with agreements on technology transfer and capacity-building at all previous meetings since the birth of the Convention and with associated calls for increased support from developed countries. To accelerate concrete action, the affected Parties could propose more specific detailing of their needs and secure more specific commitments from the developed countries to provide the necessary technical support and exchange programs.

E. Next steps for the Monitoring and Early Warning Task Group

96. This task group will continue its detailed stock-take of these existing systems over the coming months and prepare a comprehensive presentation of its findings. This reporting will be global in scope and could include case studies from both developing and developed countries in drought-affected regions. The group will also continue to work directly with the SPI Working Group on Drought, as the latter group develops technical guidance for Parties, including on the use of indicators, under the guidance of the CST.

97. Issues emerging through the task group discussion so far include needs to:

- (a) Improve drought data collection and monitoring, especially on impacts;
- (b) Ensure monitoring informs decision-makers at a range of spatial scales (including integration of local knowledge and experience);
- (c) Ensure that DEWS products and information be both useful and usable for decision-makers and policymakers, natural resource managers, the media and public at a

³⁵ The UNCCD, as the land-focused Convention, is in place to do this. It also needs to monitor progress toward its own strategic objectives

variety of scales;

(d) Promote and stress that DEWS are an integral part of the three pillars of integrated drought management;

(e) Account for ecological droughts;

(f) Address challenges on monitoring drought effects at finer temporal scales, which would take into account rapid-onset, or 'flash', drought and the need to put more emphasis on the need for diligent monitoring tools along with better forecasting capabilities at the sub-seasonal to seasonal scales; and

(g) Ensure better communication and coordination (including for users not connected to the Internet).

98. The task group will continue to refine consideration of options for action that the UNCCD could agree to take following COP 15 to monitor the intensity, areal extent and impacts of drought on ecosystems, including their hydrological functions and communities. The task group will report on outcomes from their discussions and analysis, identify the best options available and recommend context-specific measures. These will be supplemented with lessons learned from the case studies.

VIII. Preparations to report to the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth session

99. The work of the IWG will continue through its task groups and periodic meetings of the whole working group (virtually or in-person). The IWG proposes holding an in-person workshop of all members early in 2021, back-to-back with meetings of the CRIC, if the progression of COVID-19 restrictions will allow it. The secretariat stands ready to field additional input, insight and guidance from Parties as needed.

100. The IWG is considering the launch of regional and other online consultations as part of its ongoing work plan, to be implemented with assistance from the secretariat. Those consultations could gather broader feedback about the challenges and opportunities that integrated drought management presents to Parties and other stakeholders, and about the prioritization of options the IWG could present for consideration at COP 15. The IWG will also consider holding online seminars or workshops exploring specific aspects of the work of its task groups with a view to engaging experts and stakeholders at all levels.

101. The IWG will continue to work in the context of a wider holistic and integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and enhancing the resilience of communities and ecosystems. This already involves outreach to and coordination with parallel processes, including those of African Risk Capacity, FAO, United Nations Development Programme, UNDRR, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, UNEP, UNFCCC and numerous other bodies. Specific recommendations for further outreach and coordination by the IWG, as well as direct and spontaneous input to the IWG from interested parties, is also very much welcomed.

102. Important questions for discussion by the CRIC where the IWG could benefit from input and guidance from the Parties concern:

(a) Any preliminary comments on the overall direction taken and options under discussion;

(b) Guidance concerning themes requiring further consideration for better substantiation of the options and next steps, so as to facilitate decision-making at COP 15; and

(c) Encouragement or facilitation of follow-up and further input to be made to the IWG by the Parties and other agencies, with the facilitation and support of the secretariat.