



**Convention to Combat
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The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy)

Review of progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy

**Report of progress in the implementation of the
comprehensive communication strategy**

Note by secretariat

Summary

By its decision 4/COP.10, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to report on progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy (CCS) at its eleventh session.

This report provides a digest of the activities coordinated mainly by the secretariat under the CCS, with assessments of the outcomes of these activities. It focuses on activities at the international level that are mandated by decision 3/COP.8. The report makes recommendations on ways and means of addressing strategic implementation of the CCS at international level as a contribution to ongoing efforts for the effective implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), on the follow-up of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and on actions towards the post-2015 development agenda that are relevant to the CCS.

Further information on some of the progress made in the implementation is provided in documents ICCD/COP(11)/3 and ICCD/COP(11)/19.

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I. Background

1. “Advocacy, awareness-raising and education”, as one of the operational objectives of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), adopted by decision 3/COP.8, are essential activities to ensure the relevance of the Convention to major global environmental and socioeconomic challenges. The comprehensive communication strategy (CCS), developed as a result of decision 3/COP.8, is the guiding document for strategic actions for effectively supporting the implementation of The Strategy.

2. At the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10), Parties reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the CCS, as reported in document ICCD/COP(10)/2. In its decision 4/COP.10, the COP requested the Executive Secretary to report at COP 11 on progress in the implementation of the CCS.

3. Geared toward better addressing desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, the implementation of the CCS during the first half of this reporting period focused on strategically communicating to and persuading decision makers, the media, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other important stakeholders of the concept of land degradation neutrality (LDN). The LDN concept attained a firm recognition in the Rio+20 outcomes.¹ With the new development resulting from the Rio+20 outcomes to “strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development”, work in the second half of the reporting period endeavoured to operationalize the awareness-raising and advocacy actions in accordance with the secretariat’s strategy for promoting a land-degradation neutral world (LDNW).

4. This report provides a summary of the activities coordinated mainly by the secretariat under the CCS, with assessments of the outcomes of these activities. It focuses on activities at international level that are mandated by decision 3/COP.8. The report makes recommendations on ways and means of addressing strategic implementation of the CCS at international level as a contribution to ongoing efforts for the effective implementation of The Strategy, on the follow-up of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and on actions towards the post-2015 development agenda that are relevant to the CCS.

¹ The Future We Want. pp. 205–209, <www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf>.

II. Implementation progress

5. Decision 4/COP.10 affirmed that the implementation of the CCS is central to coordinated and targeted awareness-raising activities that support the effective implementation of The Strategy. The two-year work programme (2012–2013) for the secretariat on advocacy, awareness-raising and education was designed on this basis. As a result, the following activities have been implemented.

A. Land for Life Award

6. By decision 4/COP.10, the COP welcomed the “Land for Life Award” which was launched at COP 10 as part of the proposed “Changwon initiative”, as a contribution to the CCS. More than 500 guests attended the launch sponsored by the Korea Forest Service. Immediately after the launch, a part-time coordinator was engaged to draft communications, manage the application process and shortlisting, organize the recognition gala and prepare media materials promoting the semi-finalists and winners.

7. Also by decision 4/COP.10, the COP invited Parties and stakeholders, with particular emphasis on the private sector, to support the Land for Life Award by participating in the promotion of the award and other possible activities to ensure the smooth operation of the award programme. The 2012 Land for Life Award received financial support from Elion Resources Group, China; the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ); the Korea Forest Service; the Qatar National Food Security Programme (QNFSP) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provided in-kind support.

8. The award has now run two cycles, for 2012 and 2013. The calls for applications were publicized across various networks working on land and sustainable development; 110 applications were received in 2012, and 137 in 2013. Applications in all six United Nations languages came from all over the world, indicating broad awareness about the award, and from a range of organizations and individuals. Out of the total applications received, 15 semi-finalists were selected for each year and submitted to an expert jury of 10 experts in the field of development, sustainable land management (SLM) and soil science. The winners in 2012 are described in box 1. At the time this report was prepared, the winners for 2013 had not been named.

9. The announcement of the winners is a featured United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) activity of the World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD) on 17 June. In 2012, the announcement was made during a reception after Land Day 6 at Rio+20, with more than 200 people in attendance. The announcement of the winners by Miss Universe, Leila Lopes, UNCCD Drylands Ambassador, attracted wide publicity. The Land for Life Award Recognition Gala was held in Doha, Qatar, on 3 December 2012, and was co-sponsored by QNFSP. Representatives from the three winning organizations were present to accept the award. More than 120 guests, including government ministers, attended the gala, at which a video featuring each winner’s inspiring story was shown.

10. The Land for Life Award is the only global award that focuses solely on recognizing organizations and individuals working to restore degraded lands and improve soil’s natural health and productive capacity. After now running two cycles, it has served as a substantive new platform to raise awareness about the problems and solutions of desertification and land degradation. With future support from donors, the award has the potential to become a

prestigious recognition for those working to combat land degradation around the world, as well as to provide the means to scale up promising new strategies for SLM.

Box 1: 2012 Land for Life Award winners

Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL) in Haiti. Through building eco-san toilets, SOIL provides access to sanitation for thousands of people living in poverty. SOIL then processes the waste into valuable organic fertilizer for community land restoration

Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion (TEMA) in Turkey. TEMA is the largest movement for conservation, erosion control and habitat restoration in Turkey. TEMA volunteers have collected more than one million signatures, helping to pass a law on conservation of soil and land management

Conservation Efforts for Community Development (CECOD) in Uganda. Through eco-schools, CECOD trains teachers in a curriculum for sustainable land management, and has launched dozens of hands-on community projects, such as school gardens, water collection and composting

B. Training and capacity development among journalists and environmental correspondents

11. Decision 4/COP.10 emphasized that training and capacity development among journalists and environmental correspondents are imperative for developing a core group of actors whose primary focus is on DLDD. Against this backdrop, one of the focused areas under operational objective 1 of The Strategy is media training and network building.

12. With this in mind, the secretariat, starting at COP 11, embarked on an effort to build a core group of journalists in each region, with the following objectives:

- (a) To increase media coverage about the challenges of land degradation and best practices of SLM in Asia, Africa and Latin America;
- (b) To promote and popularize the concept of land-degradation neutrality;
- (c) To build a community of journalists writing regularly about combating desertification and land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought.

13. During this reporting period, regional workshops took place for the Asia and the West and North Africa regions. A third workshop, for the Latin American region, is scheduled to take place later in 2013. Participants were selected following a public call posted on the UNCCD website, and circulated through the UNCCD media mailing list and lists of partners. In addition to basic qualification criteria for selecting journalists, attention was also given to type of medium, language, gender and country representation.

14. Each workshop lasted three days, with two full days being dedicated to presentations by local and international experts, including government representatives, CSOs and scientists, and one full day to field visits. Each journalist was required to file at least two stories during and/or within two months following the event, and to submit the published articles to the secretariat. The articles were posted on the UNCCD website. The secretariat has maintained communication with the participants.

15. The regional workshop in Asia took place from 23 to 25 May 2012 in Chifeng City, China, and was co-organized by the secretariat, the State Forestry Administration of China, the Korea Forest Service and the Xinhua News Agency, with support from the Forestry Department of Inner Mongolia, China. The event was financially supported by the Republic of Korea through the Korea Forest Service. Fifty participants, including resource persons and observers, attended the workshop. Nine participating journalists from seven countries received financial support to attend. Subsequently, a network of the journalists was set up to facilitate communication, information-sharing and mutual support. The journalists said this was among the best organized media workshops they had ever attended, and they made recommendations to maximize the role of journalists, the workshop structure and field trips. The follow-up survey shows that within two months after the workshop, 22 articles were published on DLDD by the workshop participants, including in reputable media such as Inter-Press Service, AlertNet of Reuters, The Hindu, Chinadialogue and Financial Express. Journalists continue to publish on the subject.

16. The regional workshop in Africa took place from 29 to 31 May 2012 in Algiers, Algeria, and was co-organized with the sponsor, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Algeria. The opening and closing sessions were each attended by more than 100 participants. On average 50 people participated in the workshop, including resource persons and observers. Among the participants, 16 journalists from Africa, including four journalists from Algeria, received financial support to attend. By the end of the workshop, the journalists had filed at least 13 articles or radio/television transmissions; and some had sent daily press releases. By the end of 2012 more than 30 articles had been published. During the closing ceremony, the journalists presented the Executive Secretary and the Minister with a workshop report and recommendations for action to strengthen media participation in the work of the Convention. Participants have established their network and developed a programme of work.

17. The networks remain vibrant and some journalists have made DLDD a part of their environment beat, linking DLDD issues with other issues such as climate change, gender and forest degradation. Participants continue to report on major events organized by the secretariat, such as the 2012 WCD observance, the Land for Life Award recognition gala and the eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 11). The secretariat is supporting the networks to encourage environmental journalists, particularly those trained on DLDD by other partners, to join their initiatives. The journalists share the articles they produce through an online discussion list that is also used by the secretariat to disseminate information on the UNCCD activities and DLDD issues.

C. In-kind contributions and partnerships

18. Decision 4/COP.10 invited Parties, as well as Governments of States not Parties to the Convention, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide financial and/or in-kind support to ensure the effective implementation of the CCS, including financial and/or in-kind support for translation services for wider and balanced dissemination of media and outreach materials. The same decision also invited public-private partnerships for the implementation of the CCS to further strengthen the outreach for new actors on SLM and to receive support from those partnerships for global campaigns on DLDD.

19. The implementation of the CCS also depends on in-kind support, because core and extra-budgetary funds are scarce. Although many Parties recognize the importance of awareness-raising activities, their funding priorities lie with other programmes. Apart from the financial contribution to the Land for Life Award (EUR 350,000), extra-budgetary

funds allocated for awareness-raising, communication and education activities during this reporting period amounted to EUR 62,565. The extra-budgetary support was much appreciated and efficiently used, but the amount was far too small for a full implementation of the work programme. The core budget allocated for the same activities in the 2012–2013 work programme (i.e. consultants/experts, staff official travel and material productions) was EUR 70,000. The shortage of programme funds affected recurrent operations such as translations. By decision 4/COP.10, the Parties recognized the importance of language as a fundamental tool for any form of communication, and especially for public outreach. In future, as both the demand for and supply of information outputs continues to increase, wider and balanced distribution of information through multilingual translation will be increasingly difficult to achieve without sufficient resources

20. Accordingly, in-kind support received from various stakeholders made significant impacts on the implementation of the CCS. Most in-kind contributions were in the form of dedicated human that ensured the success of implementation. The Parties that provided ad-hoc in-kind contributions to major awareness-raising events during this reporting period included South Africa (Land Day 5 on 6 December 2011); Algeria (2011 observance of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (UNDDD) on 15–16 December 2011, and the Africa regional media workshop); China (Asia regional media workshop); Brazil (Fundação Cearense de Meteorologia e Recursos Hídricos and the Office of the Governor of the State of Ceara for the DLDD media promotion in Ceara); European Union (2012 WCD observance, on 17 June 2012); Qatar (Land for Life Award recognition gala); and the Republic of Korea (Land for Life Award recognition gala).

21. In addition, non-State actors such as the private sector and individuals contributed valuable time and financial resources to support the awareness-raising activities. For example, the private sector provided support for printing of materials, dedicated media reporting and advisory services for communication activities. Individual voluntary contributions to support awareness-raising activities, such as the production of a promotional video for the observance of the UNDDD, were much valued. More details on the partnership activities relating to the UNDDD can be found in document ICCD/COP(11)/19.

22. Partnerships with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions on awareness-raising and communication activities have been further strengthened through the joint activities on the Rio Conventions Pavilion and the production of the Rio conventions calendar. The Rio Conventions Pavilion is a collaborative outreach activity of the Rio convention secretariats and the GEF that aims to promote and strengthen synergy among the Rio conventions at implementation level. A special edition of the Rio Conventions Pavilion at Rio+20 was organized from 13 to 22 June 2012, and received in-kind support from the private sector. Global observance of the WCD was held at the Rio Conventions Pavilion on 17 June (see section II.D. Awareness-raising activities towards and in follow-up to Rio+20).

23. Partnership for the UNDDD observance is another example of successful multiplication of impacts achieved by like-minded organizations joining forces. The UNDDD Inter-agency Taskforce now has 13 members. The activities undertaken by the Taskforce during this reporting period is detailed in document ICCD/COP(11)/19.

24. Joint activities with the Global Mechanism (GM) took place at major UNCCD events in the forms of joint media reporting and information dissemination. In addition, the communication teams of the secretariat and the GM embarked on the development and implementation of a joint corporate identity, with joint information and communication strategies based on decision 6/COP.10 under the direction of the joint Senior Management Taskforce (see ICCD/COP(11)/3). As a result of a rigorous search for viable options that could reflect the improved institutional and governance frame as set out by decision

6/COP.10, a new joint corporate identity was introduced to the communication products of the GM.

D. Awareness-raising activities towards and in follow-up to Rio+20

25. As mentioned in chapter I (Background), the implementation of the CCS during this reporting period focused on strategically communicating the concept of land degradation neutrality (LDN) to relevant stakeholders, and, after the Rio+20, on operationalizing the awareness-raising and advocacy actions in accordance with the secretariat's strategy for promoting a land-degradation-neutral world (LDNW).

26. A dedicated web page on LDN has been created on the UNCCD website.² A policy brief "A Sustainable Development Goal for Rio+20: To secure the contribution of our planet's land and soil to sustainable development, including food security and poverty eradication" was officially launched by the Executive Secretary at the press conference in Berlin on 23 May 2012, attended by German journalists and civil society and webcast live. In order to promote the LDN concept to a wider audience, an information flyer was produced containing an executive summary of the policy brief.

27. The theme of the 2012 WDCD was "Healthy soil sustains your life: Let's Go Land-Degradation Neutral". The global observance of the WDCD in 2012, held at the Rio Conventions Pavilion on the margin of Rio+20, received partnership support from United Nations agencies, regional entities, governments, CSOs and the private sector, which was indispensable not only for the organization of the event but also for multiplying awareness-raising publicity. Partnership support is indispensable not only for the organization of the event but also for the wider publicity of the event.

28. At the observance event, the audience was particularly attracted by a high-level round-table talk by heads of agencies, and a spontaneous debate among the panellists on the theme "What sustainable land and soil management can do to achieve the Millennium Development Goals".

29. UNCCD activities undertaken in Rio were publicized before, during and after the event. The secretariat participated and shared information in various Rio+20 communications groups; distributed a calendar and summary of all the UNCCD events for Rio+20 to the media, UNCCD stakeholders and the UNCCD website prior to the event; and disseminated a press kit and media advisories before the event and prepared press releases immediately afterwards. Two press conferences were held, and requests for interviews were later received from such notable media as the Financial Times, Telesur, Le Monde, BBC Africa, Africa Renewal, Band Television (for GloboTV), United Nations Radio, Brazil Television and Télévision Nationale du Benin.

30. The secretariat played a lead role in preparing publicity materials, including posters, programme and press releases, and many partner agencies, including the GM and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) distributed these materials through their own channels. The secretariat also used its networks, such as the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the official Rio+20 page of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Department of Public Information, Rio Conventions Pavilion and 3BL Media and its partnerships with Inter-Press Service, Xinhua News Agency. It used media training avenues in Rio by the Environmental Journalists Network and by IPS-Thompson Reuters Foundation. Coverage

² <www.unccd.int/en/programmes/RioConventions/RioPlus20/Pages/Land-DegradationNeutralWorld.aspx>

by the Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) and Responding To Climate Change (RTCC) provided wider dissemination immediately following the activities. Additional coverage was provided by the journalists trained through the Asia and Africa regional media workshops held in May 2012.

31. In the run-up to Rio+20, the secretariat organized a competition, calling upon children and young people around the world, aged 25 and below, to share their wishes for soil and land. The theme was that of WDCD 2012: “Healthy soil sustains your life: Let’s Go Land-Degradation Neutral”. The winners from Uganda, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates were featured on the UNCCD website and one of the winners presented her essay describing her wishes for the future of soil and land at the WDCD observance in Rio+20.

32. Apart from the global observance in Rio+20, 34 Parties and CSOs reported to the secretariat about their observance events, which were introduced through the WDCD dedicated page on the UNCCD website.

E. Other coordination of comprehensive communication strategy activities by the secretariat

33. In its decision 4/COP.9, the COP requested the secretariat to continue coordinating the implementation of the CCS. This section provides summaries of CCS activities that are not individually named in that decision.

1. The website

34. The initial UNCCD website renewal process has been completed and a new website using the application platform SharePoint was introduced in March 2012. Within the secretariat, every unit is now responsible for updating the website. In May 2013 the website received more than 56,000 visits, which is close to 2.5 times more than the number in 2010 and seven times more than 2007. The challenges include lack of staff capacity for updating SharePoint, and more training is planned for the future.

2. Social media

35. The CCS report of the last biennium, presented in document ICCD/COP(10)/2, noted the great potential for growth in the area of social media. During this reporting period, the secretariat has strengthened social media activities through its accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Weibo (Chinese), Flickr, a UNCCD Blog (pilot phase) and others. The outreach progress through these media is summarized in table 1.

36. Social media platforms have become important dissemination channels, in particular during major events and conferences. Posts can help conference participants find timely logistical information, such as webcasts, schedules, slides of presenters and key media articles, and can also help to engage audiences that are not physically present. They also create buzz around the UNCCD brand and result in a multimedia narrative of the event. Experience shows that timely and visual multimedia posts result in the most views and active shares. For instance, during the period of CRIC 11/CST S-3 with the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, the twitter account @UNCCD reached about 100,000 accounts. Average Facebook view during the same period was between 1,700 and 2,500 views per day (the normal range is 500–1,000).

Table 1
Social media outreach

<i>Social media tool</i>	<i>Outreach June 2012</i>	<i>Outreach June 2013</i>	<i>Approximate increase in one year</i>
Facebook (www.facebook.com/UNCCD)	2,400 likes	5,780 likes	140%
Twitter (@UNCCD)	1,600 followers 5,707 accounts reached (7 day average)	3,132 followers 52,000 accounts reached (7 day average)	96% 811%
Weibo (Weibo.com/UNCCD) (started in April 2013)	N/A	26,254 followers	N/A-

3. Information dissemination

37. Information distribution across multimedia platforms, using the website and social media, helped the increase in outreach for mass media as well. Comprehensive press kits were developed for COP 10 and CRIC 11, and CST S-3 and the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference.

38. Printed and electronic information materials continue to be important means for the secretariat to raise awareness on DLDD. Periodic information dissemination over recent years with the “UNCCD brands” helped to increase the credibility of the UNCCD as an organization that tackles the DLDD issues. Those UNCCD brand periodic publication for awareness-raising include the bimonthly UNCCD News, the biweekly UNCCD Alert and the weekly LandScan, among which only UNCCD News is outsourced. An online readership survey on UNCCD News, conducted in May 2013, showed that respondents found the newsletter interesting and informative. While the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) was not in place, the library information services used alternative means to provide useful information on DLDD by means of its web page and a weekly email bulletin LandScan. LandScan now has 735 subscribers, which is a significant increase since it started as an in-house service with 43 subscribers in 2009.

4. Media liaison and outreach

39. Under operational objective 1 of The Strategy, the secretariat expanded its outreach and liaison with the media and added media training and network building to its focus. The secretariat continued the use of conventional approaches to reach out to the media, including through press releases and pitching journalists, but focused on increasing efficiency and effectiveness. To enhance effectiveness, the secretariat targeted and received coverage by global media, including ABC Australia, Agence France Press, Al Jazeera, Associated Press, BBC, DevNews, Spanish EFE, France 24, Guardian, Inter Press Service, IRIN, Korea Times, Le Monde, Thomson Reuters, SciDev, The Independent, The Hindi, Telesur, TV Globo, UN News, Washington Post, and Xinhua News Agency. Briefing sessions were held during UNCCD meetings and conferences, and at least 40 journalists from around the world received training from UNCCD at events organized by partners and expert interviewees identified ahead of meetings. Building on the experience from the last biennium, when a developing country president participated in a press conference, a former president from a developed country was invited to participate in a UNCCD press conference during the current biennium. Several press releases were issued jointly with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). To strengthen information dissemination through local and national radio stations in the region,

the secretariat has initiated a partnership through Green Radio World supporting environmental journalists to gather and disseminate radio interviews using new media.

40. To improve efficiency, the in-house media database has increased from 1,500 entries in 2010 to more than 4,300 in 2012, and is used strategically. To achieve targeted outreach and wider dissemination, the secretariat requested its communication partners to send out information through their mailing lists. Press releases and press kits were disseminated in a timely fashion and priority was given to responding to media requests. Forty-seven press releases were disseminated in 2011 and 35 in 2012. Adding to the partnerships with Inter-Press Service and United Nations Department for Public Information, a new partnership agreement was made with Xinhua News Agency, opening outreach via its 150 bureaux around the world and sponsorship of the production of awareness-raising materials.

5. Public awareness campaigns and events

41. For the reports on the 2012 WCD and Rio+20, please see section II.D. Awareness-raising activities towards and in follow-up to Rio+20. For a report on activities supporting the UNDDD (2008–2018), please see document ICCD/COP(11)/19.

42. Land Day started in 2009 as a major awareness-raising event to heighten attention among policymakers to land issues of relevance to the UNCCD. During this reporting period, two Land Day events were organized. Both had higher participation than the previous year's event in terms of attendance and the profiles of speakers.

43. Land Day 5 was held on 6 December 2011 during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban, South Africa, in partnership with the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa. The event received cabinet approval as an official South African Government event of the UNFCCC COP 17. Deputy President of South Africa, H.E. Mr. Kgalema Motlanthe, delivered the keynote address at the opening ceremony. The event also marked the start of a campaign to engage the public on the Rio+20 agenda of becoming land-degradation neutral. About 200 participants attended and most respondents in the post-event evaluation expressed themselves "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the presentations, organization and overall experience of the event.³

44. Land Day 6 was held at the Rio Conventions Pavilion during the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (COP 11) in Hyderabad, India. More than 200 people participated during the opening session, and throughout the day there were at least 80 people in the room. The keynote speech by Ms. Vandana Shiva attracted much interest. Beyond the usual online publicity and via different listservs, publicity of the event this time was enhanced through: on-site distribution of postcards; the Rio Conventions Pavilion; conference monitors; room signage using stand-alone banners; advance announcements of events at intervals and in a timely manner and in partnership with the conference organizers; and dedication of a full day of on-site pitching of individual journalists.⁴

45. Other conferences where the secretariat played a major role in awareness-raising and communication included: Caux Dialogue on Land and Security (7–11 July 2012, Caux, Switzerland), Global Soil Week (18–22 November 2012, Berlin), Agriculture, Landscapes

³ The full report of Land Day 5 is available on the UNCCD website:
<www.unccd.int/publicinfo/landday/landday5/menu.php>

⁴ The full report of Land Day 6 is available on the UNCCD website:
<www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Event-and-campaigns/Land-Day/Land%20day%206/Pages/Land-Day-6-report.aspx>

and Livelihoods Day (3 December 2012, Doha), and High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (11–15 March 2013, Geneva, Switzerland). In serving one of the Rio conventions, the secretariat was actively involved in the organizations of the Rio Conventions Pavilion at Rio+20, UNFCCC COP 17, and CBD COP 11. At each of these occasions, the UNCCD information exhibition booth was set up and manned. The secretariat also participated in exhibitions at strategic conferences such as the World Water Forum (Marseille, France), the International Trade Fair for Environment (Munich, Germany), Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum (Bonn, Germany), World Water Week (Stockholm), United Nations Day (Bonn, Germany), and the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (Bonn, Germany).

6. Recognition programmes

46. The CCS (ICCD/COP(9)/MISC.1, paragraph 87) states that identification of highly regarded champions to draw attention to the issues upheld by the Convention, including through advocacy, would provide the impetus needed to launch publicity on The Strategy and de-link the Convention from its conceptual rigidity and other dilemmas. In view of this, one of the strategic actions identified in the CCS is the establishment of a small network of sustainable land management (SLM) champions who have sufficient clout to influence a wide range of decision makers and media organizations.

47. Since the designation of the first SLM champion, Ambassador Byong Hyon Kwon (Republic of Korea) in 2010, the title SLM Champion was changed to Drylands Ambassador. Currently, nine Drylands Ambassadors are serving to raise awareness among decision makers and the public at large about the importance of tackling the DLDD issues, and to provide the impetus needed to fully implement the objectives of The Strategy (see box 2). The impact that these Drylands Ambassadors have made on awareness-raising on DLDD is more than expected. For example, Ambassador Kwon drew global attention to the regional cooperation to combat the Asian yellow-sand problem through regional partnership. Ms. Lopes increased media coverage on Land for Life Award. Mr. Garrity harnessed the secretariat's efforts in advocating LDN in the run-up to and after Rio+20. Ms. Fraser contributed to major UNCCD events such as COP 10 and Land Day 5. The challenge of running the Drylands Ambassador, however, remains that the programme incurs substantial costs and its implementation is therefore subject to the availability of funds.

Box 2 Drylands Ambassadors

- Ms. Liu Fangfei (China), TV Correspondent, China Central Television (CCTV)
- Ms. Deborah Fraser (South Africa), Singer
- Mr. Dennis Garrity (United States of America), Former Executive Director of the World Forestry Centre (ICRAF)
- Ambassador Byong Hyon Kwon (Republic of Korea), Former ambassador of Republic of Korea and chairman of the non-governmental organization Future Forest
- Ms. Leila Lopes (Angola), Miss Universe 2011
- Mr. Carlos Marchena (Spain), Football player and World Cup winner
- H.E. Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires (Cape Verde), Former President of Cape Verde
- HRH Princess Basma Bint Ali (Jordan), Princess of Jordan, Founder of Royal Botanic Garden
- Mr. Jeffrey Sachs (United States of America), Economist and Director of the Earth Institute

48. Galvanized by the success of the first Land for Life Award and Drylands Ambassador programme, and recognizing the importance to addressing success stories on SLM at both the grassroots and international levels, the secretariat has designed a holistic scheme of the recognition programme (see table 2). The latest additions to the recognition programme are “Dryland Champions” and “Global Dryland Champions” both of which aim at creating a community of doers and giving a broader group of actors a chance to join the UNCCD “family” in meeting the objectives of the Convention and striving to achieve an LDNW. The third UNCCD photo contest will take place later in 2013.

Table 2
UNCCD recognition programme overview

	<i>Land for Life Awards</i>	<i>Dryland Champions</i>	<i>Global Dryland Champions</i>	<i>Drylands Ambassadors</i>	<i>UNCCD photo contests</i>
Goal	To drive action on sustainable land and water management by inspiring leadership and motivating individuals and organizations (at all levels) through recognition of excellence and effort				
Rationale	To acknowledge sustainable land and water management activities that have brought tangible benefit in favour of sustainable development in the drylands, and “to reward those who make drylands productive, so they will prosper and others will seek to emulate their example (Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations)	To generate increased engagement by, and recognize achievements of individuals, organizations and businesses to promote grassroots action at local and national levels	To generate increased engagement by, and recognize achievements of individuals, organizations and businesses that are making a significant contribution to the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy at global level	To engage people with a track record of leadership and ability to inspire action into advocacy and awareness-raising activities to promote the implementation of the Convention	To communicate and inspire, through pictures from all over the world about the human footprint on the land, human innovation in restoring degraded areas and thereby communicate hope, optimism and the possibility of change
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognize world class contributions in the field of sustainable land and water management • To establish a prize that is well-respected and sought after that can drive communications around sustainable land and water management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide national/global recognition to those who have significantly contributed to avoid land degradation as well as restore degraded lands, thereby contributing to achieve a land-degradation neutral world • To drive social, economic and environmental movements through recognized sustainable land and water management • To give impetus at national and local levels for observing the World Day to Combat 	<p>To recognize individuals and institutions who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made outstanding contribution to achieving a land-degradation neutral world • Showcased their values and innovative approach to sustainable land and water management • Increased the attention given to desertification/land degradation and drought problems in drylands and its related major global challenges • Mobilized support for the implementation of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create opportunities for dialogue with decision makers at the highest level regionally and globally in order to drive policy change, engagement and resource mobilization • To create opportunities to generate publicity in key markets regionally and globally • To raise the profile of sustainable land and water management among non-technical/non policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To show the changing relations between people and their land and soil • To raise public awareness about the different sides of desertification/land degradation and drought • To encourage the public and policymakers to act, especially promoting sustainable land use practices • To show the benefits of managing land/soils properly

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		Desertification and the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010–2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase media coverage of sustainable land and water management and land restoration by promoting stories derived from the Dryland Champions certificate recipients 	Convention and The Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised awareness in the mainstream press and the public at large of the progress being made in private sector towards a more sustainable future Raised the global profile and visibility of the Convention 	audiences.	
Description	Land for Life will be awarded at a ceremony once per year based on a rigorous, open and transparent selection process. In accepting the prize, the awardee will agree to a programme of communication/ advocacy work with the secretariat as well as using the cash prize to scale up and/or disseminate their initiative	National focal points are encouraged to issue national Dryland Champions certificates at the occasion of the World Day to Combat Desertification. They are requested to report the awardees' names and activities with photographs to the secretariat so that the global recognition of these awardees can be made by the secretariat through the UNCCD website	The programme is exclusively dedicated to true influencers, leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators around the world who inspire and motivate others.	Appointments as Drylands Ambassador will be made by the Executive Secretary and will only take place following a rigorous selection process that matches need with skill set and global reach of the potential Ambassador with policymakers or the general public	Photographers, both amateur and professional from any country, can submit up to five pictures electronically. An international jury of renowned professional photographers and experts on the issues of sustainable land and water management will judge the images and pick the winning photos
Number awarded	Up to three prizes will be awarded each year. The prize will include a plaque and a possible cash prize from a prize fund (driven by contributions from partners)	No limit is set. A list of those awarded certificates will be submitted to the secretariat and placed on the UNCCD website	No limit, although the initial production of plaques proposed is 30	No limit, although the number should be manageable in line with the secretariat's work programme and budget that will allow maximizing the mobilization of the Drylands Ambassadors	The winner of the picture voted by the public – My Choice Award – and the best photograph submitted from each of the regions will receive honourable mention. The top three winners will receive prize funds and certificates

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Award process	Nomination by self or others, pre-screening and an international jury to select the winner	National focal point Ministries act as national reference point for the Dryland Champions programme and as primary interface for the programme applicants. National focal points will establish the country's own selection criteria based on guidelines established by the secretariat	Plaques and certificates are awarded by the Executive Secretary for well documented and substantiated achievements. No self-nomination, although nomination by national focal points to the Executive Secretary will be possible	At the discretion of the Executive Secretary according to the established terms of reference. The appointment is time-limited (two years) but renewable	The contest is open to any photographer, amateur or professional, of any country
Awarding body	Multi-stakeholder Partnership led by the UNCCD secretariat	National focal point Ministries	UNCCD secretariat (Executive Secretary)	UNCCD secretariat	UNCCD secretariat

III. Conclusions and recommendations

49. The first phase of the CCS implementation has been focusing on raising and increasing awareness among key target groups on the considerable environmental, social and economic impacts of land degradation and drought, particularly in the drylands, and its relevance to the global major challenges, while emphasizing the potential for SLM to address some of the current major global challenges. The priority has been given to making the issues known or better known.

50. Since Parties welcomed the CCS at COP 9 in Buenos Aires, visible progress has been made towards meeting the objectives set out in the CCS, as evidenced by the increasing number of the website visitors, the media coverage, the project partners and the event audience. In a sense, this result coincides with the conclusion of the preliminary analysis of information on operational objective 1 of The Strategy (ICCD/CRIC(11)/2). The analysis states that despite variation in the accuracy of data, it is possible to draw a reasonably optimistic picture of the state of affairs concerning the achievements of the outcomes of the operational objective 1.

51. Rio+20 provided an unprecedented opportunity for addressing the relevance of DLDD to attaining global sustainable development goals. As the international community is now working together towards the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, agreeing to a sustainable development goal on land degradation neutrality has become even more critical. In this regard, during the next biennium, it is envisaged that the secretariat's awareness-raising, communication and education activities would reach to the second phase of CCS implementation. The second phase aims to arrive at a point where the level of public awareness of the problems linked to DLDD and of the opportunities generated by SLM for addressing major global challenges matches a new understanding by political and economic decision makers of the advantages of making SLM a real priority for investment rather than keeping investment at the current level.

52. It is also envisaged that during the next biennium there will be an increasing amount of quantitative and qualitative data available from the UNCCD reporting process (the performance review and assessment of implementation system, PRAIS); the UNCCD best practice database; Economics of Land Degradation; and the scientific knowledge management brokering function. This will harness target-specific messages backed by strong evidence based on the implementations of the Convention.

53. While partnerships have strengthened media outreach, liaison and dissemination of articles, relying on partnerships as the key media strategy poses considerable structural limitations because media independence is a core value for this target group. Pitching to individual editors, the most effective ethical alternative, has limitations for the UNCCD by virtue of its physical location. To get consistent media attention and coverage, the secretariat needs to address these challenges.

54. Moreover, a strategic partnership as identified in the CCS is key for successful outreach. Pooling the communication resources of various institutions will harness a critical mass of outreach avenues and broaden the reach. Accordingly, the secretariat will continue its effort to widen its partnership with United Nations institutions and other major stakeholders through its flagship events and activities, including Land Day, WDCD, Land for Life Awards and UNDDD.

55. In view of the above, Parties may wish to consider the following:

(a) In view of meeting the emerging and urgent demand for addressing LDN and the relevance of DLDD in attaining global sustainable development goals, consider awareness-raising, communication and education activities, including the support for multilingual translation services, as a priority area for financial and in-kind contributions;

(b) Align the CCS with the outcomes of the mid-term review of operational objective 1 of The Strategy and the mandates given by the Rio+20 outcomes so that the updated priorities will be reflected in the CCS implementation plans for the next biennium;

(c) Invite further support from Parties and other stakeholders to the Land for Life Award so that the programme expands its advocacy component, allowing for the Award winners and applicants to become advocates at key events capable of making a persuasive case for policy targets relating to land and soil for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda;

(d) Enhance media coverage of DLDD and the UNCCD by supporting and strengthening training and capacity development among journalists and environmental correspondents, including strengthening collaboration with journalists assigned to United Nations reporting and national focal points, conducting training workshops at major DLDD and UNCCD events, early identification of planned media workshops where UNCCD speakers could be offered, and partnership with development agents focused on DLDD media training.
