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Outcome of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

Outcome of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

Note by the secretariat**

Summary

The General Assembly of the United Nations, at its fifty-eighth ordinary session, being concerned at the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and its far-reaching implications for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), declared the year 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) as a means of raising public awareness on the issue of desertification and in order to protect the biological diversity and the knowledge and the traditions of communities affected by desertification.

This report provides an assessment of the results and outcomes of the wide range of events and activities that took place in celebration of the IYDD. It concludes that the IYDD offered an important opportunity to increase awareness and disseminate information about desertification at the global level, while fostering the development and consolidation of stakeholder networks and contributing to the long-term implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the achievement of the MDGs. Combating desertification remains, nevertheless, an important challenge, and in order to perpetuate the momentum generated through the IYDD, it is imperative that appropriate follow-up action takes place.

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I. Introduction

1. In 2003, the General Assembly of the United Nations, at its fifty-eighth session, adopted resolution 58/211, deciding that the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) would be formally launched on 1 January 2006. The IYDD was designated with a view to raising global public awareness of the increasing challenges posed by desertification, safeguarding the biological diversity of arid lands and protecting the knowledge and traditions of affected communities.
2. The same General Assembly resolution 58/211 designated the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as the focal point for the IYDD, in conjunction with an inter-agency committee bringing together the principal institutional partners of the United Nations active in the UNCCD implementation process.
3. At its sixtieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/200, requesting the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session on the celebration of the IYDD. And the Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 28/COP.7, requested the Convention secretariat to report to the COP at its eighth session on the outcomes of the IYDD.
4. The present document complements the interim report on the status of celebration of IYDD events (ICCD/CRIC(5)/10), which was prepared by the Convention secretariat for the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 5). It focuses on the added value brought by the IYDD and presents possible options to maintain and build upon the momentum generated by the celebration of the IYDD, by outlining the recommendations emerging from IYDD events at all levels.

II. Background and objectives of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

5. The decision of the General Assembly to observe an international year dedicated to deserts and desertification provided an important communication platform to strongly and effectively underline the fact that desertification is a global problem. The IYDD also provided an impulse to strengthen the visibility and importance of desertification as an issue on the international environmental agenda, while also providing a timely reminder to the international community of the immense challenges that still lie ahead, particularly in relation to its far-reaching implications in the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals.
6. The IYDD was also intended to address the issue of deserts, which, with their unique habitats, fragile beauty and incredibly diverse fauna, have been home to some of the world's oldest civilizations.
7. With a view to fully capitalizing on the expected momentum to be generated by the IYDD, its conception, launch and celebration were organized around the promotion of the UNCCD process and the complementary advantages of its multilateral and bilateral partners. In this context, it was expected that the IYDD would lead to the achievement of a set of concrete and measurable objectives, assembled under the abbreviation LAND:

- (a) Long-term oriented implementation of the UNCCD;
- (b) Awareness of the implications of desertification;
- (c) Networking with all stakeholders;
- (d) Dissemination of information relating to the UNCCD.

III. Celebrations of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

8. On several occasions the General Assembly and the COP encouraged country Parties and observers, including intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies, to celebrate the IYDD worldwide. The UNCCD secretariat, in cooperation with its bilateral and institutional partners, organized major events in celebration of the IYDD. At national and regional levels IYDD celebrations were marked by numerous initiatives that highlighted the commitment of Parties and other stakeholders to the effective implementation of the UNCCD. Further details of the nature and content of these events may be found in document ICCD/CRIC(5)/10.

A. International events

9. Several international events were organized by the IYDD inter-agency committee, which included the UNCCD and major United Nations and NGO partners. These events were held in various regions of the world with the support of affected and developed country Parties, including: Algeria, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania. The key events are described in the annex.

10. In addition to activities jointly planned and scheduled by the inter-agency committee, international partner organizations also organized specific initiatives that were identified and devised on the basis of their respective fields of expertise and mandates.

11. Further global communication initiatives were undertaken to raise awareness of desertification and the UNCCD. These include broadcasts by media organizations, including the BBC, Voice of America and Deutsche Welle. In addition, Scidev.net commissioned scientific experts to prepare a Desert Science Dossier, which was subsequently made available on its website: <www.scidev.net>.

12. These initiatives contributed extensively towards raising the visibility of desertification within the media during the IYDD, particularly during the commemorations of World Environment Day (5 June) and the World Day to Combat Desertification (17 June).

B. National celebrations and events

13. Prior to the start of 2006, the Executive Secretary contacted all Parties to inform them of the General Assembly's decision and requested information on national level activities that

Parties intended to organize to celebrate the IYDD. Fifty-four Parties confirmed that they would be holding celebrations to mark the IYDD.

14. At the end of 2006, the secretariat invited Parties and observers to report on the activities they had carried out to celebrate the IYDD. By the end of May 2007 information had been received on activities and events that took place in 32 countries: Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo and Turkey. These reports were useful in identifying, at the national level, the status of stakeholders' involvement and the priorities addressed. For example, one report outlined a number of special events, publications, resources and media coverage, civil society and networking events and contributions to international conferences and events. The same report highlighted how the IYDD celebrations helped to promote knowledge and increase information exchange in relation to the UNCCD and its implementation, and raise awareness of the challenges of desertification to human security and well-being in drylands.

15. The IYDD initiatives reported from other parts of the world were varied in nature and content and involved many different stakeholders. Some of these were organized specifically in the framework of IYDD, whereas others capitalized on the IYDD celebrations.

16. National events were grouped into three categories:

(a) **Conferences/workshops/seminars/symposiums**, including academic lectures, scientific meetings, round-table discussions, forums and press conferences. Celebrations under this category were held in the following countries: Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Guinea, Guyana, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Spain, Togo and Turkey. These activities helped to achieve the objectives of disseminating information, networking and raising awareness, particularly in relation to the importance of addressing desertification in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

(b) **Public information and awareness-raising events**, including exhibition stands, postcards, posters, booklets, literature, maps, "This Land is Your Land" information pack, civil society networking events, media coverage, study tours, teaching kits, training for teachers on desertification, e-learning programmes, World Days, and tree plantings. IYDD events in this category were held in the following countries: Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, Spain and Turkey. These activities provided a valuable contribution towards the long-term implementation of the UNCCD, as well as helping to meet the objectives of information dissemination, networking and raising awareness. They also contributed towards raising awareness of the importance of protecting the biological diversity, knowledge and traditions of communities affected by desertification.

(c) **Cultural events** including museum/gallery/photographic exhibitions, musical events, plays, film festivals, commemorative stamps, calendars, websites, desertification themed lottery tickets, and photographic/writing contests and competitions. Cultural events were held in

the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Guinea, Italy, Morocco, Senegal, Spain, Togo and Turkey. Many of the exhibitions attracted large audiences. For example, a special exhibition on deserts organized in Rosenheim, Germany, received more than 200,000 visitors. Similarly, another country reported the success of an IYDD-related photographic exhibition which was seen by more than one million people. These types of cultural events made a major contribution towards the goals of raising awareness and networking, as well as celebrating the cultural and biological heritage of the world's deserts.

IV. Key outputs and achievements of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

17. Many of the IYDD events requested the COP, the secretariat and other stakeholders to give due consideration to follow-up initiatives. Outputs from the workshops organized in Bamako (4–6 September 2006) and Beijing (May 29 to 1 June 2006) specifically requested the COP to consider the statements, recommendations and declarations with a view to implementing the recommendations therein. At the end of the Algiers conference (17–19 December 2006) an agreement was signed by the Ministry of Environment of Algeria, the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the secretariats of the UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in order to strengthen the collaboration of these institutions in the fight against desertification. The agreement also referred to a proposed Decade of Deserts and Desertification (2010–2020), promoted by the conference and subsequently discussed at the UNEP Governing Council session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 5 to 9 February 2007.

18. In addition to the momentum and enthusiasm for follow-up initiatives, IYDD events also yielded outputs which, if acted upon, could capitalize on and enhance the multiplier effect of the IYDD at the national and international level. The nature of outputs is summarized in the annex. Many outputs are addressed to specific stakeholder groups and UNCCD bodies, including the CRIC, the COP, the secretariat, the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), and the Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG), as well as to country Parties, the scientific community and international partner agencies (see annex).

19. If timely responses are deployed by relevant stakeholders, these outputs could yield multiple benefits, contributing further to raising public awareness, protecting the biological diversity and knowledge and traditions of affected communities, implementing the MDGs, and playing a key role in the implementation of the UNCCD over the long term.

20. Several outputs provide suggestions to strengthen existing, often well-established aspects of the UNCCD implementation process and address the Convention's long-term goals by focusing on a variety of core themes. Some of these themes were addressed during the IYDD events: some of them were in cross-cutting thematic areas such as women and young people, whereas others pointed to new, emerging cross-sectoral issues, such as food insecurity and migration due to desertification.

21. Each recommendation has been considered and evaluated under the categories outlined below. Where appropriate and relevant, attention has been drawn to those groups to which appeals/calls are being made. It should also be noted that many of the recommendations could be

placed under several of the headings but to avoid repetition, each recommendation has been only detailed once.

A. Recommendations to strengthen existing aspects of the Convention implementation process

22. An important spectrum of recommendations have been identified in the following thematic areas: participation and empowerment, civil society/NGOs and networking, scientific research, training and consensus, long-term UNCCD implementation, indicators and targets, national action programmes (NAPs), and resources and financing.

1. Enhancing participation and empowerment

23. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) The need for recognition that successful research and knowledge sharing must involve cross-disciplinary partnerships that engage the participation of land users, governments, regional and international bodies, NGOs, civil society, communities and the private sector (Niamey);¹

(b) Acknowledgement that desertification-affected dryland dwellers must be at the centre of any remediation and engagement, and enabling of communities leading to effective stewardship should remain at the heart of policy formulation (Algiers);

(c) Recognition that poverty, desertification and migration impact strongly on women and youth which, in turn, calls for formulating strategies that will strengthen these social groups and make them less vulnerable (Almeria);

(d) The need to facilitate the effective participation of farmers, as well as populations of arid zones to the formulation of public policies which have a direct impact on them and their livelihoods (Montpellier).

2. Enhancing the role of civil society/NGOs and networking

24. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) The need for the establishment of a trust fund for the benefit of civil society during IYDD (Rome);

(b) Calls to civil society, national authorities and the international community to place the development of drylands and combating desertification at the centre of efforts aimed at the successful implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements and to achieve the MDGs (Tunis);

¹ In order to facilitate cross-referencing, each of the recommendations in section A to C will include in parenthesis the name of the city where the event took place. For a full and comprehensive list of events please refer to the annex.

(c) The need to set up a viable system in order to increase and reinforce the active contribution of civil society in reducing the impacts of desertification (Montpellier);

(d) Support and encouragement to national focal points to seek synergies, partnerships and networking opportunities to incorporate the gender dimension into civil society, grassroots, academic, economic and business organizations (Beijing);

(e) An invitation to governments and cooperation agencies to support existing youth networks involved in environmental and sustainable development issues by providing funds and building capacity (Bamako);

(f) Acknowledgement that the establishment and strengthening of local women's organizations should be promoted in order to enhance women's capacity in decision-making and participatory processes and to further develop networks (Beijing, Montpellier, Bamako);

(g) Recognition that for research and knowledge-sharing to be successful, it must address the priority needs expressed by the poor and must take a holistic approach through cross-disciplinary partnerships that engage the participation of land users, governments, regional and international bodies, NGOs, civil society, communities and the private sector (Niamey).

3. Scientific research, training and consensus

25. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Multidisciplinary research is needed on dryland policy options and consequences, the risk of drought, the hunger/thirst nexus and water scarcity, land tenure issues, farmer decision-making and incentives, interactions between agricultural and natural ecosystems, drought preparedness and mitigation, soil and water resource management, the potential of indigenous and introduced agrobiodiversity, the value of ecosystem services and on the interrelation between desertification and migration (Niamey, Almeria, Algiers);

(b) There is a need for improved communication and sharing of scientific knowledge across the spectrum of stakeholders, from grassroots land users to national and international policymakers, ensuring scientific findings are available and understandable to all stakeholders (Niamey, Sede Boqer, Tunis, Montpellier):

(c) There is a need for governments and multilateral environmental agreements to integrate science into policymaking at all levels, from policy formulation to implementation (Algiers, Tunis);

(d) There is a need to associate end-users in the definition of research programmes. Procedures should also be set up allowing consideration of the needs of local actors and their involvement in the creation and validation of knowledge and its diffusion (Montpellier);

(e) Fighting against desertification and the effects of drought through the improvement of systematic scientific assessment of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry

sub-humid areas. Such assessment should also include a link to the efforts needed to adapt to the adverse effects of climate variability and/or climate change (New York);

4. Concerns and requests for long-term UNCCD implementation

26. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Recognition of the need for a mechanism of peer review in the implementation of the Convention, to ensure compliance and facilitate the availability and accessibility of technology and funding to those who need them and for alternative livelihoods of dryland communities (New York);

(b) Recognition that improvements in the interaction of the UNCCD with other development partners and national governments would enable the Convention to champion better policies at the international level (Algiers);

(c) Requests to the Convention secretariat to establish a focal point for youth and a Convention youth partnership network (Bamako);

(d) Requests to the governments of country Parties to introduce more substance to COPs and CRICs (Montpellier);

(e) Encouragement of the IIWG to take fully into consideration the recommendations of the Beijing International Conference on Women and Desertification and the Bamako Statement and to establish clear targets towards the equal participation of women in UNCCD implementation (Beijing, Bamako);

(f) Calls to Parties and national bodies responsible for the implementation of the UNCCD to design, implement and support project activities and programmes relating to women's empowerment in areas affected by drought and desertification, with particular regard to projects in rural areas (Beijing).

5. Indicators and targets

27. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Identification of a limited number of clear, legally binding targets for UNCCD implementation based, inter alia, on past work of the CST and a review of selected successful stories/failures of campaigns against desertification and the effects of droughts. The Conference of the Parties at its eighth session should consider relevant background information with a view to initiating a consultation process among Parties (New York);

(b) Recognition of the need to fix clear, quantifiable and time-bound objectives to the UNCCD (Montpellier);

(c) Recognition of the need for better harmonization of information at various levels, together with standardization of definitions, indicators, monitoring procedures, impact studies and evaluation techniques (Algiers);

(d) The need for preparation and application of methodologies/guidelines with a view to incorporating the gender dimension into reporting activities and revising the existing set of benchmarks and indicators in order to include it appropriately (Beijing).

6. National action programmes

28. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Recommendation that the priorities of NAPs need to be fully mainstreamed in the production sector and national frameworks, and to be linked to agriculture, livestock rearing, land use planning, water use, forestry and rural development (Agenda 21) (New York);

(b) Calls upon Parties to incorporate the gender dimension in the implementation of NAPs and in other relevant frameworks or environmental strategies (Beijing);

(c) The expression of concern for the serious delays in implementing NAPs to combat desertification, and calls to those countries who have not yet finished formulating their NAPs to do so (Rome);

(d) A request to governments to raise NAPs to the strategic framework level and mainstream advanced efforts to combat desertification (Montpellier);

(e) Recognition that in view of current concerns with recurrent droughts and their impacts on local communities, it is important to develop and implement a national drought policy (NDP) that supports effective implementation of the NAPs (Arusha);

(f) A request to country Parties to identify specific measures for defining areas of participation for young people and the mechanisms that need to be in place to enhance their participation in the implementation of NAPs so as to promote the ownership of the activities by young people (Bamako).

7. Resources and financing

29. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Public-private and community partnerships should be developed with a view to creating new funding opportunities and financial instruments (Algiers);

(b) Donor countries are invited to support initiatives using micro-credit tools (Beijing);

(c) Innovative approaches to maximize the efficiency of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation instruments and their funding mechanisms, including debt swaps, in combating desertification, should be explored (New York);

(d) Consideration should be given to new innovative funding options for combating desertification, including solidarity contributions to development (New York);

(e) Donor countries and international agencies, particularly the Global Environment Facility (GEF), should be called upon to provide additional funds on a regular basis as a way of improving participation (particularly of women) in the decision-making process within the implementation of the Convention, as well as increasing budgets for small projects (Beijing, Bamako, Montpellier);

(f) The private sector must be provided with economic incentives to better invest in efforts to combat desertification (Algiers).

B. Outcomes focusing on cross-cutting themes which are already considered within the Convention but which need to continue to be mainstreamed

30. In particular these include: synergy and interlinkages, traditional knowledge, water, renewable energy, culture and education, alternative employment opportunities, access to markets and sustainable livelihoods. As the priority cross-cutting areas of gender (women) and youth formed the specific focus of international IYDD events and have provided multiple, valuable outputs with both thematic and new cross-sectoral recommendations, these have been integrated into the other thematic areas in this section. For further details, please refer to the Beijing Declaration and the Bamako Statement, available at <www.unccd.int>.

1. Synergy and interlinkages

31. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Recognition of the need for scientific studies examining the linkages between desertification, biodiversity loss and climate change (Sede Boqer);

(b) More attention needs to be given to the integration of climate change, biodiversity and freshwater programmes (New York);

(c) Recognition that innovative and adaptive land management responses to inherent climatic variability and natural hazards (droughts, floods, landslides, sand and dust storms, wildfires, etc.) must be identified and implemented for sustainable land management (Arusha);

(d) Cross-cutting programmes across sectors and ministries could help improve coordination at the national level (Algiers);

(e) Recognition of the need to identify the interdependence and conservation of cultural and biological diversity as priority issues in efforts to define future paths of dryland research for sustainable development (Tunis).

2. Traditional knowledge

32. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) The documentation and dissemination of traditional knowledge (Beijing) as a heritage of practical, common and effective experience (New York);

(b) A greater appreciation of the role of traditional knowledge and complementarities with appropriate technologies in food production, conservation and value addition (Beijing, Sede Boqer, Tunis);

(c) Recognition that combining traditional knowledge with scientific knowledge and new tools provides policymakers with crucial information (Algiers);

(d) Studies of the complementarities of local traditional knowledge and of innovative transferred technologies for effectively addressing local needs (Sede Boqer);

(e) A request to the UNCCD and country Parties to strengthen the effective integration of local traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches to combat desertification (Montpellier).

3. Culture and education

33. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) The promotion of education and dissemination of information in areas affected by drought and desertification (Beijing), as well as the inclusion of environmental and sustainable development as subjects in the curricula of schools, including the creation of specialized education facilities on combating desertification (Bamako);

(b) The creation of an international system of fellowships and/or internships on issues relating to desertification, supported by the private sector (Bamako).

4. Water

34. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) The management of water, forest and land resources to be based on an integrated, gender-oriented and ecosystem approach (Beijing, New York);

(b) Recognition that managing water scarcity will not only contribute towards reducing land degradation and desertification in fragile ecosystems characterized by structural water shortages, but also helps to attain the MDGs (New York);

(c) Acknowledgement that knowledge of water management approaches is crucial to formulating policies for dryland development (Algiers);

(d) Recognition that desert drylands provide opportunities for sustainable livelihoods which do not depend on the land's primary productivity but exploit desert attributes such as winter warmth, brackish geothermal water and high solar irradiation (Sede Boqer).

5. Renewable energy

35. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Renewable energy technologies and efficiencies to be improved according to local conditions (Beijing, Geneva) and connected to sustainable development and water access (New York);

(b) Information on alternative energy sources to be disseminated by NGOs (Beijing);

(c) Exploration of the potential of the drylands to take place in order to provide alternative energy sources (solar, wind and biofuels) (Sede Boqer, Almeria);

(d) The European Union should stress the importance of renewable energies as a means to eradicate the cause of anthropogenic climatic change (Almeria).

6. Alternative employment opportunities, access to markets and sustainable livelihoods

36. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) The comparative advantages of the drylands should be highlighted in overcoming poverty and insecurity (Niamey);

(b) Opportunities for income-generating activities should be encouraged based on the development of renewable energies (Beijing);

(c) Developing countries and countries with economies in transition should promote activities such as ecotourism to improve the livelihoods of affected communities (Bamako);

(d) Alternative employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for pastoralists and other land users in the drylands need to be created to diminish pressure on natural resource (Algiers, Geneva);

(e) Governments should be requested to set up coherent policies on international trade in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and regional trade agreements, in order to allow equitable access of dryland products to the markets (Montpellier).

**C. Outputs from International Year of Deserts and Desertification events
identifying new emerging cross-sectoral issues in need of
attention within the Convention process**

37. These include the thematic areas of health, food security, migration and environmental refugees, ecosystem goods and services, their valuation and the costs of inaction, and environmental security.

1. Health

38. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Consideration of health indicators, such as maternal diseases, child nutrition, family planning, etc., in the UNCCD reporting process (Beijing, Geneva);

(b) Recognition of the negative effects of HIV/AIDS on communities living in areas affected by desertification and drought, and particularly on women, leading also to further land degradation and poverty, and of the need to explore effective strategies to diminish this negative impact through joint efforts promoting women's active involvement (Beijing);

(c) Prevention and anticipation of health risks by strengthening capacity for resistance both of the population and the food sector, through immunization, palm production and planting drought-tolerant crops with higher nutritional qualities (Geneva);

(d) The provision of adequate reproductive health facilities for women in areas affected by drought and desertification in order to reduce maternal and child mortality (Beijing).

2. Food security

39. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Recognition of the concept of food sovereignty in development paradigms for the world's arid zones. This advocates local agricultural production to feed the local population (Geneva);

(b) Greater consideration of the increasing convergence between human rights, the right to food and sustainable environmental management with emphasis on the prevention and anticipation of food insecurity in the drylands (Geneva);

(c) Promotion of the use, based on traditional knowledge, of multi-purpose trees and crops for the production of medicines and food of high nutritive value (Beijing);

(d) Promotion of a specific study on the nutritional capacity of areas affected by drought and desertification products and ways and means of improving the nutritional status of the younger generation, taking into consideration existing research in this field (Beijing).

3. Environmental security, migration and environmental refugees

40. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Comprehensive policies should be adopted to ensure full involvement, particularly of young people, in natural resource management to encourage them to remain on their land (Bamako);

(b) Activities in areas affected by desertification should be supported as a way to prevent forced migration (Bamako);

(c) More in-depth analysis of the definition of environmental migration is needed (Algiers), as well as analysis of the causes and consequences of migration (Almeria), and recognition of environmental refugees under international law and the right to food (Geneva);

(d) A conceptual framework for desertification and migration and establishment of an international expert panel to gather existing global knowledge, measures and good practice to lessen the effects of desertification and migration is required (Almeria);

(e) A request to country Parties to undertake political measures to peacefully solve conflicts caused by desertification (Bamako).

4. Ecosystem goods and services, their valuation and the costs of inaction

41. Outcomes from the deliberations at the IYDD events include the following:

(a) Recognition that those people involved in the conservation and protection of resources should benefit from payment for environmental services (Beijing);

(b) A call to the CST and the CRIC to act with urgency in order to contribute to reaching a scientific consensus – in time for COP 8 – on the causes and symptoms of desertification, future outlooks and the likely consequences of inaction (Rome, January);

(c) Recognition of the need for evaluation of costs and benefits of combating desertification, including ecosystem services, based on quantifiable targets and estimates of the cost of non-action, with the view to better defining/fine-tuning strategies for intervention at local, regional and global levels (New York);

(d) Emphasis of the need for research and methods to better document the full costs of dryland degradation, particularly the losses of ecological goods and services, and of human and social capital (Rome, December) and different development paths (Sede Boqer), and to quantify the substantial benefits that could accrue from the sustainable rehabilitation and development of these lands (Niamey);

(e) Recognition that investment in drylands is economic, socially and environmentally profitable and judicious (Geneva, Montpellier), and should be underpinned by

appropriate legislation, land tenure security, price stability, education, health care and civil peace (Rome, December);

V. Conclusion and recommendations

42. Despite the extensive progress made towards meeting the IYDD objectives, desertification remains an important global problem, notably in Africa, especially in relation to its far-reaching implications for the implementation of the MDGs, in particular Goal 1 on poverty eradication and Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability. If undertaken appropriately, such follow-up action could have beneficial collateral effects in contributing to Goals 3, 4 and 8. It is therefore paramount that appropriate follow-up action takes place at all levels in order to build on the momentum generated through the IYDD, through the promotion of further political engagement, advocacy and awareness-raising in the context of the Convention.

43. The COP at its eighth session may wish to consider the following recommendations, identified in the relevant events organized during the celebration of the IYDD around seven main core priority areas.

A. Attain commitment to the management and restoration of degraded drylands from all stakeholders

44. The COP may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) UNCCD partner organizations (including the organizations of the United Nations system), financial institutions (including the GEF), resource mobilizers (including the Global Mechanism) and Parties, to increase the level and diversity of funding available to combat desertification and implement the UNCCD, through the timely and predictable provision of sufficient resources;

(b) The scientific community to make research findings relevant to end-users, as well as easily accessible, understandable and useable, so that they may be used by all stakeholders;

(c) Civil society and NGOs to give priority to drylands and combating desertification in their efforts to implement multilateral environmental agreements.

B. Formulate and implement supportive policies and appropriate legal frameworks

45. The COP may wish to consider the following recommendations

(a) Improvement in the interaction of the UNCCD with development partners and the other Rio conventions, and the forging of new relationships with organizations addressing emerging cross-cutting issues such as food security, health, migration and human rights, in order to capitalize on synergy and develop a mutually supportive context for UNCCD implementation;

(b) Mainstreaming of the priorities of NAPs in the production sector and national development frameworks, in conjunction with the creation of clear targets and indicators to

monitor progress. Countries who have not yet finished formulating their NAPs should do so with urgency;

(c) Guaranteeing rights to land and resources, access to markets and the establishment of appropriate legal frameworks to support these rights.

C. Empower local people and marginalized groups – particularly women and young people – and ensure the equitable sharing of costs and benefits, giving due consideration to the costs of inaction

46. The COP may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Strengthening the role of women, youth and farmers and populations of arid zones in decision-making, participatory processes and efforts to implement the UNCCD;

(b) The consolidation of multi-stakeholder networks developed during the IYDD, particularly among NGOs, women, young people, farmers and scientists, together with the provision of appropriate resources to ensure their sustainability, including the formation of constituencies depending on the interests of the different stakeholders;

(c) Further research on the full environmental, social and economic costs of dryland degradation and their distribution among different stakeholder groups, including the costs of inaction, with a view to informing strategies for intervention at local, regional and global levels.

D. Employ integrated approaches to resource assessment, planning and management, taking into consideration the links between desertification and other emerging cross-sectoral issues, including migration, environmental security, health, water, renewable energies and food insecurity

47. The COP may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) A focus on rights-based approaches to emerging cross-sectoral issues such as food security, access to water and migration, with emphasis on the prevention and anticipation of humanitarian challenges in planning and management strategies with regard to drylands;

(b) Further exploration of, and investment in, the less well-known opportunities provided by the drylands, in particular in their capacity for renewable energies and alternative livelihoods and income sources;

(c) Improved communication between stakeholders and harmonization of information at various levels across different sectors in order to enhance integration within planning and management and reduce the duplication of efforts.

E. Take an adaptive and holistic approach to dryland management, emphasizing environmental, social and cultural values, as well as traditional knowledge

48. The COP may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Commitment to integrated water, forest and land resource management based on a gender-oriented and ecosystem approach, capitalizing on the information in the Millennium Assessment and fostering synergy with other multilateral environmental agreements;

(b) Further promotion of education and dissemination of information in dryland areas affected by desertification, building on the progress made during the IYDD and incorporating different social and cultural values and traditional knowledge into dryland education efforts;

(c) Innovative and adaptive responses to natural dryland hazards, e.g. droughts, floods, sandstorms, etc., engaging all stakeholders through participatory processes, capitalizing on the complementarities of traditional coping strategies and scientific knowledge, and ensuring the timely review and revision of management goals, indicators and progress in order to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of responses.

F. Promote economic efficiency and financial viability

49. The COP may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Agreement of a limited number of clear targets for UNCCD implementation, including quantifiable objectives, time frames and appropriate indicators, in order to monitor progress and evaluate the “value for money” from investment in efforts to combat desertification;

(b) Exploration of innovative approaches to enhance resources and maximize the efficiency of bilateral and multilateral development instruments. Attention should be paid to, inter alia, debt swaps, solidarity contributions to development, public–private and community partnerships, and the provision of economic incentives to the private sector to enhance their investment in combating desertification;

(c) Documentation of the full costs of degradation and inaction (including losses of ecological goods and services, human and social capital) at national, regional and international levels, together with quantification of the economic benefits and profits that could accrue from the sustainable rehabilitation and development of the drylands.

G. Assure participatory monitoring and evaluation as a basis for adaptive management

50. The COP may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Greater involvement and participation of those stakeholders affected by desertification (particularly indigenous groups, women, young people and the poor) in problem definition, intervention design and project and policy implementation, through the establishment

of multi-stakeholder partnerships and communication platforms, building on and consolidating the networking progress made during the IYDD;

(b) Engagement of multiple stakeholders in the design and evaluation of future scenarios, allowing iterative testing and refinement of the impact of policies on target populations and end users, thus permitting meaningful local-level involvement in the creation and validation of strategies and actions to combat desertification;

(c) Further recognition to be given to the added value achieved in combining traditional and scientific knowledge in order to effectively address local needs and guide the participatory development of novel, appropriate strategies and technologies in combating desertification.

Synthesis of outcomes, objectives, ways forward and stakeholders/institutions to whom recommendations are addressed

Date and location	Event	Key outcomes, including stakeholders and institutions to whom recommendations are addressed (where appropriate)	Contributions to recommendations in chapter V
19–20 January, Rome, Italy	Workshop on combating desertification and poverty in drylands	Call for consensus on causes and symptoms of desertification, future outlooks and consequences of inaction; highlight concern for lack of methodological rigor in examining UNCCD implementation and consider delays in NAP production problematic. STAKEHOLDERS: <i>International community</i> can and should do more; <i>Civil society</i> has a role to play in awareness-raising	A(c), B(b), C(b)
27 February, Washington DC, United States of America	World Bank Rural Day: Tackling degraded land to ensure future food production	Key concerns for sustainable land management (SLM): land tenure and property rights, confusion over institutional collaboration, watershed management, payments for environmental services, costs associated with land degradation, effects of climate change on SLM; analytical work is needed to deepen interventions to incorporate SLM into community driven projects. STAKEHOLDERS: <i>Land administration and management</i> need to cooperate effectively to develop more holistic approaches to SLM.	B(a), B(c), C(c), F(c)
11–12 April, Geneva, Switzerland	International conference: combating desertification, hunger and poverty	Calls for a focus on the links between desertification, poverty and food security and highlights the need for greater political awareness and will. Stresses the importance of applying a rights-based approach, focusing on the right to food as well as the importance of rights to land and resources, and access to markets.	B(a), B(c), D(a)
13–16 April, Marrakesh, Morocco	Workshop: Decentralization and local development	Promotion of environmental education and information sharing; facilitation of access of local groups to financial facilities; need for cooperation networks in the areas of decentralization, local development, the fight against desertification and poverty reduction; development of oasis zones. STAKEHOLDERS: Call for <i>technical cooperation between subregions</i> to facilitate community access to financial facilities; call for reflection by <i>expert scientists</i> from North Africa and Sahelian countries on links between poverty, desertification and migration; encourage decentralized cooperation between the <i>communities of countries of the South</i> .	C(b), C(c), E(b), F(c)

Date and location	Event	Key outcomes, including stakeholders and institutions to whom recommendations are addressed (where appropriate)	Contributions to recommendations in chapter V
8–10 May, Havana, Cuba	IYDD and the Caribbean	<p>Call to establish a network of youth environmental groups (YEG) in <i>participating Caribbean States</i> in order to rehabilitate degraded land; generate employment for the youth sector and reduce poverty; increase water use efficiency; and improve youth access to credit and markets.</p> <p>Stress importance of incorrect policies as a cause of land degradation; the importance of soils in water protection and regulation and treating soil and water at the same level; stress the need for more acceptable and measurable criteria of degradation; consider a lack of good local information about soils and water prevents proper planning and disaster reduction. STAKEHOLDERS: recommendations most appropriate for consideration by the <i>CST</i>.</p>	C(a), C(b), G(a)
14–19 May, Marrakesh, Morocco	Fourteenth Conference of the International Soil Conservation Organization	<p>Highlight the importance of education, health, technology, energy, water and women's empowerment to participate in decision-making, capacity-building and the management of natural resources (land water etc); stress the importance of community payment for environmental services; note the need for public/private and community partnerships to create new financial instruments for the promotion of gender-sensitive use of renewable energy; call for facilitation of women's access to market information, agricultural technologies, transport facilities and micro-finance opportunities. STAKEHOLDERS: <i>UNCCD reporting process</i> should consider including health indicators; special value of clean development mechanism projects in drought and desertification-affected areas should be promoted; Additional funds for capacity-building to improve women's participation in decision-making to combat desertification are requested from <i>donors and international agencies</i>.</p>	E(a), E(c)
29 May – 1 June, Beijing, China	International Conference: Women and desertification	<p>Notes the importance of: the interdependence and conservation of cultural and biological diversity; integrated management of water resources; assessing and forecasting dryland ecosystem dynamics in order to formulate adaptation strategies in the context of global change and to alleviate poverty so as to achieve the MDGs; agriculture and pastoralism as opportunities for sustainable land use; formulating and implementing scenarios and policy options for good governance in the context of global change; identifying viable dryland livelihoods and policy options for the benefit of dryland dwellers (such as ecotourism); educating for sustainable development and knowledge sharing; costs relating to inaction in the field of land degradation; renewable energies for dryland development; and the need for evaluation of dryland ecosystem services and their trade-offs.</p>	C(a), C(b), D(b), E(a), E(b), G(a)
19–21 June, Tunis, Tunisia	International scientific conference: The future of drylands	<p>Notes the importance of: the interdependence and conservation of cultural and biological diversity; integrated management of water resources; assessing and forecasting dryland ecosystem dynamics in order to formulate adaptation strategies in the context of global change and to alleviate poverty so as to achieve the MDGs; agriculture and pastoralism as opportunities for sustainable land use; formulating and implementing scenarios and policy options for good governance in the context of global change; identifying viable dryland livelihoods and policy options for the benefit of dryland dwellers (such as ecotourism); educating for sustainable development and knowledge sharing; costs relating to inaction in the field of land degradation; renewable energies for dryland development; and the need for evaluation of dryland ecosystem services and their trade-offs.</p>	A(a), A(b), A(c), D(c), E(a), E(b), E(c), G(b), G(c)

Date and location	Event	Key outcomes, including stakeholders and institutions to whom recommendations are addressed (where appropriate)	Contributions to recommendations in chapter V
28 August, Cape Town, South Africa	GEF Forum on sustainable land management	<p>Future directions and approaches for GEF activities in sustainable land management suggest that the integration of land, water, biodiversity and societal issues enables responses to problems affecting whole ecosystems and economies, through coordinated land use planning resource management. SLM involves a combination of scientific knowledge, local knowledge and know-how, innovation, and community-driven action. New capacity for knowledge management and exchange through transparent knowledge-sharing and feedback plays a key role. STAKEHOLDERS: the <i>GEF</i> should lead development of a policy and administrative framework within which various sectoral, national and district organizations can contribute to such integrated approaches as SLM. The <i>GEF</i> and its <i>partner agencies</i> are urged to focus on activities that will result in a significant reduction in land degradation and its damage to ecosystem services and to the poor. A minimum additional 10–15 per cent annual increase in resources for the next 10 years by <i>countries and donor agencies</i> is recommended.</p>	A(a), D(a), D(b), D(c), E(a), E(c), G(a), G(b), G(c)
4–6 September, Bamako, Mali	Bamako International conference on youth and desertification	<p>Include the youth and desertification agenda in international consultations and land tenure reforms; work with young people, youth groups and advocates for youth interests; build and strengthen partnerships with the private sector and NGOs in increasing the involvement of young people in the fight against desertification; support volunteer service schemes that are targeted at young people; <i>encourage countries</i> to enhance the participation of young people in the elaboration and implementation of NAPs at local, regional and national levels; form a youth network in drylands; advocate more resources and capacity-building for young people in drylands; UNCCD should have a focal point for youth; expedite and facilitate UNCCD implementation in various countries by giving priority to drylands in both national and international political agendas; increase the role of young people in the fight against desertification and in the formulation and implementation of NAPs/RAPs;</p>	A(a), A(b), A(c), B(c), C(a), C(b), G(a)
21–23 September, Montpellier, France	International conference: Civil society and desertification	<p>Recognition of the importance of international trade and equitable access to markets for dryland products; emphasis of the need for clear, quantifiable time-bound objectives relating to the UNCCD. Appeal to <i>States</i>: to set up coherent policies regarding international trade, for agreements allowing equitable access to markets for dryland products, to set clear, quantifiable, time-bound objectives in relation to the UNCCD; to ensure that the functioning of the CST is re-examined to increase its efficiency; to raise NAPs to a strategic framework level to create incentive measures and a regulatory framework to favour the emergence of local stakeholders groups such as professional</p>	A(a), B(c), C(a), C(b), F(a), G(a), G(b), G(c)

Date and location	Event	Key outcomes, including stakeholders and institutions to whom recommendations are addressed (where appropriate)	Contributions to recommendations in chapter V
25–27 October, Almeria, Spain	International symposium on desertification and migrations	<p>organizations of farmers and pastoralists; to facilitate the effective participation of agricultural representatives and populations of arid zones to the formulation of public policies concerning them. Appeal to the <i>UNCCD and its Parties</i> to strengthen the effective integration of local traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches in actions to combat desertification. Appeal to the <i>research community</i> to involve end-users in the definition of research programmes and make research findings reach end-users. Appeal to <i>the GEF and its entities</i>: to increase funding to combat desertification, and to increase the budget devoted to small projects. Appeal to <i>State beneficiaries of aid for combating desertification</i>: to closely coordinate the actions of funders with civil society.</p> <p>International, multidisciplinary studies on the relationship between desertification and migration, with a major emphasis on youth and female employment; more in-depth analysis of causes and consequences of migration; improvement of existing statistics and a conceptual framework for desertification and migration. <i>International organizations, affected countries and civil society</i> should be active stakeholders in promoting scientific and technological development; migration should be addressed from a solidarity perspective and involve international cooperation; acquire existing global knowledge and design self-managing strategies, governmental policies, measures and good practices to lessen desertification effects and migration; funds allocated by industrialized countries to avoid migration should be invested in preventive measures and used in combination with those allocated to fight desertification; <i>European Union countries</i> should stress renewable energies to eradicate the causes for anthropogenic climatic change and recognise the potential of drylands in the development of sustainable energies; <i>Spain</i> should develop a research body to create policies on desertification and migration interrelation.</p>	A(b), A(c), C(a), C(b), D(b), D(c)
1–2 November, New York, United States of America	Round-table discussion: Assessing the UNCCD process and identifying challenges ahead	<p>Strategically embedding efforts to combat desertification into core development-policy frameworks; Periodic assessment of scientific literature on desertification; better integration with climate change, biodiversity and freshwater programmes; capacity-building of civil society organizations and communities; the role of women; long-term education programmes for raising awareness; and recording and protection of traditional knowledge; giving priority to cross-sectoral issues, with relationships between water, vegetation cover and rural poverty being most urgent, within an integrated land and water management approach; managing water scarcity and combating thirst; increasing the role of women in decision-making processes; connecting sustainable development and water access to deployment of renewable energy sources and improvement of energy efficiency;</p>	A(a), B(b), C(a), D(b), E(a), F(b), F(c)

Date and location	Event	Key outcomes, including stakeholders and institutions to whom recommendations are addressed (where appropriate)	Contributions to recommendations in chapter V
		<p>identifying specific indicators to enhance implementation of the UNCCD's objectives, particularly: development of sustainable agricultural and livestock production systems; development of renewable energy sources; launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensification of soil conservation programmes; development of early warning systems for food security, drought forecasting, and desertification monitoring; micro-credit for dryland communities; NAP priorities need to be fully mainstreamed in the production sector and national frameworks, and linked to agriculture, livestock rearing, land-use planning, water use, forestry, and rural development (a rural Agenda 21). <i>Governments and other stakeholders</i> need to show their willingness to address internal factors causing desertification when asking for financial resources.</p>	
6-9 November, Sede Boqer, Israel	International Conference: Deserts and desertification – challenges and opportunities	<p>The development of methods for evaluating the economic and social benefits as against the economic, social and ecological costs of different development paths (pastoral, farming and alternative livelihoods) in drylands; quantitative assessment of rural poverty in drylands and of the relative contribution of different poverty drivers operating at different spatio-temporal scales; exploration of the potential of drylands to provide alternative energy sources that would benefit locally, regionally and globally; evaluation of the effectiveness of different national and local policies and interventions designed to combat desertification and restore land productivity in affected countries; study of the linkages between desertification, biodiversity loss and global warming, leading to scenarios of desertification and dryland biodiversity dynamics under progressing climate change; reducing duplication of effort and research by globally networking institutions committed to desert and dryland research; promoting communication between the research community and decision-makers at all levels thus leading to an extensive implementation of scientific results and dissemination of successful practices.</p>	C(c), D(b), D(c), E(a), E(c), G(b), G(c)
4-5 December, Rome, Italy	Workshop: Cost of inaction and opportunities for investment in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas	<p>The need for operational methods to quantify economic losses from degraded land at the national level; that investment in drylands is socially, economically and environmentally profitable; the need for an international network on the costs of inaction and a synthesis of the work on cost evaluation methods and the major findings of studies.</p>	C(c), F(c)

Date and location	Event	Key outcomes, including stakeholders and institutions to whom recommendations are addressed (where appropriate)	Contributions to recommendations in chapter V
11–15 December, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania	International Workshop on climate and land degradation	Further exploration of scale transfer methodologies and procedures and improvement in monitoring of land degradation as well as climate at different scales; global assessments to take into account the perceived reality of land degradation by local populations; strengthening knowledge and understanding as well as the functions of ecosystems in order to better understand, predict and value the risks of land degradation and fully understand the complex interrelations between land use and environment; innovative and adaptive land management responses to inherent climatic variability and natural hazards must be identified and implemented for sustainable land management; land management practices in affected areas should focus on improving the amount of rainfall used in biomass production; the network of climatological, hydrological and agrometeorological stations around the world should be increased and strengthened; climatological and hydrological end products should be developed in coordination with end user needs; interactions between national meteorological and hydrological services to enhance the direct communication of weather and climate information; develop a cost-effective system to communicate early climate forecasts to farmers, so they can improve their land management practices; develop and implement a national drought policy that supports effective implementation of the NAPs.	D(c), E(a), G(b), G(c)
17–19 December, Algiers, Algeria	International Conference: Desertification and the international policy imperative	Ways forward identified include suggestions that: policies must work to provide enabling incentives, should be based on better definitions of environmental migration and must incorporate measures for coping with them; vastly different geographical scales of desertification and responses must be appropriately recognized in policy formulation; job alternatives and sustainable livelihoods for pastoralists and other land users in the drylands need to be created; <i>governments</i> can harness investments in sustainable land management through the reorientation of existing institutions; greater information sharing is needed to harmonize actions and policies that affect drylands and their inhabitants; synthesis of knowledge should be geared to developing solutions to desertification; definitions need to be harmonized, adaptive management enhanced and uptake of knowledge management in projects and agencies improved; cooperation protocols and information networks at the regional level can play a key role in harmonized information generation, sharing and uptake for policy formulation; structural changes in how the Rio Conventions relate to each other are essential. Cross-cutting programmes across sectors and ministries can help improve coordination at the national level; scientific information should be policy-relevant and cross-sectoral; conceptual development by the Millennium Assessment provides a	A(b), D(b), D(c), E(a), F(b), G(b), G(c)

Date and location	Event	Key outcomes, including stakeholders and institutions to whom recommendations are addressed (where appropriate)	Contributions to recommendations in chapter V
		<p>robust framework for policy evaluation; soil conservation may be a handle with which to grasp a broad range of issues; efforts to replicate and test successful examples of sustainable dryland management by and for local communities can be shared across national boundaries; desertification-affected dryland dwellers must be at the centre of remediation; the <i>private sector</i> must be provided with economic incentives to invest in efforts to combat desertification.</p>	
