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Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies

Progress made on the implementation of the existing advocacy policy frameworks of the Convention on gender, food security and climate change

Summary

With the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) put emphasis on advocacy and policy action as a priority in supporting the implementation of the Convention. For the implementation of The Strategy, the Conference of the Parties (COP) therefore adopted thematic advocacy policy frameworks (APFs) on gender, climate change and food security by its decision 9/COP.10, and requested the development of other APFs on critical components of the complex dryland social-ecological systems, including drought, migration, forests and biodiversity.

This conference room paper (CRP) provides additional information on the progress made in the implementation and harmonization of the existing APFs on global and thematic issues relating to desertification/land degradation and drought relevant to the work of the UNCCD in accordance with decision 9/COP.10, paragraph 10. It also complements information contained in documents ICCD/CRIC(11)/16, ICCD/CRIC(11)/17 and ICCD/CRIC(11)/19/Add.1. The aim of this CRP is to facilitate discussion among Parties on the adoption of a COP decision on a UNCCD advocacy strategy that builds on the existing APFs on gender, climate change and food security adopted by the COP at its tenth session.

In line with the Convention's overall goal of sustainable dryland development and the need for a system approach, the UNCCD secretariat developed an advocacy strategy to ensure the harmonization, alignment and mutual reinforcement of thematic APFs. This CRP includes the basic elements and the outline of the UNCCD advocacy strategy. The advocacy strategy will also take into consideration the APF on drought, including water scarcity, which has been presented to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) at its eleventh session.

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This CRP, including the outline of the UNCCD advocacy strategy, will be considered by the CRIC at its twelfth session and consequently the COP at its eleventh session.

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I. Background

1. Drylands¹ are complex social-ecological systems, as highlighted during the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 2nd Scientific Conference.² As such, drylands integrate economic, social, and environmental entities and subsystems that are all interconnected and interdependent through negative³ (damping) and positive (amplifying) feedbacks. Sustainable dryland development management thus requires a system approach building on the dynamic relationships among the many different social, economic, and environmental entities and subsystems. The High-level Panel of Eminent Persons, tasked with developing the post-2015 sustainable development agenda by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, highlights the importance of a system approach to sustainable development.⁴ According to the Panel's report, development agendas, including the Millennium Development Goals, have fallen short in connecting environment and development. As a result, there is still no country on the path of sustainable development with sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The Panel therefore stresses the need for transformative shifts, including the placement of sustainable development at the core of development agendas and integrating social progress, equitable growth and environmental management.

2. However, a system approach does not mean that specific technical aspects should not be further developed and/or given special attention when required. Rather, there is a need for an overall strategy that ensures the harmonization, alignment and mutual reinforcement of specific initiatives. This dual-track approach is reflected in UNCCD decisions calling for an overall strategy, as reflected in the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy),⁵ while at the same time requesting the further development of thematic initiatives. This is apparent in the UNCCD advocacy agenda, which is guided by The Strategy. With the adoption of The Strategy, the UNCCD Parties recognized the need to make advocacy a central component of initiatives to further the implementation of the Convention. Moreover, at its ninth⁶ session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat to develop advocacy policy frameworks (APFs) on thematic issues, including gender,⁷ climate change,⁸ food security,⁹ and drought, including water scarcity¹⁰ to further policy¹¹ action for sustainable dryland development.

¹ In line with the common use in the context of the Convention, drylands refer to arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas.

² Lene Poulsen, "Costs and benefits of policies and practices addressing land degradation and drought in the drylands", White Paper II (Bonn, Germany, UNCCD secretariat, UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference). Available at

http://2sc.unccd.grforum.org/fileadmin/unccd/upload/documents/WhitePapers/White_Paper_2.pdf

³ Negative and positive feedbacks do not refer to the desired quality of the systems as such. For example, a positive feedback can enhance an undesired quality.

⁴ United Nations, *A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development*. (2013). Available at

www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf.

⁵ Decision 3/COP.8.

⁶ Decision 8/COP.9.

⁷ ICCD/CRIC(10)/20.

⁸ ICCD/CRIC(10)/19.

⁹ ICCD/CRIC(10)/21.

¹⁰ The APF on drought, including water scarcity, was presented to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) at its eleventh session and will be considered further by CRIC at its the twelfth session and consequently the COP at its eleventh session.

3. The APFs highlight the important feedbacks among the thematic issues and sustainable dryland and drought risk management. The frameworks are based on consultations with critical stakeholder groups and outline a number of activities identified as essential to promoting the vision of the UNCCD in a number of initiatives focusing on gender equality, climate change and food security.

4. At its tenth session, the COP also invited the Executive Secretary to advocate increasing ecosystem resilience and improving the livelihood conditions of affected populations in the drylands. These advocacy efforts should draw on the guidance contained in the APFs on gender, climate change and food security, and should take into account that the implementation of the UNCCD is a continuous process. Advocacy actions with Parties and other critical stakeholders should therefore also be continuous and adapted to the different implementation phases in the iterative processes prescribed, for instance, for the national action programmes (NAPs).

5. To move the advocacy agenda further towards a system approach, the UNCCD secretariat has taken the initiative to develop an advocacy strategy to ensure an overall harmonization, alignment and mutual reinforcement of technical APFs. This conference room paper presents the issues and suggestions for an advocacy strategy for further discussion among Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) participants.

II. Progress made in the implementation of advocacy policy strategies

6. The three APFs on gender, climate change and food security adopted by the COP at its tenth session are all based on analyses of the thematic focus area and the linkages between sustainable land management (SLM) and desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD). Based on the analyses, the APFs outline objectives, main actions, key focus areas, key messages and key partners. Moreover, the APFs identify the main actors to be responsible for the advocacy actions as well as principles for monitoring and evaluation.

¹¹ We understand policy here as a decision or plan of action for accomplishing a pre-defined set of results to reach a desired goal. We do not distinguish between private and public policies but consider the overall goal to be the objective outlined in article 2, paragraph 1, of the UNCCD. Paragraph 2 of the same article states that “Achieving this objective will involve long-term integrated strategies that focus simultaneously, in affected areas, on improved productivity of land, and the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions, in particular at the community level.” The vision of The Strategy is “to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.” The outcomes of both private and public policies should therefore be mobilized to achieve these long-term objectives. The optimal combination will be context specific, depending on local conditions, traditions and settings, including political systems.

Table 1
Key elements of the advocacy policy frameworks on gender, climate change and food security

	<i>Climate change</i>	<i>Gender^a</i>	<i>Food security</i>
Objective	Mainstreaming of desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) into climate change negotiations and into the implementation of adaptation and mitigation activities.	Mainstreaming gender in work related to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), promoting gender equality in The Strategy, demonstrating the benefits of mainstreaming gender in DLDD/sustainable land management (SLM), and increasing the effectiveness of the secretariat and Parties.	Ensure that the policies of country Parties experiencing the effects of the degradation of drylands take food security into account through increased investments in restoring the productivity of degraded land.
Focus	Cancun agreements and the Bali Action Plan ^b of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) implementation process.	Institutional gender mainstreaming within the UNCCD secretariat and gender mainstreaming in UNCCD implementation activities.	National policies to promote SLM in drylands to increase food production.
Main actions	Integration of DLDD issues in national adaptation and mitigation plans, global and national funds, technology transfer and development, capacity-building, reforestation and REDD ^c activities, and the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change through the participation in relevant activities, the development of guidelines and the establishment of synergies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender mainstreaming in the UNCCD and The Strategy, including all related processes, such as reporting and the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS); - Gender mainstreaming in national action programmes (NAPs), subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs); - Awareness-raising and capacity development; - Coordinated action among the Rio conventions; - Database of relevant organizations; - Development of outreach material and tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National level - institutional reform to enable SLM: access to agricultural services (infrastructure), information systems, on-farm trees, land tenure reform, vulnerability assessments, decentralization of decision-making, policy mainstreaming, partnerships for NAPs (pilot should be launched); Regional/subregional level - cooperation, sharing experiences on food security in drylands, mainstreaming of food security in SRAPs; Global level - strengthen advocacy on SLM: dryland initiatives on food security and food security and the Rio conventions; secretariat to participate in international food security events.

	<i>Climate change</i>	<i>Gender^a</i>	<i>Food security</i>
Key messages	SLM practices are critical for climate adaptation and mitigation	The importance and added value of mainstreaming gender in development, including in drylands. Women are critical in land-use management decisions. Women have important traditional knowledge.	The great potential of SLM vis-à-vis food security. The role of the four main building blocks of The Strategy (people, soils, vegetation, water) in promoting food security.
Key target groups	UNCCD national focal points (NFPs).	UNCCD secretariat, Parties and UNCCD NFPs	National policy makers.
Key partners	UNFCCC and Convention on Biological Diversity secretariats, Global Environment Facility, World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Environment Programme, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Cooperative Partnership on Forests, regional banks, United Nations commissions and Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (particularly the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics).	Global Mechanism, International Union for Conservation of Nature, United Nations regional commissions, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), academia, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, network of female ministers of environment.	Interested and affected stakeholders.
Key actors for the outlined activities	UNCCD secretariat, including Regional Coordination Units and NFPs	UNCCD secretariat in collaboration with key partners.	UNCCD secretariat.

	<i>Climate change</i>	<i>Gender^a</i>	<i>Food security</i>
Monitoring and evaluation of advocacy policy frameworks	To be developed.	Indicators included.	Not defined.

^a The UNCCD text does not refer to gender as such, but in line with the major obstacles identified for sustainable livelihoods in the drylands, the UNCCD focuses on women’s empowerment. As recognized by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), gender mainstreaming activities should be implemented along with special activities to promote the role of women. This is also a guiding principle for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

^b The Cancun Agreements from 2010 form a comprehensive set of actions on mitigation, transparency, technology, finance, adaptation, forests and capacity-building. The Bali Action Plan is part of the Bali Roadmap from 2007. The Action Plan focuses on 2012 and includes actions on mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing.

^c Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries.

7. The three APFs differ in terms of their mainstreaming focus as can be seen in table 1 above. While the APF on climate change suggests mainstreaming DLDD in initiatives aiming at climate change mitigation and adaptation, the APF on food security focuses on mainstreaming food security issues into the direct implementation structures for the UNCCD. On the other hand, the APF on gender suggests mainstreaming DLDD issues into gender initiatives as well as mainstreaming gender issues into DLDD initiatives. Moreover, the APF on gender suggests both operational and programmatic gender mainstreaming activities. As such, the activities outlined include both activities to increase gender equality as a modus operandi in the work of the main institutions of the UNCCD, including the secretariat and activities related to the implementation of the UNCCD, mainly on the ground.

8. Since the COP adopted the three APFs at its tenth session, the secretariat has initiated several of the actions outlined therein, particularly through increased involvement with strategic partners such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat, the Rome-based United Nations organizations,¹² and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. New potential partnerships were also identified. However, the implementation of the respective activities identified in the APFs was never budgeted for and thus most activities so far have focused on using windows of opportunities whenever possible. Regardless of the non-existent budgets for the implementation of the APFs, there is still a need for an overall strategy in order to achieve the primary goal of the advocacy agenda in terms of ensuring UNCCD policy development and action occurs in countries affected by DLDD. The suggested advocacy strategy should provide the framework for the required, more direct policy-influencing activities.

9. The draft APF on drought was discussed at CRIC 11 in Bonn in April 2013. The Chair of the session will present the outcomes of CRIC 11 to the CRIC at its twelfth session for its review and recommendation for approval by the COP at its eleventh session. The draft APF on drought, including water scarcity focuses on the need for countries to develop

¹² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

national drought management policies, enhance drought response measures and preparedness, and build adaptation capacity with a special focus on creating resilient local communities. The draft APF suggests that the national drought management policies should be mainstreamed in the NAPs. The outlined advocacy activities for drought have been developed in partnership with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the National Drought Mitigation Centre in the United States of America, among other organizations. To further national drought management policies, this draft APF includes a template that was presented and discussed during the High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP) co-organized by the WMO, FAO and UNCCD secretariat in March 2013. Among the many outcomes of the HMNDP was the formation of a capacity development partnership on drought management policies. The partnership includes the UNCCD secretariat, WMO, FAO and UN-Water. The capacity development activities will be a major focus of the suggested drought APF.

10. As mandated by the COP at its tenth session, the UNCCD secretariat developed a standard approach¹³ and process for the formulation of an APF and presented it to the CRIC at its eleventh session. The standard approach will be applied to the development of new thematic APFs, including potential APFs on dryland biodiversity and dryland forests as presented as a conference room paper during CRIC 11.

III. Advocacy strategy for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

A. Purpose and focus of the advocacy strategy

11. The advocacy strategy aims at ensuring policy action at all levels that will promote a system approach to dryland development in line with the objectives of the UNCCD. The ultimate goal is sustainable dryland and drought risk management based on a transdisciplinary and integrated approach. The purpose of the system approach is to integrate social, economic and environmental aspects in the drylands focusing on optimizing feedback management among critical entities and subsystems such as gender equality and women's empowerment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, food security, drought (including water scarcity), and desertification.

12. Since the inception of the UNCCD substantial awareness-raising has taken place on the important linkages between climate change, gender and the role of women, food security, and drought and desertification. All Parties to the UNCCD recognize the existence of these linkages, for example in national and regional reports on UNCCD implementation as well as NAPs. In fact, the last decades' campaigns to raise public awareness on issues such as gender have been successful in the sense that very few – if any – would question the notion that women and men should have the same opportunities to participate in environmental management. Still, direct attention to the subject seems to evaporate somewhere between policy statements and implementation, and there is a need to focus on how to translate the awareness into action.

13. The challenge for the UNCCD advocacy strategy is to move beyond public awareness-raising and focus on fostering the public and political will as well as the capacity to create the necessary environment to implement an approach to sustainable development in the drylands. As such, to be effective, advocacy actions and messages need to be based on a clear identification of the resources available to the targeted stakeholder groups. An

¹³ ICCD/CRIC(11)/16.

effective advocacy strategy must take into account the stakeholders' main interests, priorities, capacity to act on the messages calling for action, and their direct interaction with other stakeholders. Simply broadcasting short and direct messages for interaction between stakeholders on the ground is therefore seldom effective to raise awareness on an issue. This is because it does not allow for the messages to be tailored appropriately so they can be received by the intended target group. An outline of the advocacy strategy is presented in annex I.

B. Role of the comprehensive communication strategy of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in advocacy actions

14. To further the implementation of The Strategy, the secretariat launched a series of actions to establish a communication strategy from 2008 to 2010. The result was a comprehensive communication strategy (CCS)¹⁴ that primarily targets governments of affected, developing and developed country Parties with an aim to ensure that DLDD/SLM will be considered in political and economic decisions at the local, national and international levels. Other target groups include the Regional Coordination Mechanisms, international agencies, media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmers, business, the scientific and technological community, industry, women, children, civil society and youth.

15. The key messages of the CCS focus on the influence SLM has on major global issues, the widespread impacts of land degradation, and the benefits of drylands in general. The CCS concentrates on the linkages between DLDD and the major global issues, namely poverty eradication, food security, water scarcity, climate change, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, energy challenges and environmental migration. Moreover, the messages should show consequences of underinvesting in the drylands as well as the importance of SLM at all levels.

16. The CCS is set to be implemented in three phases: (1) general awareness-raising about the importance of DLDD and SLM with special links to people's daily lives; (2) focus on investment in SLM; and (3) the repositioning of the UNCCD as an indispensable sustainable development tool. Activities include:

- Establishing a target group database;
- Developing targeted messages backed by scientific information;
- Identifying SLM champions;
- Reviewing relevant support information (e.g. scientific literature);
- Undertaking a comprehensive communication campaign (media relations, authoritative documents, broadcast emissions, journalist training, media field trips, etc.);
- Targeting influential people and relevant decision-makers with special activities such as brainstorming sessions;
- Building strategic alliances with relevant United Nations partners;
- Reaching new actors, supporting the work of Parties, establishing a DLDD/SLM virtual network and improving in-house information.

¹⁴ UNCCD secretariat, *Comprehensive Communication Strategy*, (Bonn, Germany, 2010).

17. The CCS stresses the need for context-adapted communication. Decision-makers within the national administrations will therefore be targeted with strategic information while the general public will typically require more general information for awareness-raising rather than specific actions. Likewise, the means of communication will be applied according to an initial assessment of the target groups and their capacity to receive communication. For example, while The Strategy highlights the important role that electronic communication tools should play, it also recognizes that for some stakeholder groups, the use of such communication tools remains very low and printed material for instance might thus be more suitable. To ensure the most appropriate targeting with the right set of messages and communication tools, the CCS suggests that, as a principle, the design of targeted communication strategies should take place in close collaboration with the receivers of the communication. It should be recognized, though, that in order for this principle to be effective, communication experts will be required at many levels and extensive continuous communication training might be required throughout the implementation of The Strategy.

18. To achieve as wide an audience as possible, the CCS suggests communication cascades where the number of receivers is multiplied by targeting nested networks, that is larger networks hosting smaller ones at many scales. Such a strategy is facilitated by the availability of electronic media, requiring continuous and close monitoring to ensure that the communication packages, that is the messages and tools, are still effective in reaching the set objectives for the advocacy without misunderstandings. The key messages centre around drylands as assets and opportunities rather than liabilities and challenges and SLM as a cost-effective measure with the potential for profitable investment.

19. The advocacy strategy for the implementation of the APFs will be based on and aligned with the CCS in terms of the general approach and the facilitating structures necessary for communication and advocacy activities.

C. Target audience of the advocacy strategy

20. The advocacy strategy addresses primarily the following target groups with a direct or indirect opportunity to influence policy development and implementation regarding sustainable dryland and drought risk management:

- The CRIC and the COP;
- National UNCCD focal points;
- Focal points on issues related to sustainable development at the level of national administrations, especially those of the UNFCCC, Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Environment Facility;
- The United Nations system at the national, regional and global level as well international development banks and intergovernmental organizations;
- Civil society organizations and NGOs at both national and international levels;
- Private/business sector;
- Scientific and research community;
- Media.

21. A database with specific target groups to be established under the CCS will facilitate the identification and description of the target audience. Moreover, the UNCCD regional coordination functions and Regional Coordination Units (RCUs) will play a special role in

the continuous updating of this database. In line with the principles of the UNCCD of transparency, ownership, stakeholder involvement, the database will be accessible to the public, and target audiences will be invited to provide input and feedback on advocacy experiences and needs.

D. Overall advocacy messages

22. The advocacy strategy centres around the following overall messages:

(a) Drylands are complex social-ecological systems requiring a system approach based on transdisciplinarity with emphasis on both horizontal and vertical participation at all levels. This requires an institutional setting that enables the accommodation of the capacities of the many different dryland development stakeholders (for example national institutions to promote women's participation, agrobusiness representatives, farmers' associations and various line ministries) and establishes national partnerships as described in the Convention. The institutional setting should also respond to the dynamic nature of complex social-ecological systems and ensure the implementation of the iterative planning processes in line with the Convention;

(b) Sustainable dryland and drought risk management requires an understanding of the feedbacks among the different entities and subsystems of the drylands. This requires modelling of the dynamic relationship between dryland system elements, feedback loops, resilience indicators and the identification of potential thresholds. It will thus be necessary to mobilize the local and national research community to play an active role in dryland policy development;

(c) **Prevention is cheaper and better than a cure.** Investment in sustainable dryland and drought risk management is profitable for all dryland stakeholders, whether farmers, local or national authorities or the international community. To promote dryland investment, national policies should address the need for the economic and social valuation of sustainable dryland and drought risk management, including the classification of assessment techniques with a minimum set of indicators and a simplified standard presentation of valuation summaries.

E. Development of targeted advocacy messages

23. Policy change and land-use decision-making processes are influenced by a number of more or less identifiable and predictable factors. A clearer understanding of the processes leading to policy change and decision-making is critical for the design and implementation of effective advocacy campaigns. However, decision-making is highly circumstantial and while multiple decision-making styles exist within most organizations, they are also highly dynamic and thereby challenge the identification of a limited set of decision-making models. Key circumstantial factors influencing decision-making include the number of decision-makers within the organization, the level of integration of the organization with other institutions, whether or not the problem is well-defined, and the comprehensiveness of available information. In order to establish a simplified empirical classification system for decision-making. Howlett (2006)¹⁵ suggests classifying decision-making according to the complexity of the policy context (e.g. number of decision-makers and hierarchy levels, resources available, integration/networking and political

¹⁵ M. Howlett, "Analyzing multi-actor, multi-round decision-making processes in government: preliminary findings from five Canadian cases", paper presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association (Toronto, Canada, York University, 2006).

commitments) combined with the severity of constraints on decision-makers (e.g. time, comprehensiveness of available information, clarity of problem definition) (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1
Simplified policy decision-making classification

Complexity of policy context Severity of constraints on decision-makers	Low		High
	Low	Rational decision-making	Decision accretion decision-making
High	Incremental decision-making	Garbage-can decision-making	

Source: M. Howlett, “Analyzing multi-actor, multi-round decision-making processes in government: preliminary findings from five Canadian cases”, paper presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association (Toronto, Canada, York University, 2006).

24. Howlett furthermore describes how so-called “decision accretion decision-making” is the most complex and most underresearched. This type of decision-making is typical for environments with multiple actors and levels, and in principle should characterize the decision-making processes related to complex systems such as the social-ecological dryland system. In order for advocacy messages with support information to be effective, it is important that the different actors in this complex policy context will be identified as well as their specific input to the final decision to understand their specific information needs and requirements. The list of key qualifiers of advocacy messages presented in table below 2 will facilitate this task.

25. The policy decision-making analysis will be carried out in the UNCCD secretariat across all units, especially the Policy for Advocacy on Global Issues unit, Awareness Raising, Communication and Education unit and the RCUs, in collaboration with the NFPs and with the advice of regional committees. The result of the policy decision-making analysis will form the basis for the development of targeted advocacy messages within the framework of the overall messages in the advocacy strategy.

F. Advocacy packages

26. Advocacy campaigns are typically known for their key messages. The approved APFs all present key messages that have been distilled in the key messages presented in the summary of the APFs above (see table 1). However, effective advocacy campaigns are much more than key messages, and many actors’ direct or indirect influence on dryland policymaking will need additional inputs in form of supporting information, for example

results from recent peer-reviewed research on how to empower women to have their voice heard in decision-making processes related to dryland development.

27. To facilitate the provision of supporting information, the secretariat will strengthen or establish, as needed, an online repository of relevant, reliable and continuously updated information sources that can provide information on the broad variety of issues related to dryland and drought management. This information may include changes in women's participation in natural resource management, factors influencing climate change adaptation and mitigation in pastoral production systems, the long and short-term impacts of child malnutrition as a result of droughts, or the costs of strengthening community resilience in the drylands.

28. In order to ensure that support information contained in the online repository will be as relevant as possible, the RCUs will play a special role in maintaining regional information repositories.¹⁶ These regional information repositories should respond to the specific needs for supporting information among regional stakeholders with direct or indirect influence on dryland and drought management decision-making within the specific region. To fulfil this role, the RCUs will need to maintain an ongoing dialogue with different national and local stakeholders. Special attention should be given to the need to go beyond traditional stakeholders in UNCCD contexts, for example ensuring that national institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender equality¹⁷ will be included.

G. Information criteria: main advocacy message qualifiers

29. Different UNCCD stakeholder groups targeted with advocacy campaigns have different quality requirements regarding the messages and how and when they are communicated. While these requirements are dynamic, a number of key message qualifiers can be identified that will determine the usefulness of the advocacy actions. Table 2 below presents a general overview of main qualifiers that should be considered when advocacy campaigns are being designed and evaluated. The table is a generalization and should be read as such, that is with a clear understanding that there are many nuances and that the qualifiers do not necessarily apply to all UNCCD stakeholders. Moreover, different settings will have different priorities for key message qualifiers. The qualifiers are therefore not prioritized in table 2, but presented in alphabetic order.

¹⁶ The suggested regional committees should be fully involved in maintaining the regional information repositories if/when they are established.

¹⁷ These would include line ministries responsible for the national agenda on women's empowerment and gender equality, national commissions on the status of women, etc. Since the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in 1975 in Mexico City, these institutional mechanisms have been referred to as "national women's machineries".

Table 2
Key qualifiers of advocacy messages

<i>Qualifier</i>	<i>Description of qualifier</i>	<i>Implications for advocacy campaigns and actions</i>
Accessibility	Messages should be reachable/obtainable by the stakeholders, e.g. through easily accessible websites or regular newsletters.	Communication tools should be selected based on knowledge of target groups' information traditions and capacities. For example, electronic media should only be used if the target groups traditionally use such tools.
Compatibility	Different institutions use different definitions of the same terms. For example, 'Mitigation' is defined as "the lessening or limitation of the adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters" by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), ^a i.e. with a focus on impact reduction. On the other hand, mitigation in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is defined as "a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases", i.e. with a focus on the drivers or causes while 'adaptation' is defined as an "adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities". ^b	The advocacy strategy should be managed by a unit in the secretariat with the capacity to overlook directly or indirectly the content and presentation of the messages at all levels. The Regional Coordination Units (RCUs) should play a critical role in ensuring information quality. A list of suggested definitions for terms related to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will be presented in an annex to the advocacy strategy.
Comprehensive messages	Messages should be comprehensive and integrate different components and subsystems of the drylands such as climate change, food security, and gender and women's empowerment.	Special attention should be given to the description of the feedbacks among the different components and subsystems.
Consensus-based	Messages reflect common assessment and data interpretation among key UNCCD stakeholders such as international non-governmental organizations, government institutions and United Nations agencies.	The advocacy strategy should be managed by a unit in the secretariat with the capacity to overlook directly or indirectly the content and presentation of the messages at all levels. The RCUs should play a critical role in ensuring information quality.
Credibility	The messages should be considered trustworthy based on factors such as origin of the support information, methodological soundness, representativity, and knowledge about confidence levels.	Messages should to the extent possible be supported by information from the most recent peer-reviewed scientific literature, accompanied by descriptions of methodologies applied for generating such information and for raising confidence levels with regard to the support information.

<i>Qualifier</i>	<i>Description of qualifier</i>	<i>Implications for advocacy campaigns and actions</i>
Independency	Messages should be independent of the specific interests of any UNCCD stakeholder.	The advocacy strategy should be managed by a responsible unit in the secretariat with the capacity to overlook directly or indirectly the content and presentation of the messages at all levels. The RCU's should play a critical role in ensuring information quality.
Innovativeness	Messages should show initiative, creativity and new procedures for a system approach to sustainable dryland and drought risk management.	As it is responsible for the advocacy strategy, the secretariat should facilitate various initiatives to generate new approaches to policy action on sustainable dryland and drought risk management. Such initiatives could include workshops, special research projects and the identification of good practices.
Relevance	Messages should respond to UNCCD stakeholder needs and be consistent with stakeholders' decision-making capacities and practices.	Advocacy campaigns will be based on thorough and continuous context analysis, including analyses of decision-making processes linked to policy development and implementation, and of information on who is involved in decision-making processes, how and when.
Responsiveness	Messages should respond to needs as expressed implicitly or explicitly by key stakeholders. Responsive messages will therefore include participatory design and/or regular user surveys among intended, actual and potential target groups. Moreover, responsive messages will require a certain flexibility to adapt to the dynamic nature of complex dryland social-ecological systems.	RCU's and national focal points play a key role in designing and monitoring local advocacy campaigns based on context analysis on continuous monitoring.
Timeliness	There should be concordance between the time that information is communicated to potential users and their timelines for key policy decisions.	Advocacy campaigns will be based on thorough and continuous context analysis, including analyses of decision-making processes linked to policy development and implementation, and of information on who are involved in decision-making processes, how and when. Timeliness also refers to responsiveness to emerging issues.

^a UNISDR "Terminology on disaster risk reduction", 2009. Available at <www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology#letter-m>.

^b <unfccc.int/essential_background/glossary/items/3666.php#M>.

Source: L. Poulsen, personal communication, 2013.

H. Advocacy strategy: a rolling plan

30. Policymaking for dryland development and drought risk management faces high levels of uncertainty and unpredictability because of the inherent nature of complex systems and the changing global ecological, economic and social environment. As described earlier, the complexity of dryland systems is reflected in their dynamic nature, the non-linearity of causation, the complex feedback loops within and between the many different social, ecological and economic entities, and the potential of regime shifts to alternative stable states as a result of thresholds. As such, dryland management options face

a great level of uncertainty and unpredictability calling for flexible adaptive and sustainable dryland management at all levels. The advocacy strategy should therefore be considered as a rolling plan with regular reviews and updates based on feedback from relevant partners, including the target groups for the advocacy strategy. In fact, this also follows the Convention's call for iterative planning processes.

31. Following the results-based management structure of the secretariat, the advocacy strategy is being developed with an overall goal, strategic objectives, expected outcomes, activities, inputs and performance indicators to monitor and evaluate its implementation. The indicators will be aligned with the indicators of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) and reflect recent academic developments in advocacy evaluation.

32. Based on the analysis of the information provided herein, the twelfth session of the CRIC (CRIC 12) may wish to consider making recommendations to COP 11 on the further implementation of the APFs and the advocacy strategy.

Annex

Suggested outline of the advocacy strategy

- Background
 - Introduction
 - Why do we need an advocacy strategy?
 - Target audience
 - Advocacy actions and strategic partners
 - Timeline for the implementation of the advocacy strategy
 - Monitoring and evaluation of the advocacy strategy
 - Annexes on relevant policies, tools and mechanisms for an advocacy strategy
 - Glossary
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