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Future implementation of the Convention

Initial findings from the Intergovernmental Working Group

Initial findings of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention

Report by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention

Summary

The present document contains the main findings of the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention (IWG-FSF), which was tasked to assess the current 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) and consider options for a possible future strategic approach to implement the Convention. Since the IWG-FSF was requested by Parties in decision 7/COP.12 to present its initial findings for comment at the fifteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, the document lists the main findings of the Group as well as the proposed new draft Strategy in the annex. Parties may wish to comment on the report, particularly the annex, with a view to assisting the IWG-FSF in finalizing its input to the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth session.

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I. Introduction

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), at its twelfth session decided to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention (IWG-FSF). It was tasked to assess the current 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), including the effectiveness of its implementation and the relevance of progress indicators with a view to considering options for a possible future strategic approach to implementing the Convention.

2. The IWG-FSF was requested to take into consideration:

- (a) The text of the Convention;
- (b) The current multi-year Strategy;
- (c) The midterm review of The Strategy;
- (d) The role of a multi-year strategy, which provides an effective framework to guide the implementation of the Convention at national level;
- (e) The relevant aspects of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 and its target 15.3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (f) Relevant decisions taken by the COP;
- (g) Developments under and synergies with the Rio conventions;
- (h) The limitations on Parties' abilities to increase financial resources provided to the Convention.

3. The group was also requested to present its initial findings for comment to Parties at the fifteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 15).

4. The IWG-FSF met twice in 2016: the first meeting took place on 6–8 April 2016 and the second on 26–28 July 2016. During the first meeting the group decided to advance its work so that by CRIC 15, Parties would be in a position to comment on a proposed new draft Strategy (see annex). During the first meeting, the group produced a working document which served as the basis for a first draft to be discussed and improved at the second meeting. During the second meeting, the group agreed on almost all subsections of the text and thus completed a full proposal for a new Strategy to be commented on by Parties at CRIC 15. Sentences and/or paragraphs in brackets highlight the areas that still need to be discussed and agreed upon within the group.

5. It was agreed that the IWG-FSF will meet after CRIC 15 in order to finalize the proposed new draft Strategy on the basis of feedback and comments received by Parties. The final outcome of the work of the IWG-FSF will be presented to the COP at its thirteenth session.

II. Main findings of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention

6. In its discussions, the IWG-FSF decided that future key elements of The Strategy should take into account the following:

- (a) Emphasis should be placed on implementation rather than on institutional processes. This is to be achieved through reporting on actual implementation efforts that will be discussed as a matter of priority during upcoming sessions of the CRIC;
- (b) The lifespan of The Strategy is proposed to be 2018–2030 in order to coincide with the SDG process. It is also proposed that provisions be made for a midterm review in 2023 at the sixteenth session of the COP so as to ensure that adjustments to The Strategy can be made if and when necessary;
- (c) The IWG-FSF proposes to keep the strategic objectives, as they were known in the first Strategy, with slight amendments. Reporting on related progress indicators would be facilitated through the provision of country-specific data from external databases for validation at national level. This is in line with previous decisions taken by the COP and enables those countries willing to set voluntary national targets to do so, complementing efforts to implement the relevant goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (d) The SDGs and in particular target 15.3 shall be reflected in the new Strategy; how to reflect this is still under discussion;
- (e) Narrative reporting will replace performance indicators, while strategic objectives will be measured mainly through quantitative progress indicators.

III. Recommendations

7. Decision 7/COP.12 requests the IWG-FSF to present its initial findings for comment at CRIC 15. Parties are therefore invited to provide to the IWG-FSF their comments on:

- (a) The overall structure of the new draft Strategy,**
- (b) Specific comments on any subsection of the new draft Strategy.**

Annex

Draft Strategy

[The UNCCD implementation Strategy 2018–2030]

[The 2018–2030 Strategy for] combating desertification, land degradation and drought [for present and future generations]

The UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework

Towards healthy land

**Combating desertification, land degradation and drought
[for present and future generations]**

I. Introduction

1. Desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) are challenges of a global dimension. They contribute to and aggravate economic, social and environmental problems such as poverty, poor health, lack of food security, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, reduced resilience to climate change and forced migration. They continue to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all Parties, particularly in affected countries.
2. Addressing DLDD will involve long-term integrated strategies that focus simultaneously on the improved productivity of land and the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) can play a central role in addressing these issues through capacity-building, the sharing of successful experiences, technology transfer, the provision of scientific support, awareness-raising, mobilization of resources and assistance to Parties in implementing policies at national, subregional, regional and international levels.
3. The Strategy will contribute to (1) achieving the objectives of the Convention and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, in particular regarding Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 and target 15.3 and other interrelated SDGs, within the scope of the Convention; (2) improving the living conditions of affected populations; and (3) enhancing ecosystems services.

II. The Vision

4. A future that avoids, minimizes and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels consistent with SDG 15 and target 15.3 and other interrelated SDGs, within the scope of the Convention.

III. Strategic objectives and expected impacts

5. The following “strategic objectives” will guide the actions of all UNCCD stakeholders and partners in the period 2018–2030. Meeting these long-term objectives will contribute to achieving the above-mentioned vision.

Strategic objective (2 or 1): To improve the condition of affected ecosystems, promote sustainable land management and [contribute to land degradation neutrality, [within the scope of the Convention.]]

Expected impact (1.1 or 2.1) Land productivity and related ecosystems services are maintained or enhanced.

Expected impact (1.2 or 2.2) The vulnerability of affected ecosystems is reduced and the resilience of ecosystems is increased.

Expected impact (1.3 or 2.3) Voluntary land degradation neutrality national targets are set and adopted for countries wishing to do so, related measures are identified and implemented, and necessary monitoring systems are established.

Expected impact (1.4 or 2.4) Sustainable land management and combating desertification/land degradation contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the mitigation of climate change.

Strategic objective (2 or 1): To improve the living conditions of affected populations

Expected impact (2.1 or 1.2) Food security and adequate access to water for people in affected areas is improved.

Expected impact (2.2. or 1.2) The livelihoods of people in affected areas are improved and diversified.

Expected impact (2.3 or 1.3) Local people, especially women and youth, are empowered and participate in decision-making processes in combating DLDD.

Strategic objective 3: To generate global environmental benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD

Expected impact 3.1 Sustainable land management and combating desertification/land degradation contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and addressing climate change.

Expected impact 3.2 Synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and processes are enhanced.

Strategic objective 4: To mobilize financial and non-financial resources to support the implementation of the Convention by building effective partnerships at global and national level

Expected impact 4.1 Public and private financial resources are further mobilized and made available to affected country Parties, including through domestic resource mobilization.

Expected impact 4.2 International support is provided for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in affected country Parties to support the implementation of the Convention, including through North–South, South–South and triangular cooperation.

Expected impact 4.3 Extensive efforts are implemented to promote technology transfer, especially on favourable terms and including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, and to mobilize other non-financial resources.

IV. Implementation framework

6. The Strategy will be implemented primarily through actions at national or subregional levels, with the support of UNCCD institutions and partners. This section defines the roles and responsibilities of the various Parties, UNCCD institutions, partners and stakeholders in meeting the above-mentioned objectives.

A. Parties

7. Parties bear the main responsibility in the implementation of The Strategy and would need to steer implementation in accordance with their national priorities and in a spirit of international solidarity and partnership.

8. The Strategy will become an effective tool that guides national, subnational and local implementation while enabling Parties to undertake an assessment at the level of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). Each Party could implement the future Strategy by taking advantage of partnerships, including public–private partnerships, and innovative agreements.

9. Through this Strategy and in accordance with their obligations as stated in the Convention, Parties aim to

Financial and non-financial resources:

(a) Increase mobilization of financial and non-financial resources for the implementation of the Convention from international and domestic, and public and private sources as well as from local communities, including non-traditional funding sources, and climate finance;

(b) Take advantage of the opportunity of using land degradation neutrality (LDN) as a framework to increase the coherence, effectiveness and multiple benefits of investments;

(c) To improve the use of existing and/or innovative financial processes and institutions (such as the Global Environment Facility or other new funds).

Policy and planning:

(a) Develop, implement, revise and regularly monitor, as appropriate, national, subregional and regional action programmes and/or plans as effective tools for UNCCD implementation;

(b) Establish policies and enabling environments for promoting and implementing solutions to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought;

(c) Leverage synergies and integrate DLDD into national plans related to the other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), in particular the other Rio

conventions, and other international commitments as appropriate, [with a view to their harmonization];

(d) Mainstream DLDD as appropriate into economic, environmental and social policies, with a view to increasing the impact and effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention.

Action on the ground:

(a) Implement sustainable land management practices and promote alternative livelihoods;

(b) Implement restoration and rehabilitation practices in order to assist with the recovery of ecosystem functions and services;

(c) Promote alternative livelihoods.

B. Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

10. Under the authority and guidance of the Conference of the Parties (COP), the CRIC plays a central role in assisting the COP in the review of the implementation of the Convention and this Strategy by, inter alia:

(a) Assessing reports submitted by Parties and other reporting entities with the aim of producing targeted recommendations and draft decisions for consideration by the COP;

(b) Facilitating the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties through formal and informal interactive sessions and online platforms on topical issues, including capacity-building, best practices and lessons learned relating to on-the-ground implementation.

C. Committee on Science and Technology

11. At the request of the COP, the CST will provide, with input from the Science–Policy Interface, scientific advice for the assessment and implementation of the Convention and The Strategy by:

(a) Contributing to improving the scientific understanding of and knowledge on the processes leading to and solutions to address desertification, land degradation and drought;

(b) Contributing to addressing specific needs of local populations and helping to identify solutions that improve the standards of living of people in affected areas;

(c) Networking scientific institutions related to DLDD and ongoing activities through the SPI to provide recommendations for implementation;

(d) Assisting the CRIC through the timely provision of scientific advice on methodological matters related to reporting.

D. Global Mechanism

12. The Global Mechanism has a central responsibility in contributing to financial mobilization, supporting technology transfer and exploring opportunities for increasing the financing for the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy. It does this by:

(a) Supporting resource mobilization for the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy;

(b) Assisting affected country Parties in exploring solutions for resource mobilization corresponding to the needs expressed in the countries' UNCCD action programmes;

(c) Spearheading, in collaboration with relevant partners, the establishment of new funding options, including the possible creation of an independent Land Degradation Neutrality Fund for the implementation of The Strategy.

E. Secretariat

13. The successful implementation of this strategic plan requires the continued, strong core servicing advocacy, agenda-setting and representation functions of the UNCCD secretariat with commensurate capacity and resources in order to support Parties, the COP and the subsidiary bodies of the Convention in fulfilling their respective roles.

V. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

14. Monitoring the progress made in the implementation of The Strategy will be done through national reporting from Parties to the COP and a review by the CRIC for the consideration of the COP.

15. Reporting on progress towards the strategic objectives is required provided that Parties have sufficient official national data/information to report or validate national estimates derived from global data sources and that reporting should be provided primarily from official national data.

16. Indicators for strategic objectives should be reviewed and fine-tuned, as necessary and appropriate, in consideration of the reporting system/indicators for the SDGs and with reference to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Rio conventions and other relevant MEAs in order to improve their synergetic implementation and avoid duplication.

17. Reporting on section IV of The Strategy (implementation framework) will be done through qualitative reporting and on a voluntary basis until the CRIC has considered refining the reporting guidelines. In order to ensure that interactive sessions can be organized during sessional and intersessional sessions of the CRIC on information provided in reports, the COP will identify, where needed, specific topics that will be reviewed during those sessions.

List of progress indicators used to report on strategic objectives 1–3 of The Strategy

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Strategic objective 1 or 2</i> | | <i>To improve the condition of affected ecosystems</i> |
| SO 1-1 | Trends in land cover | |
| SO 1-2 | Trends in land productivity or functioning of the land | |
| <i>Strategic objective 2 or 1</i> | | <i>To improve the living conditions of affected populations</i> |
| SO 2-1 | Trends in population living below the relative poverty line and/or income inequality in affected areas | |
| SO 2-2 | Trends in access to safe drinking water in affected areas | |
| <i>Strategic objective 3</i> | | <i>To generate global environmental benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD</i> |
| SO 3-1 | Trends in carbon stocks above and below ground | |
| SO 3-2 | Trends in abundance and distribution of selected species | |