



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Senior negotiations strategy advisor and Special Envoy for the promotion of the accession of the Holy See to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Consultancy reference number: CCD/23/C/12

Background

Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)¹ is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The vision embraced by the Convention's 197 Parties in its 2018-2030 Strategic Framework² is for "a future that avoids, minimizes, and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The ambition expressed by countries to achieve this vision is significant: the international community has pledged to restore one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030, half of which are land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets,³ making the UNCCD is well-positioned to harness a growing global momentum to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all.

Land Degradation, desertification, and drought (DLDD) are, like climate change, pose environmental, ethical, social, economic, and political challenges to the life of the poorest and most fragile. Currently, more than 1.3 billion people are trapped on degrading agricultural land, drastically increasing competition for crucial ecosystem services such as food, water and energy while it is estimated that close to 135 million people are at risk of being permanently displaced by desertification and land degradation.

Representing more than 1.2 billion Catholics globally the Holy See is playing an increasingly critical role in urging and acting on global environmental challenges thereby taking a prominent leadership role in ensuring solidarity with the most vulnerable in society. Already faith-based organizations around the world are embracing individual and collective responsibility for nature as a vital starting-point for social, economic, and environmental sustainability, supporting the United Nations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals⁴ in favour of the most vulnerable. In particular, the Encyclical "Laudato Si"⁵ (2015) calls for the urgent need to protect the Earth and redressing the production and use of ecological resources to safeguard both human dignity and mother nature.

As a Party to UNCCD, the Holy See could help negotiate critical decisions that impact the use of nature and ecological resources and propose interventions to make the vision of Laudato Si' a reality.

Objective of consultancy

The consultant will assist the UNCCD in negotiations with the Holy See, providing strategic and diplomatic advice including outreach, collaboration, and consultation with relevant key stakeholders of the Holy See.

Duties and Responsibilities

The UNCCD secretariat is looking for an experienced and senior professional to take a leading role in shaping the future relationship between UNCCD and the Holy See. The incumbent should be

¹ <https://www.unccd.int/>

² https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-02/cop21add1_SF_EN.pdf

³ Goals and Commitments for the Restoration Decade <https://www.pbl.nl/en/publications/goals-and-commitments-for-the-restoration-decade>

⁴ Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, UNEP. 2020. Faith action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals : progress and outlook. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3895334/files/SDGR.pdf>

⁵ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html



equipped with a solid knowledge of the Holy See's political, social, and environmental approaches and commitments and be able to advise on strategies to enhance the Holy See's engagement in the UNCCD and/or promote the accession of the Holy See to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Under the direct supervision of the Chief of GPARC, the incumbent will assist the UNCCD in negotiations with the Holy See, providing strategic and diplomatic advice including outreach, collaboration, and consultation with relevant key stakeholders of the Holy See.

Considering the above, the incumbent performs the following activities:

- Lead the UNCCD towards realization of its goal to achieve the accession of the Holy See to the Convention.
- Assist the UNCCD in interpreting political developments related to the Holy See and identify opportunities to engage in dialogue with high-level representatives.
- Advise the UNCCD senior management on modalities for effective engagement with the Holy See proposing a roadmap for strengthening the relationship between the UNCCD and the Holy See and, in that context, advising both Parties on the relevance of a formal accession process.
- As necessary, guide the UNCCD throughout any negotiation processes and support the UNCCD with legislative, review and guidance on specific areas of the process.
- With a view to eventual accession, develop a target-oriented value proposition for an enhanced relationship between the UNCCD and the Holy See setting out areas of mutual interest and benefit in a relevant and compelling way.
- Identify strategic partners within the Holy See and build and maintain good working relationships with the same to enhance the successful implementation of initiatives of mutual interest and benefit, notably at country level.
- Design and then coordinate the design and implementation of any initiatives of mutual interest that emerge. In this regard, the incumbent shall develop:
 - A strategy for the engagement and more effective growth and deployment of the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel.
 - A strategy for the uptake and roll out of a Peace Forest Initiative cross-border/cross community restoration project involving Catholic communities affected by conflict in any relevant region.

Deliverables

The following outputs are expected:

- 1) Production /elaboration of a value proposition for the UNCCD addressing the (i) specifics of the Holy See i.e., principles, standards, and/ or moral codes in relation to the core objects of the UNCCD (ii) areas of mutual interest and cooperation between the Holy See and the UNCCD and (iii) the benefits of joining the Convention.
- 2) Identification of core actors within the Holy See and development of a strong relationship with the Holy See in furtherance of a more coherent and consistent approach to the engagement of the Holy See in the UNCCD and/or a formal accession of the Holy See to the Convention.
- 3) Support the UNCCD with legislative, review and guiding advice on specific areas of the process.
- 4) Develop a strategy and project proposal in collaboration with the John Paul II Foundation to support the Great Green Wall Accelerator (housed at the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD) for the roll-out of the Great Green Wall of the Sahara and Sahel Initiative.
- 5) Identify potential sites where the establishment of a Peace Forest might support cross-border or cross-community peace building and initiate negotiations for implementation of the initiative.



Contractual terms

The service of the selected consultant is estimated to be for a period of six months and as home-based. Start date as soon as possible. This contract is based on deliverables and payment will be done defined by results midterm and at the end of the consultancy period. Travel to the Vatican and other locations related to the Great Green Wall Initiative, as well as the Peace Forest Initiative, may be needed and will be organized and paid separately.

Requirements

- Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in political or social science, theology, environmental studies, public policy, law or related area. A first-level university degree in combination with qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.
- A minimum of ten years of progressively responsible experience in working with faith-based groups and religious networks, as well as with high-profile political figures.
- Profound knowledge of the Holy See's political and social and environmental engagement
- Knowledge of the UNCCD, its core mandate and objectives.
- Strong research and analytical skills and the ability to synthesize and present complex information in an understandable, systematic manner.
- Experience working in a multi-cultural environment in an international organization.
- Experience in working with the Holy See and/or established networks within the Holy See and/or related catholic communities is an asset.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, handle multiple tasks, work under pressure, and deliver assignments on time.
- Excellent writing skills and fluency in English is required.

Special notice

Only individuals who can act as independent, individual economical operators are qualified to apply. Individuals who can provide their services only on account of an institution or enterprise not in their individual capacity are not eligible under this procedure.

Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered "staff members" under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations Secretariat and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultant and individual contractor is responsible for determining tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

Submission of application

The following documents should be sent to staffing@unccd.int as **one document**: UNCCD Personal History Form⁶ /CV and cover letter, specifying the following in the email subject line: **CCD/23/C/12**.

The deadline for applications is **19 March 2023**. Only applications submitted by the deadline and with complete documentation will be taken into consideration.

Due to the volume of applications received, receipt of applications cannot be acknowledged individually. Please address your application as indicated above and please do not address or copy your

⁶ UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd>



application to an individual at the Secretariat. Candidates who do not receive any feedback within three months of the deadline should consider their application as unsuccessful.

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