



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Senior negotiations strategy advisor for the promotion of the accession of the Holy See to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Consultancy reference number: CCD/23/C/96

Background

Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 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 Framework 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, 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 Goals in favour of the most vulnerable. In particular, the Encyclical "Laudato Si'" (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.

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 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.

Objective of consultancy

The final expected output from the International Consultant will be:

- Projects/programmes related documents (project idea notes, project concept notes)
- An MoU for a partnership between UNCCD/GM and the John Paul II Foundation



Duties and Responsibilities

Under the direct supervision of the Chief of GPARC and in collaboration with the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, 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 and 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.

Deliverables

The consultant will facilitate and provide following deliverables:

1. A strategy for engagement with the Vatican/Holy See over the next 6 months.
2. A final report on implementation of the strategy.
3. A conference at the Vatican, in May 2024, hosted by The Pontifical Academy of the Sciences and the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel on the challenges of desertification for frontline communities.
4. A symbolic tree-planting event is organized in Assisi, Italy in coordination with Sahelian Ambassadors to the Holy See.
5. The identification of two potential sites where the establishment of a Peace Forest Initiative might support cross-border or cross-community peace building and initiate negotiations for implementation of the initiative. A workshop is organized, and a project concept is developed for a Peace Forest Initiative between the UK and Ireland.
6. An MoU for a partnership between UNCCD/GM and the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel is drafted and signed.

Contractual terms

The service of the selected consultant is estimated to be for a period of 6 months subject to satisfactory progress in the preparatory activities identified under this term of reference. This contract is based on deliverables and payment is defined by output. The consultancy is home based, part-time. Women are encouraged to apply. Start date: as soon as possible. Where travel is deemed relevant and necessary, it will be organized and funded separately by the UNCCD.

All products resulting from this contractual arrangement are the exclusive property of the UNCCD.

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 experience in working with faith-based groups and religious networks, as well as with high-profile political figures;
- ✓ Proven experience as a technical advisor in partnership mobilization, particularly relevant to the Holy See and/or established networks within the Holy See;
- ✓ Solid knowledge in the Holy See's political, social, and environmental approaches and commitments;
- ✓ Work experience with the Great Green Wall countries in project/programme ideation and development, and partnership mobilization;
- ✓ Profound knowledge of the UNCCD, its core mandate and objectives.
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to work independently, handle multiple tasks, work under pressure and deliver assignments on time.
- ✓ Fluency in English both oral and written is required. Fluency in another UN language is an asset.

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 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 Form¹ /CV and cover letter, specifying the following in the email subject line: **CCD/23/C/96**.

The deadline for applications is **29 November 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 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.

Date of issuance: 22 November 2023

¹ UNCCD P-11 form in electronic fill-in .pdf OR .docx format available: <https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat/vacancies/applying-unccd>