



General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 December 2023

Seventy-eighth session

Agenda item 18 (e)

Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2023

[on the report of the Second Committee ([A/78/461/Add.5](#), para. 7)]

78/154. Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [77/166](#) of 14 December 2022, as well as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,¹

Reaffirming its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Recalling that, in the 2030 Agenda, the international community committed to combating desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.



by desertification, drought and floods, and striving to achieve a land degradation-neutral world by 2030,

Reaffirming its resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Recognizing that Sustainable Development Goal targets 15.3, 6.1 and 6.6 and the setting of voluntary land degradation neutrality targets have created strong momentum for accelerating the implementation of the Convention,

Noting that restoring degraded lands generates benefits for poor populations, brings more food to the hungry and to the markets, restores ecosystems and biodiversity and enhances resilience to climate change impacts, including by sequestering huge quantities of carbon from the atmosphere and bringing carbon into the soil,

Recalling that, in its decision 3/COP.15,² the Conference of the Parties to the Convention invited parties that have committed to voluntary land degradation neutrality targets to implement measures to accelerate the achievement thereof, by, inter alia, creating an enabling environment for the achievement of land degradation neutrality, including the responsible governance of land and tenure security, the engagement of stakeholders and the improved access of smallholders to advisory and financial services, in particular for women and those in vulnerable situations, therefore, taking note with appreciation of the pledge made by 131 countries to establish national voluntary targets and relevant measures to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030, while 112 parties have successfully completed this voluntary process and 106 have already published their national reports on the website of the Convention,

Noting that combating desertification, land degradation and drought, including through the sustainable management of natural resources, can contribute to sustainable development for all and to easing displacement flows,

Bearing in mind its resolution [73/284](#) of 1 March 2019, in which it declared the decade 2021–2030 as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration,

Recalling the adoption of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the Convention,³ including a new strategic objective on drought,

Reaffirming the Paris Agreement⁴ and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁵ that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Recognizing that climate change, unsustainable agricultural and forestry practices, and land degradation, inter alia, are major and growing drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, and that conservation, restoration and the sustainable use of biodiversity, and ecosystem functions and services, sustainable

² See [ICCD/COP\(15\)/23/Add.1](#).

³ [ICCD/COP\(13\)/21/Add.1](#), decision 7/COP.13, annex, and [ICCD/COP\(15\)/23/Add.1](#), decision 7/COP.15.

⁴ Adopted under the UNFCCC in [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21.

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

land management approaches and technologies, including through nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and other management and conservation approaches, in line with resolution 5/5 of 2 March 2022 of the United Nations Environment Assembly,⁶ contribute significantly to land degradation neutrality, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction and food security and nutrition,

Noting with concern the findings of the second edition of *Global Land Outlook* and the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services land degradation and restoration assessment and its *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change contained in its special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, as well as the findings contained in the special report of the Panel entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C*,

Recognizing the interdependencies between biodiversity loss, pollution, water scarcity, climate change, desertification, land degradation and drought and their interlinkages with food security and human well-being, including health,

Deeply concerned about the continuous trend in land degradation and the fact that the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought are felt most strongly by people in vulnerable situations,

Welcoming the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023,

Noting with great concern the severe negative impact on human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing and implementing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to help to reduce the risk of and build resilience to future shocks, crises and pandemics, including by strengthening health systems and achieving universal health coverage, and recognizing that equitable and timely access for all to safe, quality, effective and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics are an essential part of a global response based on unity, solidarity, renewed multilateral cooperation and the principle of leaving no one behind,

Recognizing that combating desertification, land degradation and drought is important for sustainable, inclusive and climate-resilient recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, that it is important to integrate land conservation, protection and restoration, sustainable land management, degraded soil and terrestrial ecosystems restoration, combating desertification and the aim of land degradation neutrality into the global agenda for sustainable development, and that careful targeting of the COVID-19 recovery investments, including land restoration, creates economic opportunities that contribute to environmental sustainability and poverty eradication,

Recalling the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030,⁷ and acknowledging that all types of forests provide essential ecosystem services, such as

⁶ UNEP/EA.5/Res.5.

⁷ See resolution 71/285.

timber, food, fuel, fodder, non-wood products and shelter, as well as soil and water conservation and clean air, that the sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests is vital to the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and that forests prevent land degradation and desertification and reduce the risk of floods, soil erosion, landslides and avalanches, droughts, sand and dust storms and other disasters,

Reiterating its appreciation to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for hosting the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, held in Abidjan from 9 to 20 May 2022,

Recalling the establishment of a new intergovernmental working group on drought during the triennium 2022–2024, with a view to presenting its findings and recommendations to the parties for their consideration at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,

Reaffirming the importance of government leadership, multi-stakeholder partnerships and increasing private engagement for the sustainable management, restoration and rehabilitation of ecosystems, biodiversity and land,

Recognizing the Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats to prevent, halt and reverse land degradation adopted by the leaders of the Group of 20 in Riyadh in 2020, as well as the Riyadh Leader's Declaration,

Recognizing also the launch of the International Drought Resilience Alliance with a view to enhancing drought resilience,

Highlighting the importance of multi-stakeholder participation at the local, subnational, national and regional levels and from all sectors of society, including civil society organizations, local government and the private sector, as appropriate, in the implementation of the Convention and its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework,

Recognizing the value of knowledge, education, science and new technology to sustainable land management, including making use of, inter alia, the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, emphasizing the importance of science-based decision-making and that science and technology to combat desertification, land degradation and drought should therefore be further promoted, and acknowledging the work of the Science-Policy Interface of the Convention,

Taking note with appreciation of the global celebrations of the 2023 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, under the theme “Her Land. Her Rights: Advancing gender equality and land restoration goals”, on 16 June 2023,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [77/166](#) on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;⁸
2. *Welcomes* the decisions of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and stresses the importance of their effective implementation;
3. *Welcomes with appreciation* the offer made by the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties

⁸ [A/78/209](#), sect. II.

to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, in Riyadh from 2 to 13 December 2024, and looks forward to its outcome;

4. *Welcomes* the first part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Kunming, China, from 11 to 15 October 2021, and the second part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Montreal, Canada, from 7 to 19 December 2022 under the presidency of China, and its outcomes, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and urges their early, inclusive and effective implementation;

5. *Urges* the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the agreed intergovernmentally negotiated outcomes and decisions of the subsequent United Nations climate change conferences;

6. *Takes note* of the Abidjan Call, which urged giving the highest priority to the issue of drought prevention, resilience, impact mitigation and accelerating the implementation of existing national commitments, towards achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030 and raising ambition for investments in large-scale land restoration projects and programmes, which also help countries and communities to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of drought;

7. *Invites* Member States to support efforts to implement the strategic objectives of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

8. *Welcomes* the voluntary commitment of the parties to the Convention to accelerate the restoration of 1 billion hectares of degraded land by 2030 by improving data gathering and monitoring to track progress against the achievement of land restoration commitments and establishing a new partnership model for large-scale integrated landscape investment programmes;

9. *Strongly encourages* the parties to the Convention to apply and align with the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the Convention in their national policies, programmes, plans and processes relating to desertification, land degradation and drought, and to implement the Strategic Framework, taking into account the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;⁹

10. *Welcomes* the establishment of an intergovernmental working group to oversee the midterm evaluation process related to the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the Convention, which is to present its recommendations to the parties for their consideration at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties;

11. *Reaffirms* that reducing land degradation and achieving land degradation neutrality has the potential to act as an accelerator and integrator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and respond to the overall objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;¹⁰

12. *Encourages* Member States to pursue considering target 15.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals as an integrator and accelerator to achieve other Sustainable Development Goals;

13. *Reiterates* the need to combat desertification, reduce land degradation, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and

⁹ Resolution 69/313, annex.

¹⁰ Resolution 70/1.

floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world, recalls with appreciation the voluntary land degradation neutrality target-setting programme consistent with the Convention and the work of the secretariat of the Convention and partners to assist parties to the Convention in carrying out voluntary target-setting activities, emphasizes the need for capacity-building and opportunities for parties that have yet to set land degradation neutrality targets, and in this respect reiterates its invitation to parties to the Convention that have not yet subscribed to the programme to do so;

14. *Recognizes* that sustainable land management approaches and technologies, including through nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and other management and conservation approaches, in line with resolution 5/5 of the United Nations Environment Assembly, constitute promising options to evaluate and consider in connection with sequestering carbon and enhancing the resilience of people and ecosystems affected by desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as the adverse effects of climate change and biodiversity loss;

15. *Also recognizes* the importance of applying new and innovative technologies and enabling policies and approaches, as well as sharing best practices, in combating desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as enhancing drought resilience, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to identify, as appropriate, those technologies, enabling policies and best practices in his report on the implementation of the present resolution;

16. *Affirms* that combating desertification, land degradation and drought and achieving land degradation neutrality through, inter alia, land conservation, protection and restoration, sustainable land management, degraded soil and terrestrial ecosystems restoration, sustainable afforestation and reforestation, which have emerged as a pathway to accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, will also contribute, among others, to safeguarding livelihoods, preventing and preparing for future pandemics and achieving a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and underlines the importance of integrating land conservation, protection and restoration, sustainable land management and degraded soil and terrestrial ecosystems restoration into post-COVID-19 recovery efforts, with particular emphasis on improving the livelihoods of the poorest, including rural communities and people in vulnerable situations, and recognizing and respecting Indigenous Peoples' connections to their traditional territories;

17. *Encourages* the entities of the United Nations system, when designing and implementing their programmes and projects, to take into account the role of achieving land degradation neutrality as a potential accelerator to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

18. *Underlines* the importance of comprehensive reporting, follow-up and review at the global, national and regional levels, as appropriate, in order to track progress in the implementation of the Convention;

19. *Reiterates* the invitation to parties to the Convention to take measures to ensure, as appropriate, that their relevant institutions adopt a proactive approach to drought management and integrate drought resilience and risk management, sustainable livestock and agricultural policies, drought forecasting work, sustainable water management and climate information and climate change impact assessments into relevant policymaking processes and initiatives;

20. *Reiterates its invitation* to the parties to the Convention to provide the Executive Secretary of the Convention with full support in the fulfilment of his mandate and in promoting the implementation of the Convention;

21. *Stresses* the urgent need to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events, and in this regard urges Member States to continue to engage in adaptation planning processes and to enhance cooperation in disaster risk reduction;

22. *Invites* the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, which was formed at the twenty-fourth meeting of the senior officials of the Environment Management Group, in September 2018, and other relevant United Nations entities to continue their collaboration to assist affected country parties in developing and implementing national and regional policies on sand and dust storms;

23. *Recognizes* that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls remain a crucial contribution to the effective implementation of the Convention, including its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, and to the achievement of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda, stresses the importance of parties to the Convention and partners striving to ensure the equal participation of women and men in planning, decision-making and implementation at all levels and further achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as women’s full, equal, effective and meaningful participation in desertification, land degradation and drought-related policies and activities, and also stresses the importance of the effective implementation of the four priority thematic areas of the Gender Action Plan adopted by the parties to the Convention;

24. *Reiterates* the invitation to the secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the Convention to continue to collaborate and build partnerships with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), other United Nations entities, international organizations and other relevant organizations to explore further ways of strengthening awareness-raising, improving the Gender Action Plan and developing further tools and guidelines for the use of parties in the thematic areas of the Gender Action Plan and the gender-responsive implementation of the Convention;

25. *Recalls* the invitation to parties to the Convention to legally recognize rights to equal use and ownership of land for women and the enhancement of women’s equal access to land and land tenure security, as well as the promotion of gender-sensitive measures to combat desertification, land degradation and drought and achieve land degradation neutrality, taking into account the national context, and in this context notes the Abidjan Declaration on Achieving Gender Equality for Successful Land Restoration, which promotes all measures necessary to identify and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, with particular attention to the rights of older women, widows, women with disabilities and young women;

26. *Encourages* parties to the Convention to follow the principles of implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security¹¹ in the implementation of activities to combat desertification, land degradation and drought;

27. *Encourages* the public and private sectors to continue to invest in developing, adapting and scaling up the application of technologies, enabling policies, methods and tools to combat desertification, land degradation and drought in different regions, and to boost knowledge exchange, including of traditional knowledge with the consent of the knowledge holders, capacity-building and sharing of technologies on mutually agreed terms;

¹¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, document CL 144/9 (C 2013/20), appendix D.

28. *Encourages* parties to the Convention to continue to promote the prevention of desertification, land degradation and drought with an integrated landscape approach by sustainably managing land and water resources, avoiding practices that degrade land and rehabilitating and restoring already degraded land;

29. *Encourages* developed countries party to the Convention and other relevant stakeholders to actively support the efforts of developing countries party to the Convention in promoting sustainable land management practices and in seeking to achieve a land degradation-neutral world by providing substantial financial resources from all sources facilitated access to appropriate technology on mutually agreed terms and other forms of support, including through capacity-building measures;

30. *Recognizes* the benefits gained from cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, forecasting and early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, while also taking account of sand and dust storms, at the global, regional and subregional levels, and in this regard likewise recognizes the need for further cooperation between parties to the Convention and relevant organizations in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems;

31. *Calls upon* the United Nations entities to mainstream drought resilience in their programmes when supporting countries prone to droughts or already affected, with an emphasis on enhancing preparation and resilience, noting the need for drought management through, inter alia, impactful policies, early warning systems, preparedness and mitigation, land restoration, sustainable agricultural and livestock policies and related actions to advance the neutrality of land degradation, in countries affected by drought and/or desertification;

32. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to harness opportunities for leveraging synergies among the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹² the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, as well as the 2030 Agenda, and in this respect welcomes the ongoing efforts to strengthen synergies among the secretariats of the aforementioned conventions;

33. *Welcomes* the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, as well as the convening of the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, underlines the importance of combating desertification and water scarcity and restoring degraded lands to ensure sustainable food production during the COVID-19 recovery period and recognizes the critical role that healthy land has in the global economy, calls for measures to explore and promote consumption and production patterns that conserve and protect land, advance land degradation neutrality and promote the conservation, protection, sustainable management and restoration of forests, taking note, inter alia, of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, and welcomes the convening of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 6 to 20 November 2022;

34. *Notes with appreciation* the financial contributions that have been made by Member States and other donors towards the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, and invites Member States and other donors to make further contributions to the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund and the drought initiative of the United Nations

¹² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

35. *Decides* to include, in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the year 2023 and subsequent years, the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and each of its subsidiary bodies, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to make provisions for those sessions in the proposed programme budgets;

36. *Acknowledges* the commitment of the parties to the Convention to boost drought resilience by identifying the expansion of arid, semi-arid, dry subhumid areas and drylands, improving national policies and early warning systems linked to early action, learning and sharing knowledge, building partnerships and coordinating action, and mobilizing drought finance to support a shift from reactive to proactive drought management, and welcomes the announcement by the Secretary-General of the Early Warnings for All initiative to ensure that every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems within five years;

37. *Takes note* of decision 22/COP.15,¹³ which invites the parties to the Convention to promote sustainable territorial development, including multi-level governance and planning mechanisms, as appropriate, to strengthen urban-rural linkages, address desertification/land degradation and drought, including sand and dust storms, and create social and economic opportunities that reduce forced migration and displacement and increase rural resilience and livelihood stability;

38. *Acknowledges* the decision of the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth session with respect to promoting decent land-based jobs for youth and land-based youth entrepreneurship and strengthening youth participation in the processes relating to the Convention;

39. *Reaffirms* the continuation, for a further five-year period, of the current institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements with the United Nations Secretariat, to be reviewed by both the General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties no later than 31 December 2026;

40. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”, the sub-item entitled “Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa”.

*49th plenary meeting
19 December 2023*

¹³ See [ICCD/COP\(15\)/23/Add.1](#).