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

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 19 (see [A/74/381](#), para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 22nd and 26th meetings, on 14 and 27 November 2019. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records.¹

II. Consideration of draft resolutions [A/C.2/74/L.41](#) and [A/C.2/74/L.41/Rev.1](#)

2. At the 22nd meeting, on 14 November, the observer for the State of Palestine, on behalf of the States that are members of the Group of 77 and China, taking into account also the provisions of General Assembly resolution [73/5](#) of 16 October 2018, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" ([A/C.2/74/L.41](#)).

3. At its 26th meeting, on 27 November, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in 13 parts, under the symbols [A/74/381](#), [A/74/381/Add.1](#), [A/74/381/Add.2](#), [A/74/381/Add.3](#), [A/74/381/Add.4](#), [A/74/381/Add.5](#), [A/74/381/Add.6](#), [A/74/381/Add.7](#), [A/74/381/Add.8](#), [A/74/381/Add.9](#), [A/74/381/Add.10](#), [A/74/381/Add.11](#) and [A/74/381/Add.12](#).

¹ See [A/C.2/74/SR.22](#) and [A/C.2/74/SR.26](#).



Desertification, Particularly in Africa” ([A/C.2/74/L.41/Rev.1](#)), submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution [A/C.2/74/L.41](#) and Kazakhstan.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution [A/C.2/74/L.41/Rev.1](#) had no programme budget implications.

5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.2/74/L.41/Rev.1](#) (see para. 7).

6. Also at the 26th meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the United States of America.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

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 [73/233](#) of 20 December 2018, 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 for Sustainable Development, the international community committed to combating desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected 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,

Noting that in its decision 3/COP.14,² 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,

Noting also 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,

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

² See [ICCD/COP\(14\)/23/Add.1](#).

Bearing in mind its resolution [62/195](#) of 19 December 2007, in which it declared the decade 2010–2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification, and its resolution [64/201](#) of 21 December 2009, in which it designated the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, as the focal point of the Decade, and invited States parties to the Convention, observers and other relevant stakeholders to organize activities to observe the Decade,

Bearing in mind also 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, including through nature-based solutions, 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 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*,

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,

Recalling the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030,⁶ and acknowledging that all types of forests provide essential ecosystem services, such as 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 for Sustainable Development 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,

Expressing its appreciation to the Government of India for hosting the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in New Delhi from 2 to 13 September 2019,

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

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.

⁶ See resolution [71/285](#).

Noting the establishment of an intergovernmental working group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the Convention, with a view to presenting its findings and recommendations to the parties for their consideration at the fifteenth 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,

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,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [73/233](#) on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;⁷

2. *Welcomes* the outcomes of the fourteenth 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. *Also welcomes* the New Delhi Declaration: Investing in Land and Unlocking Opportunities;⁸

4. *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;¹

5. *Strongly encourages* the parties to the Convention to apply and align with the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the Convention³ 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

6. *Reaffirms* that achieving land degradation neutrality has the potential to act as an accelerator and integrator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and as a catalyst for attracting sustainable development financing and climate finance to implement the Convention, and respond to the overall objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;¹⁰

⁷ [A/74/207](#), sect. II.

⁸ [ICCD/COP\(14\)/23/Add.1](#), annex I.

⁹ Resolution [69/313](#), annex.

¹⁰ Resolution [70/1](#).

7. *Reiterates* the need to combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world, and takes note with appreciation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality target-setting programme under 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, and in this respect invites parties to the Convention that have not yet subscribed to the programme to do so;

8. *Recognizes* that land-based solutions, as part of nature-based solutions, 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;

9. *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, 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;

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

11. *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;

12. *Reiterates* the invitation to parties to the Convention to take measures to ensure, as appropriate, that their relevant institutions integrate drought risk management, climate information and climate change impact assessments into relevant policymaking processes and initiatives;

13. *Invites* the parties to the Convention to provide the new Executive Secretary of the Convention with full support in the fulfilment of his mandate and in promoting the implementation of the Convention;

14. *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;

15. *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;

16. *Recognizes* that gender equality and the empowerment of 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 for Sustainable Development, stresses the importance of parties to the Convention and partners pursuing the equal participation of women and men in planning, decision-making and implementation at all levels and further promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in desertification, land degradation and drought-related policies and activities, and stresses the importance

of effective implementation of the four priority thematic areas of the gender action plan adopted by the parties to the Convention;

17. *Reiterates* the invitation to the secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the Convention to continue collaborating and building 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;

18. *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;

19. *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;

20. *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;

21. *Encourages* parties to the Convention to continue to promote the prevention of desertification, land degradation and drought with an integrated landscape approach, including the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded land and sustainable land management;

22. *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;

23. *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;

24. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system within their respective mandates to harness opportunities for leveraging synergies among the

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

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 Change⁵ and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in this respect welcomes the ongoing efforts to strengthen synergies among the secretariats of the aforementioned conventions;

25. *Invites* the President of the General Assembly, with the support of the Executive Secretary of the Convention, to organize, during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, a high-level dialogue to assess the progress made in the fight against desertification, land degradation and drought and to map the way forward, in the light of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification, which is coming to an end in 2020;

26. *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 Convention's drought initiative;

27. *Decides* to include, in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the year 2020 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;

28. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fifth 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".

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