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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*

Rapporteur: Ms. Francesca **Cassar** (Malta)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 18 (see [A/77/443](#), para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 23rd meeting, on 22 November 2022. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary record.¹

II. Consideration of draft resolutions [A/C.2/77/L.29](#) and [A/C.2/77/L.58](#)

2. At the 21st meeting, on 10 November 2022, the representative of Pakistan, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, 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.2/77/L.29](#)).

3. At its 23rd meeting, on 22 November, the Committee had before it 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.2/77/L.58](#)), submitted by the Vice-Chair

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in 12 parts, under the symbols [A/77/443](#), [A/77/443/Add.1](#), [A/77/443/Add.2](#), [A/77/443/Add.3](#), [A/77/443/Add.4](#), [A/77/443/Add.5](#), [A/77/443/Add.6](#), [A/77/443/Add.7](#), [A/77/443/Add.8](#), [A/77/443/Add.9](#), [A/77/443/Add.10](#) and [A/77/443/Add.11](#).

¹ See [A/C.2/77/SR.23](#).



of the Committee, Ahmed Magdy (Egypt), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution [A/C.2/77/L.29](#).

4. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution [A/C.2/77/L.58](#) had no programme budget implications.

5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.2/77/L.58](#) (see para. 8).

6. Also at the 23rd meeting, after the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, the European Union (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro and Ukraine) and Mexico.

7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution [A/C.2/77/L.58](#), draft resolution [A/C.2/77/L.29](#) was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

8. 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 [76/206](#) of 17 December 2021, 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 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.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,

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

² See [ICCD/COP\(14\)/23/Add.1](#).

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, therefore, taking note with appreciation of the pledge made by 129 countries to establish national voluntary targets and relevant measures to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030, while 107 parties have successfully completed this voluntary process and 100 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 land management, ecosystem-based approaches and 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 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, climate change, desertification and land degradation and their interlinkages with 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,

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

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.

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 2017–2030,⁶ 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 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, and welcoming the offer made by the Government of Saudi Arabia and the Government of Mongolia to host the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Conference of the Parties, in 2024 and 2026, respectively,

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,

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,

⁶ See resolution [71/285](#).

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 76/206 on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;⁷
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. *Urges* the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the agreed intergovernmentally negotiated outcomes and decisions of the subsequent United Nations climate change conferences;
4. *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;
5. *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;
6. *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;
7. *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;⁸
8. *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 findings and recommendations to the parties for their consideration at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties;
9. *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 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;⁹
10. *Reiterates* the need to combat desertification, reduce land degradation, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world, recalls with appreciation the voluntary land degradation neutrality target-setting programme

⁷ A/77/215, sect. II.

⁸ Resolution 69/313, annex.

⁹ Resolution 70/1.

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, and in this respect reiterates its invitation to parties to the Convention that have not yet subscribed to the programme to do so;

11. *Recognizes* that sustainable land management, ecosystem-based approaches or 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;

12. *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;

13. *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;

14. *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;

15. *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;

16. *Reiterates* the invitation to parties to the Convention to take measures to ensure, as appropriate, that their relevant institutions integrate drought 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;

17. *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;

18. *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;

19. *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;

20. *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, 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 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;

21. *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;

22. *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;

23. *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 Security¹⁰ in the implementation of activities to combat desertification, land degradation and drought;

24. *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;

25. *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, avoiding practices that degrade land and rehabilitating and restoring already degraded land;

26. *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

¹⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, document CL 144/9 (C 2013/20), appendix D.

resources from all sources facilitated access to appropriate technology on mutually agreed terms and other forms of support, including through capacity-building measures;

27. *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;

28. *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,¹¹ 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;

29. *Welcomes* the convening and takes note of the outcome of the High-level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought convened by the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, which mapped the way forward in view of the end of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification and the beginning of 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;

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

31. *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;

32. *Acknowledges* the commitment of the parties to the Convention to boost drought resilience by identifying the expansion of arid, semi-arid, dry sub-humid 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

¹¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

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;

33. *Takes note* of decision 22/COP.15,¹² 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;

34. *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;

35. *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;

36. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-eighth 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 See [ICCD/COP\(15\)/23/Add.1](#).