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Convention to Combat Desertification

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Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

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Agenda item 2

Assessment of Implementation

Strategic objectives 1 to 5

Conclusions and recommendations

I. Strategic objective 1

1. Some Parties at the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 17) recommended, in relation to multiple strategic objectives (SO 1-4), that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Request the secretariat to monitor and evaluate the reporting process (administrative, financial, and technical) with the aim of ensuring adequate time allocation for data analysis, quality control and interpretation both by national experts and at the global level when the data for all country Parties is integrated;

(b) Request the secretariat to conduct a quality control audit on the data presented in the reports for all strategic objectives to ensure the results of this audit reflect the national reports accurately;

(c) Request the secretariat to review the text of these reports to ensure the appropriate use of adopted terms with respect to the mandate and scope of the Convention and past decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties;

(d) Request the secretariat to involve the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Science-Policy Interface (SPI), as appropriate, in questions related to the development of methodologies for the indicators, and to deepen the preliminary analysis of the data received by the Parties, including the limitations of the current methodology.

(e) Encourage the SPI, in their review of the IPBES thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration, to update the CST on the direct and indirect drivers of land degradation and compare this review with what has been reported by country Parties;

(f) Request the secretariat to pursue the enhancement of the metrics for strategic objectives 1 and 5 and evaluate the appropriateness of the metrics for strategic objectives 2,

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3 and 4, keeping with the principle of leveraging existing global standards and working towards the provision of default data for strategic objectives 2, 3 and 4 (e.g. SDG indicators);

(g) Request the secretariat to develop an interactive and geospatial data management platform that runs synergistically with Trends.Earth and PRAIS (including forms, templates, reports, plugins and linkages to data cubes), ensures transparency and interoperability among datasets, improves and sustains data and information flows, and provides the necessary functionality, including:

- (i) The management and presentation of metadata;
- (ii) The capacity for regular updates between reporting periods;
- (iii) The capacity to upload and integrate data from all sources which meet data quality standards for each indicator, including the inputs necessary to generate the indicators and all the underlying algorithms used by the data providers and the Good Practice Guidance for SDG Indicator 15.3.1;¹
- (iv) The capacity (e.g. decision trees) to compare and select between national, regional and global default datasets;
- (v) The capacity to conduct analyses across all UNCCD indicators;
- (vi) The capacity to analyse hotspots and brightspots;
- (vii) The capacity to analyse additional information, including other nationally relevant indicators as well as complementary information such as climate variables, land ownership, land governance, gender equity, women's empowerment and stakeholder engagement;
- (viii) The capacity to visualize the data prior to reporting as well as the capacity for the public to visualize and interact with officially reported results after the reporting process is completed;
- (ix) The capacity to automatically generate reports relevant for the UNCCD reporting process and for national use, including text, tables, figures and maps;
- (x) The capacity to generate information useful to government line agencies and CSOs in support of more effective integrated land-use planning and land degradation neutrality (LDN) implementation;

(h) Request the secretariat, and other actors in a position to do so, to encourage and support developing countries Parties in the development of national data sets through institutional capacity-building, finance and technology transfer;

(i) Request the secretariat to expand the scope of analysis beyond individual indicators so that their interactions and correlations can be better understood, e.g. the link between land degradation, poverty and gender equity;

(j) Request the secretariat to expand the current categorization used in Party reporting to distinguish between “not reported” and “not required to report”;

(k) Request the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) to ensure that LDN target-setting, implementation and monitoring, at the local, national and global levels, is a continuous process including regular stocktakes of LDN targets and their implementation;

¹ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-10/Good%20Practice%20Guidance_SDG%20Indicator%2015.3.1_Version%201.0.pdf>.

(l) Request the secretariat and the GM to identify, generate and make available high spatial resolution datasets (and associated scale-specific methodologies) for all indicators intended for use in small countries, particularly small island developing States, arid and semi-arid regions and in terrain of countries that is characterized by high variability (e.g. mountain regions);

(m) Request the secretariat and the GM to support country efforts, both technically and through capacity-building, to ensure harmonization between data reported to the UNCCD and that which is used by national statistics offices (NSOs);

(n) Request the secretariat and the GM and encourages Parties to assess and further refine the baseline to be used in future reporting cycles;

(o) Request the secretariat and the GM to work with partners to promote coherence and joint Rio convention work on reporting, considering lessons learned by each and the costs and benefits of action and inaction, focusing on high priority/high opportunity cases (e.g. peatlands due to their carbon potential);

(p) Request the secretariat to use the data available from the existing reporting mechanism to present information on global desertification trends around the world;

(q) Request the secretariat to take measures to sustain global data flows so that improved data can be provided to affected country Parties;

(r) Request the secretariat to further analyse and present global and regional data in interactive and visualized formats;

2. Regarding the national estimates provided by the Secretariat to the Parties and the extension of this provision to SO 2, 3 and 4, it is important to state that national estimates are not sufficient. For them to be relevant and connected to SO 1, they have to refer specifically to affected areas.

3. Some Parties at CRIC 17 further recommended, in relation to multiple strategic objectives (SO 1-4), that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Request the secretariat to use in the documents language agreed at COP 12 and COP 13 in particular, including the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, such as ‘combat desertification, land degradation and drought’ and ‘voluntary LDN targets’, and references to the scope of the Convention in relation to the SDGs, and to act in accordance with the Convention mandates;

(b) Request the secretariat and invite technical partners to provide clear guidelines on the methodologies used to calculate land productivity dynamics (LPD) and to facilitate the enhancement of Trends.Earth to provide the capacity to directly input key datasets (e.g., NDVI, precipitation, evapotranspiration and soil moisture);

(c) Request the secretariat and invite technical partners to develop the means to incorporate land ownership information corresponding to land cover classes in order to obtain a clearer picture of adverse land-use conversions and problems related to land-cover changes.

4. Some Parties recommended, in relation to continuing work to support efforts to achieve (SO 1), that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Request the secretariat to enhance, both technically and procedurally, efforts to ensure harmonization of data, including land cover classification systems, so that national trends correspond with regional and global trends;

(b) Request the secretariat to develop and help identify resources for ground-truthing and other forms of data verification at the national level;

(c) Request the secretariat to improve land cover estimates related to land take (land sealing);

(d) Request the secretariat and the GM, encourage Parties and invite technical partners to focus part of the investment in capacity-building on improving national capacity and national networks in the assessment of each indicator. This should include the strengthening of appropriate partnerships, within and beyond the context of the GEO LDN Initiative, in order to capitalize on synergies (e.g. FAO soil mapping and the Global Soil Partnership).

(e) Request the secretariat and the GM and encourage Parties to develop a strategy to bolster national mapping networks for all indicators in order to improve data collection and enhance the utility of national datasets;

(f) Request the secretariat to improve the spatial resolution of the inputs used to generate the land cover change indicator and expand the number of classes used to account for subnational variability, with the flexibility to distinguish among major forms of land use in each country;

(g) Request the secretariat and encourage Parties to explore approaches that would facilitate reporting that captures the magnitude of degradation along with land area;

(h) Request the secretariat to review the global and regional data analysis as presented in the document ICCD/CRIC(17)/2 and ICCD/CRIC(17)/6 to reflect the data from the national reports correctly;

(i) Request the secretariat to take account the importance of increasing restoration and rehabilitation of degraded wetlands, and especially peatlands areas;

(j) Request the secretariat to organize trainings and workshops specifically targeting SO 1 for land cadaster services and national statistics offices (NSOs);

(k) Encourage the secretariat, the GM and other bilateral and multilateral partners to continue their efforts in supporting countries in the integration of voluntary LDN targets into national action programmes and other strategic national documents;

(l) Request the secretariat to provide clear guidelines and technical support on methodologies for calculating and reporting on indicators under SO 1, particularly for LPD, and incorporate this into future reporting and capacity building;

II. Strategic objective 2

5. All interventions in the plenary directly related to SO 2 have been incorporated into the section above on interventions relevant to multiple SOs (1-4).

III. Strategic objective 3

6. Some Parties recommended, in relation to continuing work to support efforts to achieve SO 3, that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Request the secretariat and the GM and encourage Parties to leverage efforts on the Drought Initiative (including national drought planning elements of early warning systems, mitigation, adaptation, monitoring) in support of enhanced drought monitoring at the country level;

(b) Request the secretariat and the GM to collaborate with appropriate technical partners (e.g. the Integrated Drought Management Programme, Global Water Partnership,

WMO and FAO) in the development of a globally relevant drought indicator and the harmonization of drought monitoring approaches and systems, including national drought planning elements of early warning systems, mitigation, adaptation, monitoring).

IV. Strategic objective 4

7. Some Parties recommended, in relation to continuing work to support efforts to achieve SO 4, that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Request the secretariat to reevaluate the current biodiversity metric for strategic objective 2 (The Red List), exploring ways to enhance its utility to the UNCCD with consideration of alternative metrics, such as absolute numbers of species which are extinct or endangered that might be more appropriate. This shall be pursued in collaboration with its custodian (IUCN) as well as the CBD secretariat;

(b) Request the secretariat to correct the mismatch in the reporting template for SO4 and the subsequent analysis of drivers under The Red List metric.

V. Land degradation neutrality

8. Parties emphasized the role that LDN plays in maintaining and restoring the land-based natural capital by tackling climate change, securing biodiversity and maintaining critical ecosystem services while ensuring shared prosperity and well-being of populations.

9. Parties acknowledged that the LDN target-setting processes provided an opportunity for countries to promote synergies and policy coherence across sectors and at all levels, particularly as an accelerator within the national SDG agenda, the Rio conventions and other relevant international commitments.

10. Parties welcomed with appreciation the achievements of the LDN Target Setting Programme in support of the strong political momentum created by country Parties to achieve LDN, which is reflected by the high number of participating countries. Parties emphasized the importance of maintaining this momentum by supporting LDN implementation. Parties stressed that LDN target-setting should lead to an iterative process with regular review of targets and strategies at national level and regular stocktaking at global level.

11. Parties welcomed the involvement of multiple stakeholders at all levels supporting the LDN target-setting process. They acknowledged with appreciation the role of the GM and the secretariat in forging partnerships at global level and noted with appreciation the involvement of international technical and financial partners. Some Parties highlighted the importance of involving all relevant national stakeholders, including all ministries concerned, local communities, civil society organizations and the private sector, and promoting gender inclusivity to further strengthen LDN implementation and ensure long-term success.

12. In order to promote an enabling environment for LDN implementation (i) Parties emphasized the importance to further strengthen the integration of the LDN concept and targets into relevant national policies and planning frameworks, including those related to land governance and responsible land tenure systems as well as sustainable development; (ii) Parties also stressed the importance of establishing sustainable monitoring systems at national level to ensure the regular and systematic review of the progress made towards achieving LDN targets; and (iii) Parties suggested establishing a joint monitoring platform integrating relevant tools to monitor land degradation at subnational, national, regional and global levels.

13. Parties emphasized the need to increase capacity-building efforts in the areas of LDN data management, LDN monitoring, and the development of LDN transformative projects and programmes (TPPs), and requested the secretariat, the GM and other development partners to provide the necessary financial and technical support for this purpose.

14. Parties invited financing partners, including the Global Environment Facility and the GM, to further support countries' activities towards the achievement of LDN targets, including by developing TPPs and facilitating the mobilization of adequate financial resources from various sources.

15. Some Parties recommended, in relation to continuing work to support efforts to achieve LDN, that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Request the secretariat to obtain from the LDN Fund detailed information regarding the selection of projects and the definition of priorities by the LDN Fund;

(b) Note that the TPP Checklist is a voluntary tool and should not be used a mandatory prerequisite for the approval of projects;

(c) Remind that all our efforts are focused on the scope of the Convention to combat desertification and land degradation, and mitigate the impacts of drought.

VI. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan

16. Some Parties at CRIC 17:

(a) Reiterated that the Gender Action Plan is a good starting point for actions to mainstream gender, and proposed that:

(i) In order to empower women especially with regard to land and land-based resources, the principle of "one out all out" must be applied to the four priority areas of the GAP, i.e. (i) participation; (ii) land rights and access to resources; (iii) access to knowledge and technologies; and (iv) economic empowerment. Failure to achieve any of the four priority areas would mean LDN implementation is not gender responsive;

(ii) It includes specific activities with a clear road map to give it impetus;

(iii) It includes the decoupling of the actions relating to women and youth;

(b) Stressed the need to enhance advocacy in order to strengthen gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the GAP through, inter alia: raising awareness; promoting collaboration between DLDD specialists and gender equality experts; engaging national gender equality mechanisms; improving capacities; and securing necessary political support to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming in DLDD;

(c) Emphasized the need to create enabling environments at the national level to make the implementation of the Convention gender-responsive and transformative, including by:

(i) Implementing policies and legal reforms that remove structural barriers, such as inheritance or land tenure rights, discriminatory norms and gendered roles and stereotypes;

(ii) Facilitating the organization, collective voice and representation of women in leadership and decision-making;

- (iii) Promoting consultative processes that engage women from the local to national levels in order to promote country ownership of the plans and programmes;
 - (iv) Coordinating and integrating gender needs within other plans and in project design from their inception;
 - (v) Working on land governance and providing secure land rights for women;
 - (d) Stressed the need for capacity-building in order to realize the full potential of LDN and ensure it is gender-responsive by:
 - (i) Providing dedicated staff and the capacity to manage results;
 - (ii) Developing practical guidance, tools and policy guidance;
 - (iii) Developing guidance and guidelines on reflecting gender considerations in the LDN target-setting process and capacity-building exercises to help countries to better understand the gender dimensions of drought response and management;
 - (iv) Providing ongoing technical support for the integration of gender issues into LDN TPPs;
 - (e) Emphasized the need to strengthen gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of the GAP, building on existing good practices and guidelines, by:
 - (i) Improving statistics on gender, including the development of a gender development index for LDN projects;
 - (ii) Gathering gender disaggregated data, eliminating fragmentation in its collection and presenting the data in user-friendly formats;
 - (iii) Reviewing the reporting templates, including the PRAIS, integrating the GAP indicators into UNCCD reporting and allowing for more structured submissions with clear guidelines and standards, including gender indicators for various thematic sectors;
 - (iv) Including specific requirements for Parties to report on progress related to the integration and impact of the GAP in the reporting tools and the PRAIS.
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