



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

UNCCD COP 15 through the lens of **drought**

Highlights, outcomes,
and the way forward

9-20 May 2022, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire



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Partners

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. The organization's goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. With over 194 member states, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide, and believes that everyone can play a part in ending hunger.

Global Environment Facility

Established in 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the largest funder of projects to improve the global environment. The GEF became a financial mechanism of the UNCCD in 2010, when the GEF instrument was amended by its Fourth Assembly. Since then, the GEF directly contributes to implementation of the Convention, including its UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework adopted at 13th Conference of Parties of the UNCCD in Ordos, China, within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Conference of Parties and the GEF. Through its Land Degradation Focal Area, the GEF provides incremental financing for countries to invest in sustainable land management activities that generate multiple environmental and development benefits.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was established in 1994 to protect and restore our land and ensure a safer, just, and more sustainable future. The UNCCD is the only legally binding framework set up to address desertification and the effects of drought. There are 197 Parties to the Convention, including 196 country Parties and the European Union. The Convention – based on the principles of participation, partnership and decentralization – is a multilateral commitment to mitigate the impact of land degradation, and protect our land so we can provide food, water, shelter and economic opportunity to all people.

Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties (COP) was established by the Convention as its main decision-making body. It is made up of governments and organizations such as the European Union and is responsible for guiding the Convention so that it can respond to global challenges and national needs. COP is mandated to review commitments related to land degradation neutrality submitted by the Parties detailing how they are carrying out their LDN commitments and make recommendations on the basis of these reports. It also has the power to make amendments to the Convention or to adopt new annexes (documents which specify how the Convention will be implemented), such as additional regional implementation annexes.

Acronyms

CIFOR-ICRAF	Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry
COP	Conference of Parties
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographical Information System
GM	Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
IDRM	Integrated Drought Risk Management
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWG	Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought
NBS	Nature-based solutions
NDP	National Drought Plan
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
YVE	Young Volunteers for the Environment

Introduction

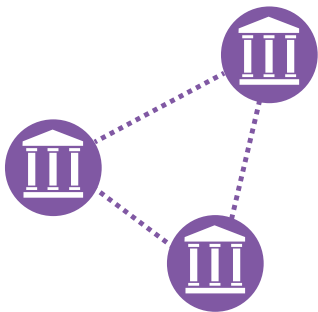
The fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) took place from 9 to 20 May 2022 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The theme of COP15 was **Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity**. COP15 discussed sustainable solutions for land restoration and drought resilience, with a strong focus on future-proofing land use. COP15 explored links between land and other key sustainability issues, such as climate, biodiversity, green jobs and gender equality. These issues were discussed at a Heads of States Summit, roundtables and interactive dialogue sessions among ministers and other high-ranking officials.



Main results

Following two weeks of high-level discussions and negotiations, COP 15 adopted 37 decisions and one resolution to enhance drought resilience, reduce land degradation, and invest in land restoration efforts. To accelerate actions on drought preparedness, new commitments include:



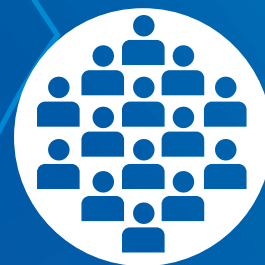
Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought for 2022-2024 to support a shift from reactive to proactive drought management



Drought resilience by improving a new partnership model for large-scale integrated landscape investment programmes



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Participation of **civil society** organizations and youth in the work and meetings of the UNCCD



National policies and early warning, monitoring, and assessment, in particular as related to sand and dust storms and drought



Women's involvement in land management through ensuring secure land tenure and collecting gender-disaggregated data on the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought



Capacity building, sharing of knowledge and lessons, and coordination towards these efforts at the regional level



Greater synergies among the three Rio Conventions, including complementarities in the implementation of these treaties through nature-based solutions and target-setting at the national level



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Drought in COP 15 – decisions and declarations

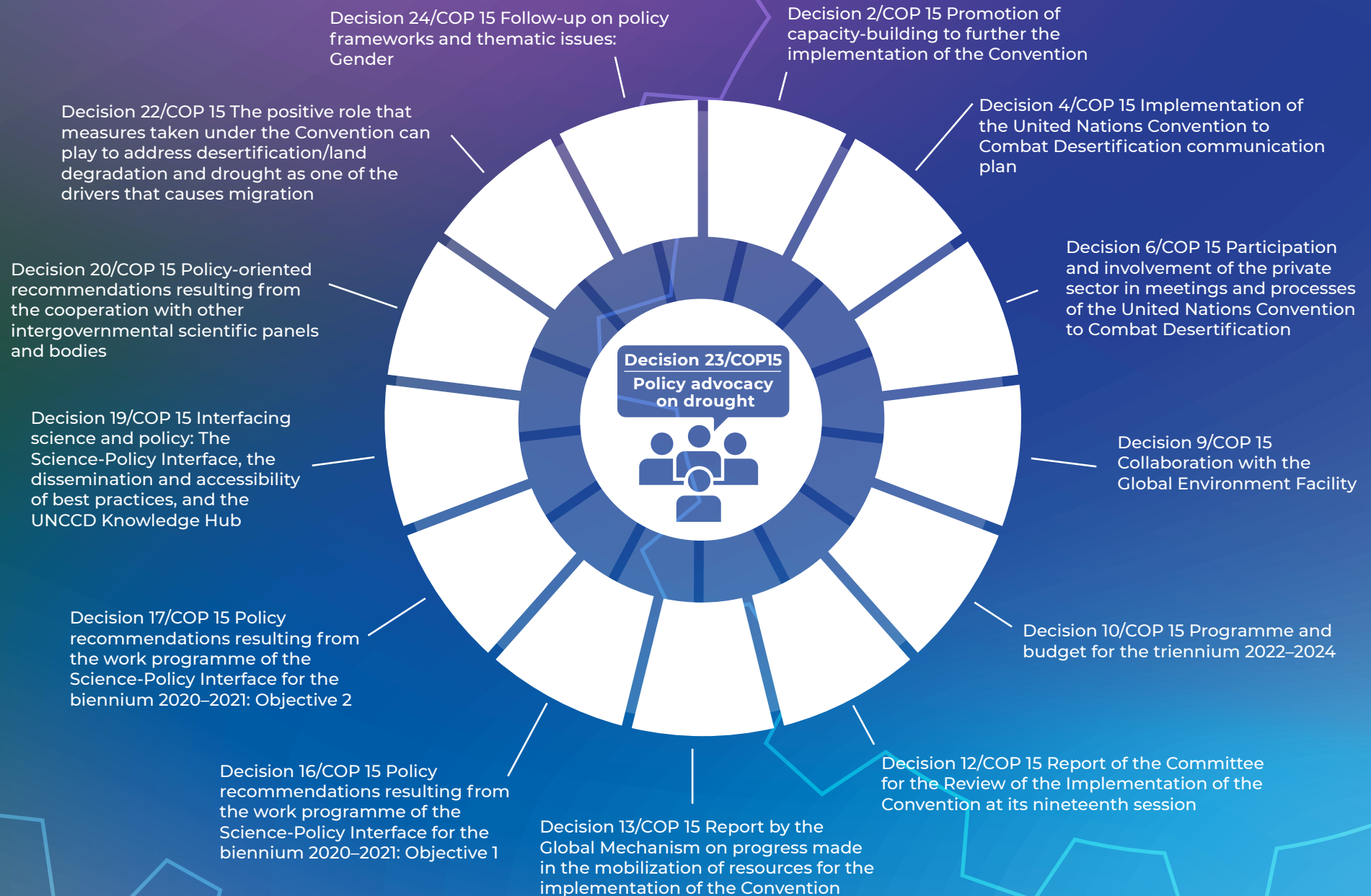


THE DECISIONS

Decision 23/COP 15 | Policy advocacy on drought | “Driving actions on drought”

- A new Intergovernmental Working Group: A new Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on Drought to be established during the triennium 2022-24 to identify and evaluate options of global policy instruments and regional policy frameworks, linked to national plans.
- Tasks of the IWG: review and analyze reports and decisions, options to drive the shift to proactive drought management, support the establishment and implementation of policy options.
- Increased commitment: policies and partnerships with all sectors and stakeholders to enable holistic and integrated approach for resilience-making.
- Informed decision: enhanced information from monitoring, early warning, and action systems for decision-making.
- Knowledge-sharing: support of knowledge- and experience-sharing, with innovative and transformative tools, including the Drought Toolbox.
- Financing: scale-up and facilitation of effective financing for drought risk reduction and resilience-building.
- High-level awareness: increased high-level global awareness of drought resilience, including the organization of a High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy.

RELEVANT DECISIONS ON PROGRESS, PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING, AND THEMATIC AREAS



11 out of the 37 decisions are directly related to drought for progress, planning and programming. More precisely, the decisions encompass the following actions, inter alia:

- Support to capacity-building: provision of trainings and further capacity-building on drought, including the promotion of the UNCCD Drought Toolbox (Decision 2/COP.15, Decision 13/COP.15).
- Implement communication plan: all-inclusive publication and media outlets, including the involvement of civil society organizations, the media, and the private sector to leverage awareness-raising opportunities (Decision 4/COP.15, Decision 12/COP.15).
- Strengthen partnership and collaboration: involvement of actors with positive contribution to the mandate, such as private sector, and request to the Global Environment Facility to support the implementation of drought plans and relevant policies (Decision 6/COP15, Decision 9/COP.15, Decision 13/COP.15, Decision 23/COP.15).
- Allocate budget: financial resources to support the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought (Decision 10/COP.15).
- Follow up on the Report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention: amplified efforts to provide technical and financial supports to Parties in project formulation, resource mobilization, drought planning, capacity-building, and integration of drought plans into national frameworks (Decision 12/COP.15).
- Translate plans and instruments into actions: resource mobilization to achieve concrete actions, wider and inter-sectoral collaboration, sufficient financial and non-financial resources for the implementation of the Convention and the development of transformative projects and programmes, and enabling environment for the implementation

of national drought plans (NDP); and, accelerated efforts to support private sector engagement and promotion of innovative financing models and instruments (Decision 13/COP.15).

- Follow up on the recommendations of the Science-Policy Interface: review of existing methodologies, approaches, practices and development of new ones related to monitoring, indicators, integrated management, risk management; and support to the dissemination of best practices, and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub (Decision 16/COP.15, Decision 17/COP.15, Decision 19/COP.15).
- Follow up on the recommendations of intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies: World Meteorological Organization (WMO) invited to improve forecasting and monitoring capacity and incorporate climate interactions with lands in future climate services-related projects (Decision 20/COP.15).

2 out of the 37 decisions indicate thematic working areas and denote specific interventions to address drought-related issues.

- Supporting measures under the Convention to address migration: promotion of sustainable territorial development to strengthen urban-rural linkages and address desertification/ land degradation and drought to create social and economic opportunities, in turn to reduce the forced migration and displacement and increase resilience and stability (Decision 22/COP.15).
- Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues related to gender: facilitation of the implementation of Gender Action Plan, with special attention on intersectionality related to policies and programmes (Decision 24/COP.15).

The original text of the decisions can be found in Annex I.

DROUGHT NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

The document 'ICCD/COP(15)/15 Follow-up on Policy Frameworks and Thematic Issues' seeks to provide an overview of the emerging UNCCD drought agenda, including key points of the IWG report and the Science-Policy Interface recommendations, but with focus on the activities carried out, and proposed, by the secretariat to the UNCCD and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD (GM). The content is presented under five interlinked areas: (1) drought policies; (2) early warning, monitoring and assessment; (3) knowledge sharing and learning; (4) partnerships and coordination; and (5) drought finance.

Enabling environment

Collaboration

National action can greatly benefit from regional collaboration and exchange of experience. The regional strategies developed in Central Asia and SADC provide elements for similar efforts in other regions

Finance

The GM, in collaboration with others, will ensure that the financing opportunities target identified needs, and that the countries have the necessary capacity to access the available financial tools

Partnership

Partnership building, coordination and information exchange can advance global action on drought and assist in reinforcing the momentum of countries' cooperation at regional and global levels

Tools - Ground actions

Technology

Drought forecasting, monitoring, early warning, and preparedness systems, as necessary measures, need further development. This is a critically important area for further support, collaboration and capacity building

Measures

Rigorous actionable and concrete measures are required that enhance drought monitoring and early warning systems, and reduce the impacts and vulnerabilities of economies, communities and ecosystems

Toolbox

The Drought Toolbox provides easy access to multiple tools, case studies and other resources. Its upgrading and expansion, as well as related capacity building ensures that this tool remains useful and interesting



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Approach

Paradigm shift

The positive experience and enhanced collaboration of the UNCCD, United Nations agencies and other relevant stakeholders transformed the drought management approach from reactive to proactive

Integration

The development and implementation of the NDPs boosted integrated and inclusive action, while coordination and interlinkages among policies/programmes in different sectors remain a challenge



Knowledge

Learning

The co-organization of communities of learning and practice offer one potential solution while networks of experts and institutions could provide further expertise and backstopping to the UNCCD work on drought

Awareness-raising

Awareness-raising and advocacy will continue. The secretariat will identify opportunities at the highest level, by co-organizing a ten-year follow-up to the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy in 2023

SYNTHESIS OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP

The IWG on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD was requested to present its findings and recommendations to Parties for their consideration at the COP15. The IWG discussion emphasized the under-recognized potential of land-based interventions to mitigate drought impacts, risks and cascading downward spirals due to their interactions with other economic, environmental, social and health-related issues. This necessitates a holistic approach to underwrite and enable the intended achievements of the established global agendas for adaptation and mitigation of extreme climate change events, disaster risk reduction and the green economic recovery, including for the most vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

The IWG's main findings underline:

- Ongoing improvements under existing arrangements;
- A holistic approach to partnerships emerging through IWG's work due to its approach to interlinking agendas for sustainable development that gives consideration to ongoing changes affecting both land and climate conditions;
- Continuing discussion on the need for and possible form of any potential new arrangements for the UNCCD to provide leadership of its interlinking global agenda on land and drought;
- Increasing recognition of the need and opportunity for the UNCCD to transform drought risks through its well-grounded approach to land

as the central basis underpinning progress for other global development targets and agendas as well as its own. Overcoming negative drought effects due to both climate and land-use changes must entail a continuous and adaptive learning process at all levels, including leadership at the global level and good practices from the ground.



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THE DECLARATIONS OF COP15

Further landmarks of COP15 are the three key declarations: Abidjan Call issued by the Heads of State and Government, Abidjan Declaration on achieving gender equality for successful land restoration, COP15 “Land, Life and Legacy” Declaration. Moreover, two more declarations are adopted in the Report of COP15: Declaration of civil society organizations attending the fifteenth session of the conference of the parties, and Declaration of the Youth Forum.



Abidjan Call

Give the highest priority to the issue of drought and desertification.

Address the issue of gender equality and the full participation of women and the youth in the development and implementation of drought and land restoration policies.

Urge the development partners to align their interventions, combine their efforts and initiatives and engage more forcefully in responding to the impacts of drought.



Abidjan Declaration on achieving gender equality for successful land restoration

Promote all necessary measures to identify and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in the context of fighting against desertification/land degradation, and drought, in relation to land tenure security and access to, ownership of, and control over land and natural resources, and other forms of property and inheritance.



The COP15 “Land, Life and Legacy” Declaration

Take a proactive, comprehensive, and holistic approach towards drought impact mitigation, adaptation and resilience, including through responsive policy frameworks that incorporate early warning systems and timely interventions, scientific collaboration, and multi-stakeholder partnerships which should be sustained with adequate levels of finance.



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Declaration of the Youth Forum

Reaffirm the relevance of all the measures to combat desertification promoted by the two previous editions of the Youth Forum of the COP of UNCCD;

Call for an inclusive amplification of the mobilization of public opinion and the sensibilization of citizens to sustainable human development and desertification issues through diversified outlets.



Declaration of civil society organizations attending the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties

Give drought a human face and better understand the impacts of this disaster on “people in situations of vulnerability”, including children, women, men, farmers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and local communities;

Ensure better coordination of information exchange, policies and budget allocation regarding drought preparedness and response among different levels of stakeholders;

Support the observance of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026 by the United Nations General Assembly in March 2022, and promote and develop multidimensional mechanism regarding the IYRP;

Support and promote the role of sustainable pastoralism and mobile pastoralists’ strategies on mitigating, adapting to and living with climate variability and droughts.

Events on drought

THE BIG DRY: FROM DISASTER TO DROUGHT RESILIENCE

TUESDAY 10, MAY 2022 | ORGANIZER: UNCCD

Objective:

Provide a timely opportunity to discuss options for a paradigm shift from drought disaster to resilience guiding the way to a new era of proactive drought risk management at all levels.

Key messages:

- Climate change is going to cause droughts of increased severity, droughts of higher frequency, and it is also going to make some part of the world wetter, so flood management will be also needed.
- Human activity is the root cause of the biodiversity, climate, and land crises.
- We need the support of science to better understand current and future climate trends and be able to predict the future and we need to be creative in thinking how to adopt our agricultural systems to the new climate conditions.
- The role of finance is key to support the paradigm shift from drought disaster to resilience and finance should be considered through a lens of resilience and sustainability.

The recordings of the event are available at: <https://youtu.be/cIBOmOutFEU> and <https://youtu.be/6J5BXxove2s>

“Vegetation is an insurance against disaster”

Tony Simons, Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF)



DROUGHT DAY: MOVING FROM COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

TUESDAY 10, MAY 2022 | ORGANIZER: UNCCD

Objectives:

- Showcase examples of effective national and regional policies and projects that improve drought resilience.
- Highlight the role of new technologies, including satellite imagery and artificial intelligence, in delivering input and analysis for timely decision making.
- Discuss and exemplify how sustainable finance could be channeled into nature-positive bankable projects that contribute to drought resilience.
- Present the overview of the IWG report and its recommendations.
- Highlight tangible actions which can be taken to enhance multi-stakeholder coordination and partnerships.

“We are here, fundamentally, to protect coming generations from an increase in devastating droughts and the attendant impacts. We are here to work for action”

Maria Helena Semedo, FAO

Key messages:

- Substantial progress has been made within the last decade by the UNCCD on policymaker awareness and uptake of drought risk reduction measures, now it is time to transform political commitments into action to protect coming generations from an increase in devastating droughts and the attendant impacts.
- Early warning and action systems are essential for a proactive drought management, and the role of new technologies, including satellite imagery and artificial intelligence, is key in delivering input and analysis for timely decision making.
- There is a need to promote sustainable finance and ways to channel it into nature-positive bankable projects that contribute to drought resilience.

The recordings of the event are available at: <https://youtu.be/We3KFmJIYMI>



LAUNCH OF THE SADC DROUGHT RESILIENCE STRATEGY

THURSDAY 12, MAY 2022 | Organizer: South African Development Community (SADC)

Objective:

- Share experiences and lessons learned on the challenges faced by SADC countries in dealing with drought.
- Launch the SADC Drought Resilience Strategy.

Key messages:

- Addressing problems related to drought, e.g. energy – the reliance on fossil fuels for electricity production is still high in many parts of Africa and this contributes to accelerate climate change.
- Implementing strategies to reach rural communities, which are the ones most affected by drought.

The recordings of the event are available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRIO903pV5M>

“Drought greatly affects people in vulnerable situations , especially women and young people”

Flora Mokgohloa, Fisheries, Forestry and Environment – South Africa



THE YOUTH CONSORTIUM – GALVANIZING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS: LAND RESTORATION AND DROUGHT RESILIENCE TOWARDS AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

THURSDAY, 12 MAY 2022 | Organizer: The Youth Consortium

Objective:

- Discuss the meaningful role that young people are playing in providing and implementing solutions for land degradation.
- Identify strategies to allow youth contributing to achieving the SDGs that address the thematic areas of land management.
- Highlight the role of youth in shaping a sustainable land agenda, and solutions for restoring agricultural lands in order to increase crop yields and productivity which could halt the conversion of forests and grasslands into farmland and reverse biodiversity loss.

“Young people and women must be considered not only as beneficiaries of development initiatives, but as major actors who must take ownership of the objectives of this decade”

Sani Ayouba, Young Volunteers for the Environment organization (YVE Niger)

Key messages:

- Young people and women must be actively involved in the of development initiatives.
- The promotion of decent land-based jobs and the development of capacity-building activities for youth is essential to facilitate their involvement in the development initiatives.

The recordings of the event are available at: <https://youtu.be/ofdB0UnpRhI>

AGAINST ALL ODDS. THE WINDING PATH FROM MULTIDIMENSIONAL FRAGILITY TO DROUGHT RESILIENCE IN DRYLANDS

FRIDAY 13, MAY 2022 | ORGANIZER: FAO

Objectives:

- Discuss drought management, drylands, and fragility from multiple perspectives.
- Give voice to different actors, such as institutions, civil society, academia, and internal organizations to outline the complexities of fragile systems.
- Examine the specificities of drought-prone drylands to foster the elaboration of a roadmap for resilience.

“If the multiple dimensions of fragility are not addressed conjunctively and adequately, natural regenerative capacities may fall behind and negative impacts may become difficult to reverse”

Lifeng Li, FAO

Key messages:

- Addressing fragility in drylands should be a consistent strategy to avoid incurring in the short and longer-term costs that can affect many different dimensions.
- Transformational changes in drylands are required to look beyond fragile conditions and identify opportunities for development in different sectors.
- If the multiple dimensions of fragility are not addressed conjunctively and adequately, natural regenerative capacities may fall behind and negative impacts may become difficult to reverse.
- Developing capacities of local human capital in agriculture is critical not only to reduce food insecurity, but also to reduce long-standing conditions of fragility and, ultimately, identify potential for growth.

The recordings of the event are available at: <https://youtu.be/wW6u62LpbIM>



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NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR REDUCING DROUGHT AND BUILDING ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE

SATURDAY 14, MAY 2022 | Organizer: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Objective:

- Discuss how nature-based Solutions (NbS) can help addressing drought.
- Present lessons learnt on on NbS for drought reduction from Burkina Faso, Georgia and Kenya.

Key messages:

- NbSs provide ecosystem-based approaches to address drought through sustainable land management and restoration, focusing on managing and restoring land productivity and biodiversity, whilst addressing the social and economic development concerns that drought brings to communities and countries.
- NbSs addressing land degradation have large potentials for drought reduction and therefore for strengthening drought resilience, and can provide a cost-effective, cohesive and coordinated approach to addressing drought, at national, regional and global scale.

The recordings of the event are available at: https://youtu.be/LbTRh-_deJY

Publications and media coverage

PUBLICATIONS



A rapid review of effective financing for policy, implementation and partnerships addressing drought risks

King, C., Salman, M., Tsegai, D., Naqvi, M.

FAO, 2022

The present report was informed by the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought under UNCCD, and its holistic approach with the other Rio Conventions, as well as the international sustainable development and disaster risk reduction communities. The publication builds on a recent review of drought risk mitigation, preparedness and response measures commissioned by FAO with partners in the Integrated Drought Management Programme, alongside a range of other recent global reviews, and the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group of the UNCCD on drought.

Available at: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB9971EN/>



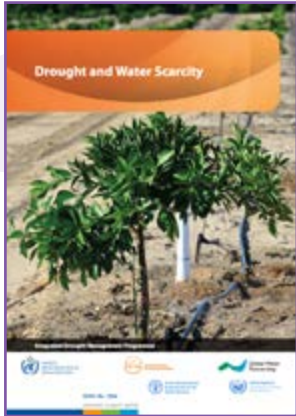
A rapid review of drought risk mitigation measures - Integrated drought management

King-Okumu, C.

FAO, 2022

This knowledge product is conceived as the second in a three-part series reflecting the established three pillars of integrated drought management: (I) effective drought monitoring and early warning systems; (II) vulnerability and impact assessment; and (III) drought preparedness, mitigation and response. It builds on a previous IDMP publication that reviewed practices and policy recommendations for drought impact and vulnerability assessment. The following three types of measures for managing drought risks are explored: prevention, mitigation and preparedness; response and recovery; and transformation.

Available at: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb7085en/>



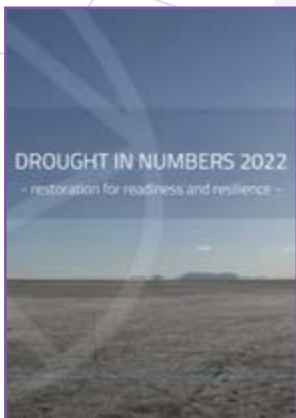
Drought & Water Scarcity

Valentin Aich (GWP), Katrin Ehlert (WMO), Maher Salman (FAO), Robert Stefanski (WMO), Daniel Tsegai (UNCCD)
UNCCD, 2022

Drought and water scarcity are often interrelated, and droughts can trigger or amplify water scarcity, while water scarcity can aggravate droughts.

This publication highlights the differences between drought and water scarcity and where they become blurred due to climate change and human activities. Coping strategies to both phenomena should be part of overall integrated drought and water resource management strategies.

Available at: https://library.wmo.int/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=22069#.Ys6OdBNBy3J



Drought in Numbers 2022 - restoration for readiness and resilience -

Daniel Tsegai, Miriam Medel, Patrick Augenstein, Zhuojing Huang
UNCCD, 2022

The report, an authoritative compendium of drought-related information and data, helps inform negotiations of one of several decisions by UNCCD's 196 member states, to be issued 20 May at the conclusion of COP15.

Available at: <https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/drought-numbers>

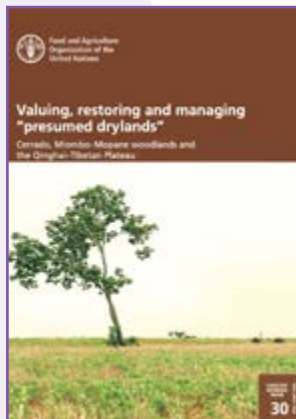


The Blue Paper – Drought Risks, Resilience and Restoration

Augenstein, Patrick, Lukas, Martin, Tsegai, Daniel, Björklund, Gunilla, Eudoxie, Gaius, Brüntrup, Michael, King-Okumu, Caroline, Kust, German, Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought.
UNCCD, 2022

The Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought presents its outcomes at COP 15, building on a policy framework where implementation and partnerships as well as effectiveness under the Convention, should result in reduced disaster risks and enhanced resilience. This Blue Paper brings extra dimensions to the IWG document in deepening several aspects such as: “Policies make a difference”, “Land restoration works”, “Education brings change”, “Media matters”, “Turning the tide” and “New horizons”.

Available at: <https://www.unccd.int/resources/reports/blue-paper-drought-risks-resilience-and-restoration#:~:text=The%20Intergovernmental%20Working%20Group%20on,disaster%20risks%20and%20enhanced%20resilience>.



Valuing, restoring and managing “presumed drylands”

Cerrado, Miombo-Mopane woodlands and the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau Haddad, F.F., Blicharska, M., Westerberg, V., Riccardi, T. & Costa, L.,
FAO, 2022

This study confirms the existence of 1 075 million hectares of presumed drylands that are under threat from unsustainable use and climate change. This is in addition to the 6.1 billion hectares of official drylands that already cover 41 percent of the planet’s land surface and are home to 2 billion people. All these areas contain high levels of biodiversity and are home to a large number of people reliant on agriculture to sustain their livelihoods, this is why it’s so important to research, analyse and work to protect them. The report contains concrete information on the environmental and ecological value of these dryland areas, and key recommendations for actions to limit land degradation, sustain biodiversity and mitigate climate change.

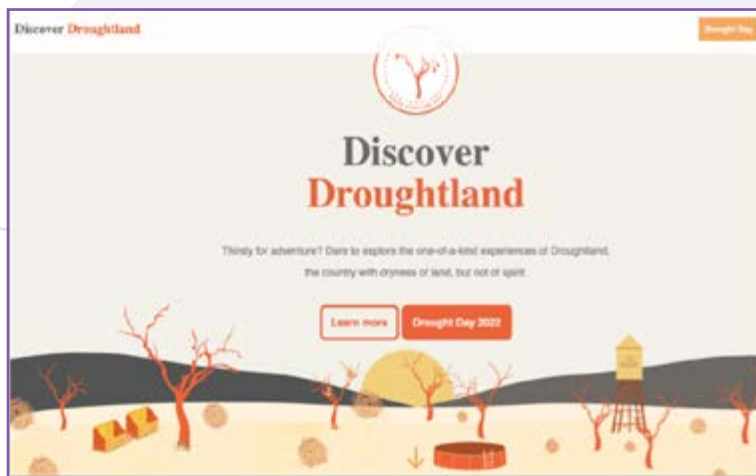
Available at: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc0110en/>

MEDIA COVERAGE

Official document and daily journals of the COP15 are available on UNCCD website at: <https://www.unccd.int/cop15>

Media coverage was provided by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) available at: <https://enb.iisd.org/convention-combat-desertification-unccd-cop15>

Recordings of COP15 sessions and events are available at: <https://unccd-cop15.org/conference>



UNCCD launched “Droughtland”, a public awareness campaign that aims to showcase solutions and rally global action on drought. Droughtland is an imaginary country that lives under a dry spell. Campaign materials – cartoons, animations and videos – use a dash of humor to describe everyday challenges of living in Droughtland and encourage people to take action, so that no country becomes a real “drought land” where citizens lives are forever altered by water scarcity.

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ANNEX I: ORIGINAL TEXT OF COP15 DECISIONS DEALING WITH DROUGHT

DECISION 2/COP.15 PROMOTION OF CAPACITY-BUILDING TO FURTHER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

The Conference of the Parties,

- Requests the secretariat to continue enhancing the continuation of the provision of training and further strengthening of capacity-building on drought, notably through the promotion of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Drought Toolbox and organization of training sessions on its use, as well as the development of additional tools in this field;
- Invites Parties to continue to support and fully participate in the efforts being made by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to develop and implement, as appropriate, specific capacity-building programmes concerning, inter alia, drought preparedness and mitigation.

DECISION 4/COP.15 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION COMMUNICATION PLAN

The Conference of the Parties calls for Parties and invites civil society organizations, the media, the private sector and all other relevant stakeholders to leverage international awareness-raising opportunities, such as the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, for outreach, including to Indigenous peoples, local communities, women and youth, around actions to combat desertification/land degradation and drought.

DECISION 6/COP.15 PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN MEETINGS AND PROCESSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

The Conference of the Parties requests the secretariat and the Global Mechanism within their mandate and subject to the availability of resources to engage with companies that are working in the food-feed-fibre sector that have potential to make positive contributions to addressing desertification/land degradation and drought.

DECISION 9/COP.15 COLLABORATION WITH THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

The Conference of the Parties,

- Requests the Global Environment Facility, within its mandate, to support the implementation of the national drought plans and other drought-related policies, especially strengthening early warning, preparedness, mitigation and recovery, rehabilitation and monitoring systems and capacity-building;
- Invites the Global Environment Facility, within its mandate, to assess the feasibility of establishing a focal area for drought in order to increase the visibility and financial resources allocated to drought.

DECISION 10/COP.15 PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR THE TRIENNIUM 2022–2024

The Conference of the Parties authorizes the Executive Secretary, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, to draw upon available unspent balances or contributions from prior financial periods to support the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought, including temporary support staff, in an amount not exceeding EUR 1 050 000, on an exceptional basis.

DECISION 12/COP.15 REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AT ITS NINETEENTH SESSION

The Conference of the Parties,

- Requests the Global Mechanism and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to provide further

support to country Parties to improve and accelerate the preparation and development of gender-responsive, viable transformative projects and programmes that jointly address desertification/land degradation and drought and increase knowledge-sharing among countries and partners;

- Invites developed country Parties, and all other Parties and partners in position to do so, to increase financial and technical resources specifically dedicated to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in order to bridge the current financing gap and scale up Convention implementation activities related to desertification/land degradation and drought.
- Requests the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and appropriate United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification institutions and bodies, to: (a) Continue to review existing global and regional challenges associated with drought and to consider geographical balances in terms of the planning and implementation of regional and national drought projects; (b) Support country Parties in translating national drought plans or other policy instruments related to drought into concrete projects on the ground; (c) Consider the transboundary nature of drought; improving communication and enhancing the engagement with regional and sub-regional institutions to address issues relating to drought and sand and dust storms; (d) Support Parties by developing further regional and sub-regional projects to address the issues of drought and sand and dust storms; (e) Facilitate the development of research programmes on drought with the active participation of local and vulnerable communities, and the sharing of knowledge and information on data (high-resolution satellite data and indicators) in the context of the ongoing development of national drought plans; (f) Continue to provide training and further strengthen

capacity-building activities; (g) Adopt an integrated approach, linking drought management with humanitarian and development efforts, notably with regard to early warning systems, preparedness, response, resilience-building and sustainable recovery; (h) Ensure that drought issues are integrated into the land degradation neutrality implementation process;

- Urges Parties to integrate national drought plans, or other policy instruments related to drought into overall national frameworks in order to improve drought indicators and help build the preparedness, response and resilience of land users and communities.

DECISION 13/COP.15 REPORT BY THE GLOBAL MECHANISM ON PROGRESS MADE IN THE MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

The Conference of the Parties,

- Further invites Parties participating in the Drought Initiative to translate the recommendations in their national drought plans and other policy instruments related to drought into concrete action;
- Welcomes efforts by Parties to strengthen intersectoral collaboration at (sub)national, national and regional levels to ensure that the impacts/effects of desertification/land degradation and drought are prioritized in national development plans and other relevant sectoral plans;
- Invites developed countries and other Parties in a position to do so to provide substantial financial and non-financial resources to affected country Parties in order to strengthen the Convention implementation

activities related to desertification/land degradation and drought, including capacity-building and the facilitation of technology transfer;

- Requests the Global Mechanism and the secretariat to: (a) Support country Parties in creating an enabling environment at the national level to facilitate the Convention reporting process, the implementation of national drought plans or other policies related to drought; (b) Strengthen partnerships to accelerate the development of a geographically balanced project preparation pipeline, through a partnership model, to facilitate gender-responsive, large-scale integrated landscape investment programmes and flagship initiatives that support work on sustainable land management and drought resilience; (c) Continue to support countries in promoting a paradigm shift in the way drought is managed and forge specific partnerships to mobilize technical and financial support for transformative projects and programmes on drought;
- Also requests the Global Mechanism to accelerate efforts to support private sector engagement and promote innovation through evaluating and, as appropriate, testing innovative drought financing models and instruments.

DECISION 16/COP.15 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE FOR THE BIENNIAL 2020–2021: OBJECTIVE 1

The Conference of the Parties, encourages Parties to provide a more central role for integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management beginning with an assessment of land capability and suitability in national,

subnational and local policy development to address desertification/land degradation and drought.

DECISION 17/COP.15 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE FOR THE BIENNIUM 2020–2021: OBJECTIVE 2

The Conference of the Parties,

- Encourages Parties to consider the roadmap for drought resilience assessment summarized in document ICCD/COP(15)/CST/3 as an indicative pathway for developing a new approach or reviewing an existing one to national and subnational drought resilience assessment and monitoring, taking into account national circumstances as well as the existing drought resilience indicators and assessment guidance;
- Also encourages Parties to enable or enhance systematic drought impact collection and risk assessments at national, subnational and local levels using, where appropriate, a globally standardized approach;
- Further encourages Parties to pursue the development and implementation of integrated drought risk management from existing communities of practice and learning networks, including the Integrated Drought Management Programme and its cooperating partners, and to monitor and assess drought risk in natural and managed ecosystems;
- Invites the Integrated Drought Management Programme and its cooperating partners in: (a) Enhancing their capacity to collect, analyse and interpret data on resilience indicators; (b) Systematically integrating the findings from drought resilience assessments into drought early warning systems and into drought resilience planning; (c) Working in

collaboration with relevant partners responsible for established resilience frameworks towards the harmonization of drought resilience terminology and definitions; (d) Facilitating coordination and interaction between the land restoration and drought risk management communities, notably by creating a common understanding of definitions and the cross-sectoral nature of drought risk management, sustainable land and water management, and land restoration.

- Encourages Parties to seek support in the development and implementation of integrated drought risk management from existing communities of practice and learning networks.

DECISION 19/COP.15 INTERFACING SCIENCE AND POLICY: THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE, THE DISSEMINATION AND ACCESSIBILITY OF BEST PRACTICES, AND THE UNCCD KNOWLEDGE HUB

The Conference of the Parties,

- Requests the secretariat to continue the development of the Drought Toolbox, the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox and other knowledge tools, and to conduct an assessment of the use and effectiveness of the tools and, based on the results, where possible explore opportunities to improve their efficacy;
- Invites Parties and financial and technical institutions to support the maintenance, expansion and further enhancement and development of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification knowledge tools, including the Drought Toolbox and Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox.

DECISION 20/COP.15 POLICY-ORIENTED RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM THE COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENTIFIC PANELS AND BODIES

The Conference of the Parties invites the World Meteorological Organization to consider:

- How, in the context of the Global Multi-hazard Alert System, authoritative and early warnings of weather, water, ocean and climate hazards produced by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services might be enhanced to improve forecasting and monitoring capacity for extreme weather events influenced by the interaction of climate change, land-use change and land degradation in order to facilitate adaptation to climate change-driven droughts and floods;
- Incorporating climate interactions with land in the future development of climate services-related projects, with the aim of supporting national and local efforts to enable effective adaptation and mitigation responses that help address desertification/land degradation and drought through the Climate Coordination Panel and the Global Framework for Climate Services.

DECISION 22/COP.15 THE POSITIVE ROLE THAT MEASURES TAKEN UNDER THE CONVENTION CAN PLAY TO ADDRESS DESERTIFICATION/LAND DEGRADATION AND DROUGHT AS ONE OF THE DRIVERS THAT CAUSES MIGRATION

The Conference of the Parties,

- Invites Parties 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;

- Requests the Global Mechanism to assess and make recommendations about the feasibility of facilitating resource mobilization to leverage diaspora or new private sources of investments for desertification/land degradation and drought projects and programmes.

DECISION 23/COP.15 POLICY ADVOCACY ON DROUGHT

The Conference of the Parties,

- Decides to establish a new IWG on Drought during the triennium 2022–2024, subject to the availability of resources, tasked with identifying and evaluating all options, including, inter alia, global policy instruments and regional policy frameworks, and linking, where relevant, to national plans, as appropriate, to effectively manage drought under the Convention, including supporting a shift from reactive to proactive drought management;
- Decides that the IWG on Drought will have the following terms of reference: review and analyze relevant reports from the IWG on Drought and COP decisions on drought; identify and evaluate all options, including, inter alia, global policy instruments and regional policy frameworks, and linking, where relevant, to national plans to effectively manage drought under the Convention, including supporting a shift from reactive to proactive drought management; and prepare justifications and outline possible elements, processes, insti-

tutional arrangements and mechanisms for establishment for each policy option;

- Invites parties to increase their commitment to pursue effective policies and partnerships on drought, with relevant sectors and stakeholders, particularly Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth, civil society, and the private sector, as appropriate, to enhance the implementation of a wider holistic and integrated approach for improved resilience of communities and ecosystems;
- Invites parties, with the assistance of regional institutions, as relevant, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, to support and increase the utilization of information from monitoring, early warning, and action systems for decision making at national, subnational and local levels to enhance the drought resilience of ecosystems, societies, and economies;
- Encourages parties, regional organizations, and other stakeholders working on drought to share their knowledge of and experiences with relevant, innovative and transformative tools for inclusion in the Drought Toolbox, and requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources and in cooperation with partner organizations, to further update and enhance the functionality of the Drought Toolbox, as well as continue related capacity building;
- Invites all parties, multilateral and bilateral partners, and international financing mechanisms to scale up and facilitate effective financing for the implementation of drought risk reduction and resilience-building measures at all levels;

- Requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, in consultation with relevant partners and processes, to identify activities to foster high-level global awareness of, and commitment to, enhancing drought resilience, which could include the participation in or co-organization of a ten-year follow-up to the 2013 High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy.

DECISION 24/COP.15 FOLLOW-UP ON POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND THEMATIC ISSUES: GENDER

The Conference of the Parties encourages Parties, in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan, to pay special attention to intersectionality (including but not limited to age, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, nationality) when planning, designing and implementing policy and programming related to desertification/land degradation and drought.

ICCD/COP(15)/15 FOLLOW-UP ON POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND THEMATIC ISSUES: DROUGHT NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

The document seeks to provide an overview of the thereby emerging UNCCD drought agenda, including key points of the IWG report and the SPI recommendations, but with focus on the activities carried out, and proposed, by the secretariat to the UNCCD and the GM. The content is presented under five interlinked areas: (1) drought policies; (2) early warning, monitoring and assessment; (3) knowledge sharing and learning; (4) partnerships and coordination; and (5) drought finance.

The conclusions and recommendations include, inter alia, the following points:

- The need is growing for targeted policies, effective collaboration and increased investments on drought preparedness, response, and recovery measures with a particular focus on developing countries that have been hit by drought in the last few years. These will require, inter alia, rigorous actionable and concrete measures that enhance drought monitoring and early warning systems, and reduce the impacts and vulnerabilities of economies, communities and ecosystems.
- The positive experience and enhanced collaboration of the UNCCD, United Nations agencies and other relevant stakeholders within the framework of the Drought Initiative is an encouraging development. At the national level, it has ICCD/COP(15)/15 13 effectively transformed the approach to drought management from “reactive” to “proactive”.
- The development and implementation of the NDPs has also boosted integrated and inclusive action to address drought, while coordination and interlinkages among policies and programmes in different sectors remain a challenge.
- Drought forecasting, monitoring, early warning, and preparedness systems, as necessary measures for proactive drought management, are in need of further development in many countries. This is a critically important area for further support, collaboration and capacity building.
- National action can greatly benefit from regional collaboration and exchange of experience. The regional strategies developed in Central Asia and SADC provide elements for similar efforts in other regions.
- In line with the IWG recommendations on effective knowledge sharing and learning, new approaches are needed for the UNCCD. The co-or-

ganization of communities of learning and practice offer one potential solution while networks of experts and institutions for drought capacity building and knowledge exchange could provide further expertise and backstopping to the UNCCD work on drought.

- The UNCCD has succeeded in fostering coordination and collaboration on drought with numerous key partners. Further strengthening of partnership building, coordination and information exchange can effectively advance global action on drought and assist in reinforcing the momentum of countries’ cooperation at regional and global levels.
- Many new prospects and options for drought finance are available or under development. The GM, in collaboration with the secretariat and partners, will aim to ensure that the financing opportunities target identified needs, and that the countries have the necessary capacity to access the available financial tools.
- In the coming years, the secretariat will continue awareness-raising and policy advocacy on the importance of addressing drought under the UNCCD. In collaboration with partners, the secretariat will identify opportunities for such advocacy at the highest level, possibly by co-organizing a ten-year follow-up to the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy in 2023.

The interactive Drought Toolbox provides stakeholders working on drought with easy access to multiple tools, case studies and other resources. Its further upgrading and expansion, as well as related capacity building, in partnership with expert organizations, ensures that this tool remains useful and interesting in the future.

The fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) took place from 9 to 20 May 2022 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The theme of COP15 was Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity. COP15 discussed sustainable solutions for land restoration and drought resilience, with a strong focus on future-proofing land use. COP15 explored links between land and other key sustainability issues, such as climate, biodiversity, green jobs and gender equality. These issues were discussed at a Heads of States Summit, roundtables and interactive dialogue sessions among ministers and other high-ranking officials.

Following two weeks of high-level discussions and negotiations, COP 15 adopted 37 decisions and one resolution to enhance drought resilience, reduce land degradation, and invest in land restoration efforts.

This report outlines the highlights and outcomes of the conference and points the way forward.



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