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Report on the session

Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties

Note by the secretariat

Summary

By its decision 33/COP.15, paragraph 5, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat to circulate in all official languages at least six weeks prior to the sixteenth session of the COP one document for each governing body (COP, Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, Committee on Science and Technology) with all respective draft decisions prepared for Parties' consideration and further adoption and to ensure that the draft decisions are clearly written and properly formatted.

Accordingly, document ICCD/COP(16)/22 includes all substantive draft decisions proposed by the secretariat that will serve as starting points for discussion and further negotiation in the Committee of the Whole contact groups.



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1. Enhancing the implementation of the Convention and the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions 7/COP.13, 7/COP.14 and 7/COP.15,

Welcoming with appreciation the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group to Oversee the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework Midterm Evaluation Process in overseeing as well as conducting the midterm evaluation process of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Having reviewed document ICCD/COP(16)/2,

Commending the progress made by Parties, Convention institutions and bodies, and numerous partners and collaborators in the implementation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, most notably in advancing land degradation neutrality, developing the basis for effective action on drought, and increasing the visibility of land and drought issues on the global stage, among other achievements,

Underlining the importance of further enhancing and expanding measures and cooperation to avoid, reduce and reverse desertification and land degradation, and mitigate the effects of drought worldwide,

Recognizing the urgent need to translate the provisions of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, decisions made, and the guidance provided in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process into effective, large-scale, multi-stakeholder national implementation,

Further recognizing the potential of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to become an effective catalyst for such large-scale, multi-stakeholder implementation,

1. *Requests* Parties and relevant stakeholders to enhance national information-sharing and coordination in the preparation for and follow-up to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification meetings and the topics discussed in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process, with a view to integrating Convention implementation into national political priorities, planning and budgeting systems;
2. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to support the capacity of the national focal points and science and technology correspondents to enhance national information-sharing and coordination on United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification matters, and to translate the land degradation neutrality concept and methodology into a concrete tool that is simple, concise and easily understandable by policymakers and the general public, and *supports* the development of transformative projects and programmes to address desertification/land degradation and drought;
3. *Further requests* the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, to prepare generic lists of main tasks that the national focal points and science and technology correspondents, as well as their respective offices, are recommended to carry out to ensure that information concerning the Convention is effectively shared to support implementation the at the national and local levels;
4. *Requests* Parties to develop and implement measures to advance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at the national, subregional and regional levels, including incentives, promotion of expert training, capacity-building, recognition of achievements, and demonstration and promotion of best practices; and *requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, in collaboration with financial and technical partners, to assist Parties in identifying and using such measures;
5. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to continue developing and promoting the use of approaches and practices with high potential for combined

environmental and socioeconomic gains, such as nature-based solutions, schemes for payments for ecosystem services, agroecology, and regenerative agriculture, with due consideration to ensuring their alignment with and responsiveness to the principles of sustainable land management and land degradation neutrality; and to collaborate on sustainable land management projects that contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals relevant to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

Engaging the private sector

6. *Further requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to collaborate with Parties and partners on the development and improvement of best practices and guidelines that are relevant to addressing desertification/land degradation and drought, such as corporate disclosure standards and frameworks on nature;

7. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to further develop the private sector engagement strategy for protecting and restoring land and building resilience to drought, in particular to encourage private sector support, finance flows and technology transfer;

Recognizing that everyone is affected

8. *Also requests* the secretariat to consult with Parties categorized as non-affected on how best to integrate their national circumstances, aims, actions and needs concerning desertification/land degradation and drought within the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process, and encourage them to define voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and submit national reports;

9. *Further requests* the secretariat to initiate a comprehensive process of exchange among Parties on how to best reaffirm the global role and importance of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in deepening political commitment and cooperation to address desertification/land degradation and drought, taking into account new trends and recognizing that everyone is affected;

Enhancing synergies among the Rio conventions

10. *Encourages* Parties, with support from the secretariats of the three Rio conventions, to establish a practical framework for national coordination in the implementation of the three Rio conventions;

11. *Requests* the secretariat to (i) support countries in developing national coordination among the offices of the national focal points and other key stakeholders; and (ii) actively collaborate with the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to, for example, provide joint guidance for enhancing national coordination and share information on the priorities and key initiatives to improve synergies across the Rio conventions;

12. *Invites* the secretariat to promote the sharing of data collected under each convention, initiate joint science-policy publications, improve countries' access to case studies and lessons learned from projects, pilot projects and programmes that link the objectives of the three Rio conventions, consider building interoperability into information management systems, and promote workshops and awareness-raising efforts for synergies;

Empowering women as land users

13. *Requests* Parties, the secretariat, the Global Mechanism, and their implementation partners, within their respective mandates, to prioritize in the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Gender Action Plan: (i) measures that facilitate women's economic and social empowerment, including their access to capacity-building, financing and technology in addressing desertification/land degradation and drought and their role in transformative desertification/land degradation and drought programmes, projects and initiatives; as well as (ii) institutional empowerment to enhance and secure women's equal land rights;

14. *Also requests* the secretariat, in cooperation with partners, to continue developing gender-responsive indicators to support Parties in collecting and reporting sex-disaggregated

data for monitoring and reporting under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

Upgrading United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification science-policy guidance

15. *Calls upon* the Science-Policy Interface, in line with its renewed mandate and modalities of work, to enhance the responsiveness of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification science-policy guidance to the needs of countries;

16. *Requests* the secretariat to further promote information on scientific findings and their practical applications for decision-makers;

Enhancing monitoring and reporting

17. *Also requests* the secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, to conduct a thorough participatory analysis and assessment of the current indicators and data required for national reporting on strategic objectives under the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including consideration of the necessity of additional indicators, taking into account data availability and ongoing initiatives and processes at global, regional and national levels, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as consideration of the responsiveness of the current indicators and required data to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification objectives and expected performance, with particular attention paid to assessing drought and the use of the national reporting results at the country level;

18. *Further requests* the secretariat to continue exploring different reporting frameworks and systems to (i) identify possibilities to ease the current data collection and verification tasks of Parties; and (ii) further develop capacity-building for national reporting;

Further targeting United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification resource mobilization

19. *Requests* the Global Mechanism to continue increasing its focus on large-scale, high-impact, multi-country flagship initiatives, projects and programmes and scale up its capacity-building to countries and relevant stakeholders, including local authorities, civil society and the private sector, where applicable, to help in accessing funding from a variety of sources, such as those under the Green Climate Fund, regional development banks, different Global Environment Facility focal areas, philanthropies, the private sector and innovative funding sources;

20. *Invites* the Global Mechanism to enhance its collaboration with regional organizations in resource mobilization for the development of multi-country, large-scale projects addressing desertification/land degradation and drought;

21. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to strengthen the transparency of the monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track the progress of resource mobilization efforts and the implementation of large-scale projects;

Enhancing stakeholder and civil society engagement

22. *Also requests* Parties to work more closely with accredited civil society organizations in preparation for United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification meetings and processes and consider fostering partnerships and collaboration among relevant national stakeholders to leverage their collective expertise, resources and networks;

23. *Further requests* the secretariat, including its regional offices, to enhance effective communication and outreach globally to different stakeholder groups that are active and influential in matters concerning land, desertification and drought, with a view to progressively involving these groups in the implementation of the Convention;

24. *Requests* the secretariat to facilitate (i) the involvement of accredited civil society organizations in meetings and processes under the Convention, including regional consultations; and (ii) the provision of capacity-building that also targets civil society organizations;

Launching the development of the next United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification strategy

25. *Decides* to launch the development of the next strategy for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to be adopted as the current 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification comes to an end, which could include the consideration of (i) a clear, ambitious, concrete and measurable global target or a set of targets to guide and focus the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process and the actions of the Parties and their implementation partners; as well as (ii) a related framework for implementation and monitoring;

26. *Requests* the secretariat to present a report on the implementation of this decision at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

2. Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decision 8/COP.15,

Acknowledging that the implementation of the Convention benefits from strong and effective collaborations to leverage synergies with relevant organizations and international instruments, including, *inter alia*, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Welcoming the progress made in enhancing existing and establishing new partnerships, such as the Group of 20 Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats and the International Drought Resilience Alliance, as well as the renewed efforts to coordinate activities with the other Rio conventions through the Joint Liaison Group,

Also welcoming ongoing efforts by the successive Presidencies of the three Rio conventions in exploring greater synergies across the climate, biodiversity and land agendas,

Taking note of the findings and recommendations of the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification which highlighted the importance of synergies in the implementation of the three Rio conventions, and that, without addressing desertification/land degradation and drought, the objectives concerning climate change and biodiversity will not be achieved.

Recalling that the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative was established in response to decision 9/COP.13 and *acknowledging with appreciation* the important contribution of the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative to the development of data quality standards, education programmes and practical tools for the planning for, implementation and monitoring of, and reporting on land degradation neutrality,

1. *Encourages* Parties, as appropriate, to explore synergies at the national level in the planning and implementation processes of the three Rio conventions through integrated actions within their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, nationally determined contributions and voluntary land degradation neutrality targets;
2. *Invites* Parties, as appropriate, to engage at the national level to explore synergies in monitoring and reporting with, *inter alia*, the monitoring system of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement;
3. *Also invites* the Group on Earth Observations Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative to continue facilitating the uptake and use of Earth observation data, enhancing interoperability among analytical tools and developing national and local capacity for planning, monitoring, reporting and decision-making processes to achieve land degradation neutrality, including national reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.3.1, in full collaboration with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat;
4. *Further invites* developed country Parties, other Parties in a position to do so, international financial organizations, civil society organizations and private sector institutions to consider contributing, financially or in-kind, to global partnerships, alliances and coalitions, as well as to regional and bilateral cooperation to address desertification/land degradation and drought;
5. *Requests* the secretariat and appropriate Convention bodies and institutions, within their respective mandates and existing resources, to:

(a) Continue to strengthen existing and seek new partnerships that enhance the implementation of the Convention, address desertification/land degradation and drought, and help achieve voluntary national land degradation neutrality targets;

(b) Continue to strengthen collaboration with relevant United Nations entities and other partners to provide practical tools, technical guidance and capacity-building related to the implementation of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification policy frameworks, such as land tenure, gender, drought, migration, and sand and dust storms;

(c) Continue to develop and implement, in partnership with relevant organizations and networks, stakeholder engagement plans, including awareness-raising strategies, for policymakers in line ministries in charge of land-based sectors, as well as non-party stakeholders, including youth, civil society organizations, land owners and land managers, the farmer community and pastoralists, the media and the private sector;

6. *Also requests* the secretariat to present a report on the implementation of this decision at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

3. Participation and involvement of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling articles 3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21 and 22 of the Convention,

Also recalling decisions 5/COP.9, 5/COP.10, 5/COP.11, 5/COP.12, 5/COP.13, 5/COP.14 and 5/COP.15,

Recognizing the importance of engaging civil society organizations and stakeholder groups that are more affected by desertification/land degradation and drought in the decision-making processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Welcoming the open dialogue sessions organized by the civil society organizations as part of the official agenda of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties,

Also welcoming the organization of the youth conference, the Gender Caucus and the convening of Indigenous peoples and local communities organized on the sidelines of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties,

Further welcoming the Youth Engagement Strategy prepared by secretariat to ensure stronger, effective and meaningful participation of the youth in meetings and processes of the Convention and ongoing initiatives, such as the Land Heroes and Land Youth Negotiators Programme,

Expressing appreciation to the Government of Germany for its hosting the global observance of Desertification and Drought Day 2024, with a focus on intergenerational land stewardship and youth engagement as part of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention,

Taking note of the increasing work carried out by the Parties to the Convention and the secretariat to give visibility to the voice of youth within the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (see document ICCD/COP(16)/12),

1. *Encourages* those countries with no or few civil society organizations accredited to the Conference of the Parties to promote the involvement of their organizations in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process at the international level to ensure more balanced participation of civil society organizations in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, particularly civil society organizations working with people in vulnerable situations, including Indigenous peoples and local communities, people living in rural areas, women, youth, and persons with disabilities;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to continue working with the key stakeholders, including Indigenous peoples, local community organizations, youth, farmer organizations, pastoral organizations, women's organizations, persons with disabilities, local governments and parliamentarians;
3. *Takes note* of the Youth Engagement Strategy and the modalities for its implementation presented by the secretariat and *encourages* Parties, the secretariat, civil society organizations, youth organizations, the private sector, academia, local governments and other relevant actors to implement it;
4. *Requests* the secretariat to support and guide Parties and other stakeholders to implement the Youth Engagement Strategy as well as supporting initiatives, such as the Land Heroes and Land Youth Negotiators Programme, within available financial resources;
5. *Also requests* the secretariat to include an agenda item at the next session of the Conference of the Parties to address the engagement of young and future generations in the implementation of the Convention and provide guidance on how to accelerate their meaningful participation in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

6. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to facilitate the renewal of membership to the Civil Society Organization Panel until the next Conference of the Parties starting immediately after sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with previous decisions;
7. *Requests* the secretariat to continue using all possible means, including state of the art information and communication technology, to facilitate the interaction among civil society organizations and ensure the active involvement of civil society in United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification processes at all levels;
8. *Encourages* developed country Parties, international and financial organizations, civil society organizations and private sector institutions, which are in a position to do so, to consider contributing substantially and promptly to the Supplementary Fund and Special Fund of the Convention with the aim of ensuring wider participation of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as well as in the work undertaken by the Civil Society Organization Panel;
9. *Requests* the Civil Society Organization Panel, through the secretariat, to report on its activities to the Conference of the Parties at its next session;
10. *Also requests* the secretariat to report at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of this decision.

4. Participation and involvement of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling articles 6, 17 and 20 of the Convention,

Also recalling decisions 6/COP.12, 6/COP.13, 6/COP.14 and 6/COP.15,

Stressing the importance of the involvement of the private sector in the implementation of the Convention and the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Noting the outcomes of the Sustainable Land Management Business Forum, and the information provided in document ICCD/COP(16)/13 related to the initiatives undertaken by the secretariat and Global Mechanism,

1. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, within their respective mandates and subject to the availability of financial resources, and in collaboration with relevant financial and technical partners in a position to do so, to accelerate efforts to support private sector engagement and promote innovation by:

(a) Implementing the Business4Land strategy with a focus on integrating sustainable land and water use decision-making into environmental, social and governance standards and corporate disclosures or investment decisions along value chain;

(b) Continuing to develop the Business4Land Initiative as the main vehicle for private sector engagement in the Convention's processes;

(c) Identifying and promoting impact investment opportunities in sustainable land management and drought resilience;

(d) Nurturing innovative projects and their attractiveness to the private sector, particularly in regenerative agriculture, finance and trade;

(e) Strengthening the capacity of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification national focal points to make a business case for sustainable land management and drought resilience;

(f) Developing pilot projects to evaluate the viability and usefulness of innovative financing mechanisms, notably in new and emerging areas of interest and concern such as sand and dust storms, among others;

(g) Exploring options to scale out models developed or piloted by the Global Mechanism (e.g. technology transfer, insurance) to other regions;

(h) Collaborating with the Group of 20 Land Restoration Initiative on the development of the restoration industry;

(i) Facilitating, in collaboration with relevant partners and representatives of the private sector, the organization of the eighth Sustainable Land Management Business Forum on the sidelines of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties;

2. *Invites* Parties and business and industry entities to support the Business4Land Initiative and present specific commitments, on a voluntary basis, that will deliver a regenerative approach to land management and ensure the achievement of land degradation neutrality;

3. *Requests* the Global Mechanism to include in its report on the mobilization of resources, to be submitted at future sessions of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention held in conjunction with sessions of the Conference of the Parties, the measures taken to facilitate and encourage the participation and involvement of the private sector in the implementation of the Convention;

4. *Also requests* the secretariat to report to future sessions of the Conference of the Parties on the measures taken to facilitate and encourage the participation and involvement

of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

5. Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Sand and dust storms

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions 26/COP.15, 25/COP.14 and 31/COP.13,

Also recalling the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions 2/21, 4/10 and 6/7, and United Nations General Assembly resolutions 70/195, 71/219, 72/225, 73/237, 74/226, 75/222, 76/211, 77/294, and 78/158,

Recognizing that land use and management practices have increased the global frequency and intensity of sand and dust storms over the last decade and that effective sand and dust storm management responses must address both (i) natural sources, in terms of risk mitigation, adaptation, response and recovery for affected communities and sectors; and (ii) anthropogenic sources, where prevention and reduction are key strategic priorities,

Welcoming the United Nations General Assembly Resolution (A/78/L.88) declaring the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025–2034) with the aim of enhancing international and regional cooperation and supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and mitigate the negative effects of sand and dust storms, especially on affected countries,

Acknowledging that a proactive approach to enhancing cooperation and coordination at global, regional and subregional levels is required to address sand and dust storm causes and impacts while promoting and supporting initiatives to streamline comprehensive sand and dust storm preparedness that reduces the risks and boosts the resilience of affected and vulnerable communities and ecosystems,

Endorsing the Guideline on the Integration of Sand and Dust Storm Management into Key Policy Areas, the Technical Brief on the Global Sand and Dust Storms Source Base-map, and the publication of relevant data sets for sand and dust storms source identification,

1. *Urges* Parties to:

(a) Enhance the management of existing sand and dust storm sources, the prevention of new ones, and the mitigation of their impacts through domestic budget allocations and private sector investments in key sectors and policy areas as well as through the development projects and programmes financed by multilateral and bilateral donors;

(b) Strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms and regional initiatives that contribute to addressing sand and dust storms, taking note of the regional and subregional nature of the impacts and with particular attention paid to involving women, youth and other vulnerable groups;

(c) Make use of the available knowledge products, including the Sand and Dust Storms Compendium: Information and Guidance on Assessing and Addressing the Risks and the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox, the Global Sand and Dust Storms Source Base-map and Visualization Tool, and the Guideline on the Integration of Sand and Dust Storm Management into Key Policy Areas;

2. *Invites* the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms and other relevant entities to continue their collaboration to assist affected country Parties in developing and implementing national and regional policies on sand and dust storms, including early warning, risk and vulnerability assessments, and source mitigation, complemented by the development of a global sand and dust storms implementation programme;

3. *Also invites* organizations, institutions and other stakeholders in a position to do so to provide technical and financial support for countries to achieve their voluntary land degradation neutrality targets through the integration of sand and dust storms management approaches and measures into key sectors and policy areas;

4. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to continue:

(a) Actively participating in the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, including collaboration to develop a global sand and dust storms implementation programme, advocacy and awareness-raising, and other activities for the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025–2034);

(b) Refining the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox, including the Global Sand and Dust Storms Source Base-map and other geographic information system platforms, data and tools, as feasible, and supporting the capacity of country Parties to use these;

(c) Developing a comprehensive inventory of existing sand and dust storm-related tools and technologies and making this information readily available to Parties through the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox;

(d) Supporting countries and regions with sand and dust storms strategies and action plans as well as the implementation and financing of sand and dust storm-related projects and programmes;

5. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to:

(a) Present a report on the implementation efforts relevant to this decision at future sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;

(b) Present a report on policy issues relevant to this decision to the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth session.

6. Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Gender

The Conference of Parties,

Recalling decisions 7/COP.12, 9/COP.10, 9/COP.11, 30/COP.13, 24/COP.14 and 24/COP.15,

Reaffirming that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, particularly the poor and most vulnerable, will make an important contribution to the effective implementation of the Convention, including the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and to the achievement of the goals and targets contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3 on land degradation neutrality and Sustainable Development Goal targets 5.5 and 5.a on women's leadership and rights to land ownership,

Also reaffirming that securing women's tenure rights and women's access to and right to land and other natural resources will be critical for the achievement of key Sustainable Development Goals (in particular on poverty, women's empowerment and food security) and for the effective implementation of the Convention,

Reiterating our strong commitment to the effective implementation of the Gender Action Plan and its associated Roadmap, as well as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Gender Caucus,

Welcoming with appreciation the work done by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism,

Having considered document ICCD/COP(16)/17 and the conclusions contained therein,

1. *Requests* the secretariat to continue to monitor gender parity across the Convention and report on this data at every session of the Conference of the Parties, with a view to promote at least 40 per cent women in each constitutive body and in the total delegates to each session of the Conference of the Parties and Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;

Recalling the recommendations contained in paragraphs 185, 186 and 187 in document ICCD/CRIC(21)/11,

2. *Invites* Parties to tackle the gender data gap by collecting sex-disaggregated data through their national statistics offices and systems, regarding income, poverty levels, land ownership, migration, school enrolment, prevalence of illnesses, and other types of relevant data, that may provide a basis for future gender-responsive indicators which will reflect the actual differences in how men and women are affected by drought and land degradation;

3. *Requests* the secretariat and the relevant bodies of the Convention, within their respective mandates, and in collaboration with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies, as appropriate, and subject to availability of funding, to develop effective and meaningful gender-responsive indicators for (a) the next United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification's Strategic Framework, following the current 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; and (b) the monitoring and reporting process associated with the next strategy, in order to close the gender data gap in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and work towards a better assessment of the impact of desertification/land degradation and drought on men, women, boys and girls;

4. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, in consultation with potential contributors and partners, to identify and apply means for facilitating women delegates' participation in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification official meetings for the purpose of increasing the number of women delegates attending and effectively participating in deliberations at sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Conference of the Parties;

5. *Further requests* the secretariat to continue collaboration with the other Rio conventions and relevant conventions and international organizations on critical issues for

advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, including, but not limited to, access to resources and technologies for sustainable land management and women's economic empowerment;

6. *Requests* the secretariat to continue collaboration with the other Rio conventions and relevant conventions and international organizations on advocacy for the expansion of women's land rights, building on the high-level advocacy and global visibility achieved by the "Her Land. Her Rights" campaign, as well as the collaborative momentum generated by recent workshops focused on leveraging synergies between Rio conventions and other key actors on women's land rights;

7. *Also requests* the secretariat to continue organizing the Gender Caucus at future sessions of the Conference of the Parties and Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention as a vehicle for identifying bottlenecks in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and for sharing best practices in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

8. *Further requests* the Global Mechanism to continue to establish and strengthen partnerships to design flagship initiatives and projects that promote and integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in establishing land tenure, addressing desertification/land degradation and drought, and achieving land degradation neutrality;

9. *Requests* the secretariat to report on the progress made in implementing this decision to the Conference of Parties at its seventeenth session.

7. 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,

Recalling decisions 19/COP.13, 22/COP.14 and 22/COP.15,

Also recalling that the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification recognizes that desertification/land degradation and drought are challenges of a global dimension which contribute to and aggravate, inter alia, economic, social and environmental problems, and forced migration and displacement,

Acknowledging that all forms of migration and displacement due to desertification/land degradation and drought are factors to be considered when strengthening urban-rural linkages, as appropriate,

Welcoming the progress made to operationalize the Sustainability, Stability and Security Initiative through the partnership between the Global Mechanism and the International Fund for Agricultural Development which aims to harness the potential of remittances and diaspora investments to foster climate resilience and sustainable land use in rural Africa,

Also welcoming the support by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism for initiatives aimed at addressing desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that cause migration,

1. *Urges* Parties, to:

(a) 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;

(b) Review development policies, including on integrated land-use planning, land tenure, agricultural practices, water management, and sustainable and resilient infrastructure, with a view to promoting the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems and land restoration, respecting social and environmental safeguards;

(c) Implement land and ecosystem restoration as an essential part of land-use planning at national and subnational level by enhancing understanding of how changing rural-urban interactions affect the livelihoods of low-income and vulnerable people in both urban and rural contexts;

(d) Support the implementation of initiatives that address land degradation, desertification, drought, conflict and forced migration nexus, such as those considered in the Sustainability, Stability and Security Initiative in Africa, which contributes to employment creation for people in vulnerable situations in rural areas by restoring degraded land and supporting the empowerment of Indigenous peoples and local communities, women, people with disabilities and youth by facilitating access to secure land tenure;

2. *Requests* the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to:

(a) Continue supporting resource mobilization for integrated initiatives that address the land degradation, desertification, drought, conflict and forced migration nexus, along with developing other projects and initiatives that prioritize decent work, including green jobs and livelihoods for people in vulnerable situations, including those living in rural areas, Indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth, and people with disabilities;

(b) Also continue assessing and supporting country Parties to implement 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;

3. *Also requests* the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to:

(a) Assist Parties, upon request, in strengthening urban–rural linkages through territorial governance systems by utilizing principles and guidance from existing frameworks set out in the Primer on Urban-Rural Linkages and Land as a way to scale up sustainable land management and restoration activities and more effective land use planning in order to achieve voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and enhance the implementation of the Convention;

(b) Continue to strengthen cooperation with other United Nations agencies and programmes, regional and international organizations, and other stakeholders to share information in order to foster a better understanding of urban-rural linkages, including the dissemination of good practices identified at the local and sub-national levels, such as green and blue infrastructure, integrated water and forest management, renewable energy schemes, and sustainable agrifood supply chains;

4. *Further requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to present for consideration at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties a report on progress made in implementing this decision.

8. Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Land tenure

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions 16/COP.14, 26/COP.14 and 27/COP.15, which stress the importance of land tenure security within the framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Further recalling targets on responsible land governance, secure land tenure, and access to natural resources, specifically for women and Indigenous peoples and local communities, contained in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,

Recognizing that tenure insecurity remains a significant development challenge for many countries and requires policy and operational frameworks that mobilize stakeholders and finance, create enduring partnerships, and harness synergies that support a more sustainable, equitable and virtuous cycle of land governance, use and management,

Further recognizing that tenure security empowers land users to be agents of change by incentivizing their adoption of and long-term investment in regenerative agriculture, sustainable land management and restoration practices; and supports smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and other rural groups in accessing technologies, extension services, credit and markets,

Taking note of the findings and recommendations of the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification that highlighted the importance of women’s economic empowerment and equal land use rights as critical enablers for land degradation neutrality and gender equality,

Also taking note that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Gender Action Plan highlights the strengthening of women’s land rights and access to natural resources as a priority for action,

Expressing sincere gratitude to the Robert Bosch Stiftung and TMG Research for funding and organizing two Strategy Workshops on Women’s Land Rights and the Rio Conventions,

Welcoming the work of the Global Mechanism in developing the business case for responsible and sustainable public and private investments in land tenure, and the checklist to integrate land tenure into projects and programmes,

Acknowledging that additional work needs to be carried out, either within policy or programming efforts, to integrate land tenure into the implementation of the Convention, such as land degradation neutrality target-setting efforts and land degradation neutrality transformative projects and programmes,

1. *Strongly urges* Parties to (i) continue integrating land tenure, in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the pathways outlined in the technical guide on the integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, into the implementation of the Convention; and (ii) achieve land degradation neutrality targets;
2. *Invites* Parties to consider land tenure when reviewing their plans and activities to combat desertification/land degradation and drought with the aim of proactively collecting data on legitimate land tenure rights in priority land degradation neutrality target areas;
3. *Encourages* Parties to promote inclusive and participatory national level dialogues, including partnering with civil society organizations and relevant actors, to enhance the implementation of decisions 26/COP.14 and 27/COP.15, building on all forms of available knowledge, with the aim of improving the livelihoods of people in vulnerable and marginalized situations, including Indigenous peoples and local communities, those living in rural areas, women, youth, and persons with disabilities;

4. *Urges* Parties to explore ways and means to effectively integrate land tenure information into their capacity development efforts and data analytic tools for evidence-based decision-making to support land degradation neutrality implementation through integrated land-use planning;

5. *Invites* developed country Parties and other Parties in a position to do so, including relevant United Nations entities, international financial organizations, and private sector institutions, to consider (i) providing financial and technical support to design and implement land administration systems in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security; and (ii) funding the delivery of requested national consultations for integrating land tenure into land degradation neutrality, for example through a multi-donor trust fund;

6. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to continue their efforts to support Parties that wish to integrate land tenure considerations into the implementation of the Convention and land degradation neutrality initiatives, and specifically to:

(a) Use the lessons learned from the first phase of national consultations to organize and deliver further consultations to assist Parties with the ways and means to integrate land tenure into land degradation neutrality and related targets, plans, projects and programmes;

(b) Build on the business case and implement the tenure checklist to identify financing opportunities and sustainable public and private investments to strengthen land governance and land tenure within the context of activities to combat desertification/land degradation and drought, in collaboration with relevant partners and financing institutions, in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and social and environmental safeguards, and particularly taking into consideration the perspectives of Indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth, and communicate these financing opportunities to Parties;

(c) Conduct awareness-raising actions on responsible land governance for combating desertification/land degradation and drought, and engage with Parties, civil society organizations, other United Nations organizations and other key partners, where appropriate, to reach stakeholders from global to local level with the aim of improving the livelihoods of people in vulnerable situations, including Indigenous peoples and local communities, those living in rural areas, women, youth, and persons with disabilities;

(d) Explore existing global indicators and data sets relevant to land governance and women's land rights and, when appropriate, engage with relevant partners and institutions to pilot options to include potential indicators in future United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification reporting processes, with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts;

7. *Also requests* the secretariat to:

(a) Present a report on the implementation efforts relevant to this decision at the twenty-third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;

(b) Present a report on policy issues relevant to this decision to the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth session.

9. Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Drought

Note: This draft decision reflects the findings of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought (IWG on Drought)¹ and includes further elements concerning drought under the UNCCD.

The Conference of the Parties,

Deeply concerned about the increase in the intensity, duration and spatial extent of drought contributing directly to large-scale devastating impacts on every continent of the planet over the last decade;

Recognizing the need for decisive action to urgently build drought resilience and the need for a proactive approach and coordinated action to prevent immense human suffering and ecological damage;

Noting with appreciation the outcomes of the Drought Resilience +10: High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy Conference,² held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 30 September to 2 October 2024,

Commending the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and their partners for their efforts to advance policy development, global cooperation, resource mobilization and transformative projects to address drought in the context of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Welcoming with appreciation the report by the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought, as contained in document ICCD/COP/16/20,

1. *Endorses* the Riyadh Declaration and its messages on drought and *encourages* Parties to enhance their measures to proactively mitigate the effects of drought in line with the Riyadh Declaration and to integrate measures to address drought in all relevant policies;
2. *Highlights* the additional political value of resolutions by the General Assembly of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Assembly on this matter and *calls on* Parties to promote the integration of proactive drought risk management and governance in the work and the instruments negotiated under these or other relevant fora and processes;
3. *Requests* the secretariat, in cooperation with relevant partners and processes, to continue to foster global high-level awareness of, and commitment to, enhancing drought resilience, including the follow-up to the Drought Resilience +10: High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy" Conference;

{The following two alternative paragraphs reflect two legally binding options identified by the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought: an amendment to the Convention (related to option A – Amendment to the Convention); and a protocol to the Convention (related to option F – Protocol), followed by a paragraph determining the negotiation body and the timeline for either of these two options.}

4. *Decides* to develop an amendment to the Convention for effectively addressing drought under the UNCCD, building on the elements and institutional arrangements outlined in section III.A of document ICCD/COP/16/20;
4. *alt.* *Decides* to launch an open-ended intergovernmental negotiation process to develop a legally binding protocol for effectively addressing drought under the UNCCD, building on the elements and institutional arrangements outlined in section III.F of document ICCD/COP/16/20;
5. *Also decides* that the amendment or protocol to the Convention referred to in paragraph 4 and paragraph 4alt above shall be developed and negotiated through an ad hoc working group, which is hereby established as a subsidiary body under the Conference of

¹ The findings of IWG on Drought are contained in document ICCD/COP/16/20.

² See: <https://www.droughtmanagement.info/hmndp10/about/conference/>.

Parties and shall complete its work in 2026 or 2028 in order to adopt the amendment or protocol at the seventeenth or eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties;

6. *Further decides* to establish and further develop a Global Framework on Drought Resilience to advance proactive drought risk management, emphasizing a participatory, human rights-based and gender-responsive approach and drawing from the best available science as well as Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and local knowledge systems, including:

- (a) Principles of proactive drought risk management;
- (b) A goal and a set of associated targets to serve as tangible, short-term and actionable pathways for achieving the goal;
- (c) Integrated drought management strategies that are multisectoral and encompass monitoring and early warning, vulnerability and impact assessments, mitigation, preparedness, and response, and allow for continuous updates and improvements over time;
- (d) Effective mechanisms for resource mobilization from all sources, including the public and the private sector and domestic and international resources, with the longer-term aim of establishing modalities for self-sustaining resource generation for proactive drought risk management; and
- (e) A global monitoring and reporting system, based on United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification national reporting, to review collective progress against the implementation of the goal and targets of the Global Framework on Drought Resilience;

7. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to take the necessary measures for the development and effective implementation of the Global Framework on Drought Resilience, including of the elements referred to in paragraph 6 above, taking into account paragraphs 37–40 and 42 of document ICCD/COP/16/20;

8. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility, to enhance efforts to enable United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Parties to implement their national drought plans according to the principles of integrated drought management, including by:

- (a) A proportional increase of the financial resources allocated to drought to support programming for the proactive management of drought, enhance global and regional cooperation and harness the synergetic potential of addressing drought;
- (b) Adapting the System for Transparent Allocation of Resource (STAR) formula to give more weight to the 'drought sensitiveness' component of the Global Benefit Index for Land Degradation and the Gross Domestic Product index to favour the most vulnerable countries facing the highest capacity constraints related to drought;
- (c) Mandating the Independent Evaluation Office to assess the Global Environment Facility support to countries affected by drought, and the Global Environment Facility to adapt or add relevant drought-related indicators and targets that may be needed for the assessment; and

- (d) Urging countries to repurpose environmentally harmful subsidies contributing to increasing exposure to drought towards drought resilience investments;

9. *Requests* the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to (i) estimate the economic returns in cases when harmful subsidies are repurposed and adequately rechanneled towards virtuous practices which increase drought resilience; and (ii) assess the economic returns from the use of insurance products, bonds and microfinance (i.e. financial services for the poor, such as savings, credit and insurance), building on a multitude of previous reports;

10. *Urges* Parties to increase their efforts in national coordination to ensure appropriate allocation of funding (including to the Global Mechanism) towards proactive drought risk management planning and implementation to secure optimal flows towards existing and future projects;

11. *Requests* the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to:

(a) Increase its efforts to support United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Parties to implement their gender-responsive national drought plans, in particular by enhancing their access to finance through capacity-building, knowledge-sharing on project proposal drafting, and training of stakeholders;

(b) Further assist Parties in the formulation and refining of financing proposals aimed at strengthening proactive drought risk management at global, regional and national levels in order to engage with donors and the private sector, help co-design national, multi-country and regional projects addressing drought-related issues and tap into innovative and blended financing opportunities;

(c) Reach out to the Adaptation Fund, the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and other relevant sources of funding to identify opportunities to mainstream proactive drought management into their project pipeline and achieve synergies with existing and emerging funding streams;

(d) Support the identification of financing needs and opportunities for drought risk reduction and resilience-building activities, including the repurposing of harmful subsidies, partnerships with the private sector, and domestic revenue mobilization;

12. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to promote regional collaboration on drought policies and strategies as a cost-effective means to support national action;

13. *Further requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, subject to the availability of resources, to continue exploring further possibilities to effectively support the addressing of drought at the national level, including measures such as (i) assessing the potential of developing an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard on proactive and integrated drought risk management and governance; and (ii) promoting the establishment of national voluntary targets on drought resilience and preparedness;

14. *Requests* Parties, with the assistance of regional and international institutions and other relevant stakeholders, to establish accessible, inclusive and effective monitoring, early warning and action systems that support drought-resilient ecosystems, societies and economies;

15. *Also requests* the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to continue developing the tools for tracking drought impacts and the communities of learning and practice to advance the co-learning as well as support intra and inter-regional cooperation for drought risk and impact management issues;

16. *Encourages* Parties, regional organizations and other stakeholders working on drought to share their knowledge and experiences of relevant, innovative and transformative tools for inclusion in the Drought Toolbox, and *requests* the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to further update and enhance the functionality of the Drought Toolbox as well as continue related capacity-building;

17. *Requests* Parties to support the secretariat and appropriate United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification institutions, bodies and the Science-Policy Interface, to enhance their capacity to assess the effectiveness of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification strategic actions addressing drought;

18. *Also requests* the secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth session on progress made in implementing this decision.

10. Programme of work for the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 22 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Also recalling decisions 9/COP.1, 2/COP.2, 4/COP.3, 5/COP.4, 5/COP.5, 29/COP.6, 30/COP.7, 27/COP.8, 35/COP.9, 38/COP.10, 39/COP.11, 34/COP.12, 35/COP.13, 32/COP.14 and 33/COP.15 on its programme of work,

Taking into consideration the relevant decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth session,

1. *Decides* to include the following items on the agenda of its seventeenth session and, if necessary, its eighteenth session:

(a) 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification:

(i) Report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties;

(ii) Enhancing the implementation of the Convention and its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

(iii) Review of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology and its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties;

(b) Promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies;

(c) Policy frameworks and thematic issues;

(d) Programme and budget for the biennium 2025–2026;

(e) Procedural matters:

(i) Participation and involvement of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

(ii) Participation and involvement of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and business engagement strategy;

2. *Also decides* to include interactive dialogue sessions with relevant stakeholders, including ministers, civil society organizations, the business community, the scientific community and members of parliament, on agenda items of relevance to them;

3. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare an annotated provisional agenda, in agreement with the President of the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth session, taking into consideration provisions contained in the relevant decisions taken during that session;

4. *Also requests* the secretariat to circulate, in all official languages at least six weeks prior to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties, appropriate documentation for that session, reflecting the decisions contained in operative paragraphs 1 and 2 above;

5. *Further requests* the secretariat to circulate, in all official languages at least six weeks prior to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties, one document for each governing body (Conference of the Parties, Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, Committee on Science and Technology) with all respective draft decisions prepared for Parties' consideration and further adoption and to ensure that the draft decisions are clearly written and properly formatted.