

Synthesis note – Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Gender

Document ICCD/COP(15)/17 scheduled for consideration at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention.

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the UNCCD was developed at COP13 by decision 30 with the aim to strengthen and support the gender-related knowledge and capacity within the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda. The UNCCD GAP emphasizes that gender equality and women’s empowerment are crucial to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention. According to collected data by the secretariat, in all regions, women face various obstacles to accessing land and non-land assets including legal literacy, discriminatory gender stereotypes around land ownership or legal discrimination under customary laws. Hence, there is the need to understand and address these issues, essential for the development and implementation of gender-responsive programmes that contribute to the enhanced implementation of the Convention.

The report provided by the secretariat will be considered at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention. It presents numerous gender-related activities undertaken by the secretariat and the GM on four priority thematic areas of the GAP and lists five objectives with concrete activities and measures towards addressing the gender-related issues that impact the implementation of the Convention. Secretariat also proposes recommendations to be included to the action plan, to provide impetus and a focus on actions relating to women and men, and girls and boys.

I. Consideration of national reporting on gender equality

Based on the voluntarily submitted national reports on gender equality and women’s empowerment, the secretariat has included new sex-disaggregated indicators and a new set of questions in the narrative section of the report template. The secretariat is convinced that these reports have the potential to raise awareness and further the understanding of Parties on this important aspect, ensuring continuous debate on gender equality during CRIC.

II. Increased impact with the UN System-wide Action Plan

As a result of the conducted capacity assessment and the gender audit, secretariat and the GM have shown most of the key requirements for gender responsiveness in place or under development ever since collaborating with the United Nations System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), which is spearheaded by UN Women. The findings have also shown that there was a need for major improvements in the tracking of resources allocated to gender equality and in building staff capacity for gender-responsive budgeting. Building on these, the secretariat and the GM is currently preparing a gender policy as the next step in enhancing their internal gender responsiveness.

III. Gender Action Plan Roadmap

Concrete activities and measures are proposed to be included in the GAP to provide impetus and a focus on actions relating to women and men, and girls and boys. These are 5 objectives for potential interventions, which seek close collaboration with institutions at various levels.

1. Enhance women's role as agents of change by addressing the gender inequalities they face;
2. Build the capacities of women and girls to access the resources they need to improve their livelihoods, manage land sustainably and become resilient to drought;
3. Build the technical capacities of UNCCD stakeholders at all levels to design and implement gender-responsive plans and programmes, including in LDN interventions;
4. Develop a baseline on gender-related issues in land degradation and desertification, and monitor, report and regularly review progress in the implementation and achievement of objectives;
5. Mobilize adequate resources to achieve these objectives.

IV. Recommendations to the Parties for Decision at COP15

A. Parties need to acknowledge and address the root causes of pre-existing gender inequalities which are socially constructed and embodied in the gendered division of labour, allocation of resources, care work and other discriminatory practices.

B. Successful initiatives such as the Gender Caucus should be taken to scale because gender-responsive LDN initiatives strategically contribute to the achievement of LDN, while strengthening women's tenure rights and access to land and natural resources.