



## **Synthesis note by the secretariat – Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues, drought**

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

During COP15, drought policies around the world will be reviewed based on data provided by the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on drought report and the Science Policy Interface (SPI) report. The objective of this note is therefore to provide an overview of the thereby emerging UNCCD drought agenda, with focus on the activities carried out, and proposed, by the secretariat to the UNCCD and the Global Mechanism (GM). The role of the UNCCD process in addressing drought has grown since the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) in 2017. COP 13 included drought matters as one of the five objectives of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, adopted an advocacy policy framework for drought, and approved a Drought Initiative that provided up to EUR 1.8 million for action on drought.

### **I. Drought policies**

Nearly 60 countries have now finalized their National Drought Plans (NDP) following the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP) held in Geneva in March 2013. Nine others are now in the process of developing and finalizing their plans. A preliminary analysis of the completed NDPs<sup>8</sup> that the secretariat commissioned in 2021 confirmed the need for more effective coordination among relevant sectors and stakeholders in tackling the issues of drought. Many of them reported limited coordination among the institutions, sectors and stakeholders involved in drought management, and also lack of synergies at policy level. However, they remain good starting points for proactive action, hence the commitment of the secretariat and the GM to continue to support the implementation of these national plans in developing countries. In 2019, for example, the two entities supported four countries (Bolivia, Dominican Republic, India, and Madagascar) in developing land-based transformative projects related to drought impact mitigation, within the framework of national voluntary land degradation neutrality target setting.

The secretariat emphasizes the richness of existing collaborations at the regional level, particularly in terms of sharing experiences, which should then guide actions at the national level. As an example, a regional project has been developed in Central Asia, which resulted in a comprehensive regional strategy for drought management and mitigation, adopted in October 2021, with an action plan for 2021–2030. The regional strategy of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member countries will also be launched during COP15 by the secretariat and its partners. The secretariat and the GM will continue promoting and supporting regional collaboration to create and strengthen regional platforms for the coordination and exchange of data, knowledge and experiences on drought indicators.

## **II. Early warning, monitoring and assessment**

In too many countries, drought monitoring, early warning and response systems have yet to be established. The establishment of these systems is of crucial importance to initiate proactive management of these disasters. In this regard, many collaborations are underway between the Secretariat, the GM and other actors (including UN agencies, FAO, GEF, etc.) to help countries improve their warning and monitoring systems. The two structures propose to launch the Drought Resilience Accelerator initiative to develop national drought monitoring, with particular attention on improving drought early warning systems. The Secretariat proposes to fund this initiative with the Convention's savings from the pandemic. In turn, strengthening drought resilience offers a prime tool for building forward better from COVID-19 and ensuring improved preparedness for future pandemics, natural disasters and the climate emergency.

## **III. Knowledge sharing and learning**

During the biennium 2020–2021, the UNCCD knowledge sharing actions on drought focused on the upgrade and expansion of the Drought Toolbox, which was created to provide easy access to tools, case studies and other resources to support the development and implementation of NDP. The toolbox has been promoted by the Secretariat and other agencies through webinars. The Secretariat is also actively working in partnership with FAO to create a "community of practice" on drought risk management to contribute to knowledge sharing between countries and individual users. The Secretariat also wishes to develop a knowledge exchange and capacity building network for drought preparedness, where scientists, experts, technicians and UNCCD institutions would interact. Such a network could be of great help to many actors.

## **IV. Partnerships, coordination and finance**

The Secretariat and the GM conduct their activities in partnership with many other structures, and are committed to continuing to do so, with the ultimate objective of generating coordinated and effective action to combat drought at all levels. The Secretariat also points out that only one member of the Convention's staff is working full-time on drought issues, considers this to be insufficient and explains that a proposal is being made in the program and budget to remedy this understaffing.

The GM has carried out two additional informal assessments on:

- The feasibility and options for establishing a Global Drought Resilience Fund
- The potential for issuing sustainable land bonds in alignment with land degradation, which could also include financing for drought.

The results of these assessments will be available by COP 15.