

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

### **14<sup>TH</sup> COP OF THE UNCCD 2 -13 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT INDIAN EXPO CENTRE, GREATER NOIDA, NEW DELHI INDIA**

#### **A. BACKGROUND**

UNCCD COP 14 convened in New Delhi, India, from 2-13 September 2019. Over 8,000 participants, including more than 100 ministers and high-level officials, attended the two-week meeting. The UNCCD is one of the three Rio Conventions—along with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Uganda's delegation to the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties for the UNCCD was led by the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries Hon. Vincent Bamulangaki Ssempijja and was attended among others by Hon. Members of Parliament on the Climate Change Committee including the Vice Chairperson -Hon. Beatrice Anywar, the Hon. Milly Mugeni- Member, Hon. Fred Baseke- Member. Other Participants included Dr. Juliet Sentumbwe Ag. Director Animal Resources, Freddie Kabango Asst. Com Soil and water conservation and Stephen Muwaya, UNCCD Focal Point from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Dr. Wilberforce Kisamba Mugerwa - Chairperson Micro Finance Centre, Mr. Robert Opio, Ms. Mukite Rosemary, Mukhana, Ms. Fridah Mutuzo, Isaac Kinalwa from the Ministry of Lands, Housing & Urban Development, Mr. John Tumuhimbise - Ministry of Energy & Mineral Development, Mr. Henry Bbosa - Ministry of Water & Environment, Mr. Mpuga Rukidi office of Clerk to Parliament, Prof. Moses Isabirye - Busitema University, Mrs Christine Kisamba - Makerere University and Mrs Sarah Kisolo from the Civil Society.

#### **B. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September, Sun Guoji, on behalf of COP 13 President Zhang Jianlong, Minister of State Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, opened COP 14. He highlighted achievements since COP 13 and expressed China's continued commitment to combating desertification by offering capacity-building opportunities for developing countries.

Delegates then elected Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India, as COP 14 President. In his opening remarks, Javadekar noted that human actions have contributed to accelerating climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity loss and that, similarly, strong human intent, intelligence as well as technology will be needed to reverse the damage.

UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw invited delegates to follow Mahatma Gandhi's legacy in removing obstacles and spreading well-being of peoples, stressing that "science has spelled out what needs to be done. We need to translate this knowledge into policies."

#### **C. TECHNICAL SEGMENT**

The 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of Parties (COP) for the UNCCD started with technical segment under the Committee on the Review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC 18), The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Committee of the Whole (COW). The CST concluded its work while the other two committees concluded their work after the high-level segment.

The Conference also elected the Bureaus of the following committees of the conference:

1. The Committee of the whole (COW);
2. The Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC); and
3. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST). ESWATINI

During the Technical Segment, the following contact groups were established under each of the above mentioned Committees to negotiate key decision texts as below:

**The CRIC Contact Group** negotiated among others decision on relationship with the GEF, work program of the UNCCD Secretariat, Reporting process by parties Synergies with other conventions.

**The CST Contact Group** Negotiated among others decisions on drought indicators, work program of the Science Policy Interphase and the CST, the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, clarifying indicators for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)

**The Committee of the Whole designated two Contact Groups to negotiate decisions:**

1. On Budget and Program that negotiated the new Biennium budget for the UNCCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism.
2. Other matters including decisions on policy frameworks on drought, sand and dust storms, migration and land tenure

Uganda provided leadership in the negotiation on drought policy framework on behalf of the African Group of Parties and made a statement at the introduction of the topic by the UNCCD Secretariat in the Committee of the Whole (COW). Uganda also supported Negotiating teams of the African Group on matters under the CST, CRIC and COW contact groups

The conference also featured a number of exhibitions and side events which provided a wide range of technological tools useful in combatting Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought.

#### **D. KEY PRIORITY AREAS FOR UGANDA AND AFRICA**

The following themes dominated the Technical segment of the Conference and were a priority for Uganda and African Country Parties generally:

- 1. Action to address management of drought particularly preparation of National Drought Action Plans and their implementation.**

The COP noted the assistance provided to Parties by the Secretariat and Global Mechanism to develop National Drought Action Plans under the Drought Initiative.

Effort by the UNCCD Secretariat and collaborating Partners in developing the drought toolbox was commended but will require wider engagement and capacity building for parties to use effectively in formulating and implementing National Drought Action Plans.

The Committee on Science and Technology approved the following indicators to monitor the strategic objective on drought:

- Trends in the proportion of land that is under drought over the total land area;
- Trends in the proportion of the population exposed to drought of the total population; and
- Trends in the degree of drought vulnerability.

GEF, a funding mechanism of the Convention was requested to include drought action plans among its priorities for the UNCCD.

A decision on policy advocacy for drought established an Inter-Governmental Working (IGW) Group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought.

IGW will have, the following terms of reference:

- take stock of and review the existing policy, implementation and institutional coordination frameworks, including partnerships, on drought preparedness and response and to consider options for appropriate policy, advocacy, and implementation measures at all levels for addressing drought effectively under the Convention;
- comprise parties, international organizations, the SPI, CSOs, and key stakeholders, as appropriate; and
- consist of a maximum of three party representatives from each regional implementation annex of the Convention.

The decision also called for submissions from Parties, International Organizations and Stakeholders on:

- Policy, implementation and institutional coordination frameworks and implementation measures for addressing drought under the Convention; and
- Barriers, challenges, opportunities and implementation measures as well as preparing for, responding to, and recovering from drought;

## **2. Support to the development and implementation of Transformative Projects to address Land Degradation Neutrality activities towards achieving National Targets.**

The COP, requested the Secretariat, the GM and appropriate UNCCD bodies to continue to develop partnerships to support the implementation of the Convention and LDN. It also calls on parties and other stakeholders to take note of and engage with existing and new UNCCD initiatives including the Group on Earth Observations LDN Initiative, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the Changwon Initiative, the Ankara Initiative, the Peace Forest Initiative, and other complementary initiatives.

## **3. The findings of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on Land and Climate Change**

Key observations in the IPCC report

- a. The climate and land interact with and influence each other
- b. Dryland areas are expected to become more vulnerable to desertification in Africa
- c. Desertification has implications for food security and poverty in Africa
- d. Community and policy responses can combat desertification
- e. Managing land, value chains and climate risks can deliver climate adaptation, mitigation and development benefits
- f. Insecure property rights and lack of access to credit and agricultural advisory services hamper progress – especially by women
- g. The skills and knowledge of women and marginalized groups are not yet sufficiently recognized
- h. Integrated governance is needed to maximize the benefits of land and water
- i. Emissions reductions in other sectors are vital to relieve pressure on land

#### **4. Implementation of the UNCCD communication plan**

The COP called for parties and invited civil society organizations, the media, the private sector, and all other relevant stakeholders to leverage international awareness-raising opportunities for outreach, including to women, girls, and youth, around actions to combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD), and achieve LDN and drought resilience.

The COP encouraged parties to consider identifying key audiences in order to most effectively leverage outreach around action to combat DLDD and drought and to achieve LDN.

The COP requested the Secretariat, among other actions, to:

1. review the communication plan and base it on the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework in its entirety;
2. identify key audiences and propose relevant options for increasing awareness about the objectives of the Convention;
3. raise the profile of UNCCD outreach programmes and products.

#### **5. Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Migration:**

The COP invited parties, to consider promoting the restoration of degraded land as one way of changing the narrative in communities impacted by desertification/land degradation and drought, and allowing UNCCD to focus on new opportunities and solutions which offer hope to young people; and

requested the Secretariat to also support regional and international cooperation and initiatives that aim to promote the positive role SLM can play to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers of migration.

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

The COP encouraged parties to create enabling environments at the national level to make implementation of the Convention gender-responsive and transformative.

The COP further requested the Secretariat, the GM, and appropriate UNCCD bodies, including the SPI, to continue their support to UNCCD country parties on gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP).

#### **7. New and emerging issues: Land tenure:**

The COP encouraged the parties to follow the VGGT in the implementation of activities to combat DLDD and achieve LDN and invites parties to review and, where appropriate, adopt national land governance legislation and procedures in order to support sustainable land use and land restoration.

The COP further encouraged parties to recognize legitimate tenure rights, including customary rights, consistent with the national legal framework; provide effective, timely, and affordable access to justice and transparent dispute resolution mechanisms; recognize and promote fair and inclusive community-based conflict resolution mechanisms; and promote responsible and sustainable private and public investments in combating DLDD, including restoration programmes that adhere to environmental and social safeguards in line with the VGGT, and national legislation.

The COP also invited parties to legally recognize equal use and ownership rights of land for women and the enhancement of women's equal access to land and land tenure security as well as the promotion of gender-sensitive measures to combat DLDD and achieve LDN, taking into account the national context; and

ensure that measures to combat DLDD are carried out in a non-discriminatory and participatory way so that they promote equal tenure rights and access to land for all, in particular vulnerable and marginal groups, within the national context.

#### **8. Securing of additional investments and relations with financial mechanisms: Report by the GEF on the financing of programmes and projects concerning desertification, land degradation, and drought:**

The COP requested the GM to continue its collaboration with the GEF. The COP invites the GEF to continue support for countries in programming GEF Land Degradation Focal Area resources to combat desertification and achieve their voluntary LDN targets;

support the implementation of relevant aspects of the national drought plans and other drought-related activities within its mandate; and

continue supporting parties to meet their reporting obligations under the Convention.

### **E. THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT**

COP 14 President Prakash Javadekar opened the two-day High-Level Segment on Monday, 9 September. He pledged India's commitment to use its presidency to reverse the negative contribution of human activities to land degradation. UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw reminded delegates of the common goal of ensuring a safe, prosperous and equitable society for every child born today. UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed called for greater collaboration across the UN system, deploying and investing resources wisely, and scaling up collective ambition to bring solutions that "let people thrive, not just survive."

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced his government's support for, among other actions, an initiative for enhanced South-South Cooperation that aims to share India's experiences with cost-effective and sustainable land management strategies; and a "Global Water Action Agenda" to maximize synergies through holistic land and water management.

Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, highlighted the vulnerability of small island developing states, and Zhang Jianlong, Minister of State Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, and COP 13 President, outlined a series of intergovernmental and national actions that have been achieved since the last COP.

Hon. Vincent Bamulangaki Ssempijja, the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries led the Uganda team at the high level segment which included the Hon. Beatrice Anywar Vice Chairperson of the Parliament Committee on Climate change and two other members of the Committee - Hon. Milly Mugeni, and Hon Fred Baseke. The Team was supported by the technical officers led by the Dr. Juliet Sentumbwe Ag. Director Animal Resources and Mr. Stephen Muwaya the UNCCD National Focal Point.

## F. PARALLEL MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE

In the Afternoon of Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September delegates participated in 3 Parallel Ministerial Round Tables.

The following Ministerial Round Tables took place:

**Roundtable 1: Land, climate and renewable energy:** Ovais Sarmad, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNFCCC, Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Hoesung Lee, Chair, IPCC, delivered keynote presentations. Delegates then shared climate change impacts in their countries. Others discussed negative as well as positive effects of climate change on energy security. While some pointed to reduced capacity for hydropower generation due to decreasing water flows, others emphasized the value of biofuels and cogeneration in achieving cleaner and more efficient energy use.

Speakers highlighted co-benefits from implementing the UNCCD, such as the links between afforestation, LDN, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. They also outlined their national determined contributions under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The discussions also outlined resource mobilization strategies by the Green Climate Fund and others aimed at closing the USD 300 billion gap in financing SLM.

**The Hon. Beatrice Anywar Members of Parliament and Deputy Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Climate Change represented Uganda at the Ministerial Round Table.**

**Roundtable 2: Rural and urban communities – “failing or flourishing together”:** Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union, and Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chair, GEF, delivered keynote addresses. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), addressed delegates via video message.

In the ensuing discussion, participants acknowledged the importance of linkages and cooperation between urban and rural areas, and pointed to opportunities for SLM. The discussion also featured strategies to mitigate negative impacts on ecosystems and resources for both rural and urban dwellers. Participants called for: education and awareness raising; a comprehensive restoration plan for land, water bodies, and forests to rejuvenate rural areas; development of medium-sized towns to stimulate employment and entrepreneurship; and initiatives to preserve the rural identity.

**The Hon Vincent Ssempijja, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of Uganda represented Uganda at the Ministerial Round Table and made a statement.**

**Roundtable 3: Fostering a global movement for ecosystem restoration:** Inger Anderson, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and Co-Chair Mahendra Reddy, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, Waterways and Environment, Fiji, provided keynote presentations.

In the ensuing discussion, speakers highlighted various factors in promoting and scaling up ecosystem restoration initiatives; enabling policies that mobilize entire societies to address DLDD; institutional innovation; fostering South-South cooperation; and ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment.

On ensuring multiple benefits of ecosystem restoration, many parties identified: ensuring synergies among scientific panels of the three Conventions; the carbon benefits of restoration and rehabilitation; involving scientists and information holders to avoid exacerbating land degradation, such as planting inappropriate or invasive species. **Hon Wilberforce Kisamba Mugerwa Chairperson Microfinance Support Centre represented Uganda at the Ministerial Round Table.**

## **G. SPECIAL SEGMENT 2**

On Tuesday, 10 September, three interactive dialogues took place. in sequence and allowed exchange of views on the 3 topics:

***Interactive dialogue 1: A values-based approach to land stewardship:*** Participants called for a "values revolution" through collective human action and a shift in consumption and production patterns, and highlighted, among other issues: initiatives based on ecological economics; concrete support to mobilize youth; and shared values aimed at a sustainable and transformative development model. Participants also called for mapping out a wise direction for the world to attain sustainable management of resources, and more concrete actions to be taken to address the depletion of resources. **Hon. Milly Mugeni - Member of Parliament submitted a statement on behalf of Uganda.**

***Interactive dialogue 2: Healthy land–healthy people:*** In this dialogue, participants described land as an important, critical resource for human wellbeing that is under severe pressure, with around 2.2 billion people affected by land degradation worldwide, as well as that a lack of knowledge on gender-differentiated health impacts results in a "one-size-fits-only-men" syndrome. Participants also stressed challenges including the impacts of soil pollution on food safety and security and the consequences of population growth and resulting pressure on existing, cultivable land was highlighted, as well as the notion of intergenerational equity. **Hon. Milly Fred Baseke - Member of Parliament submitted a statement on behalf of Uganda.**

**Interactive dialogue 3: Boosting sustainable value chains for land-based business:** In this final dialogue, participants stressed the need for economic diversification and actions towards creating innovative, inclusive, and “entirely new” value chains in order to unlock natural capital, and provide capital and linkages to local and international markets, is contributing to improved livelihoods at the local level. In the ensuing discussion, speakers highlighted the need for: investing in dryland areas to boost local livelihoods; ensuring equitable access to land, knowledge, and funding, especially for women; and promoting international cooperation. On business solutions, speakers called for, *inter alia*, alternatives to chemical fertilizers, insurance for agriculture soil health, water-efficient irrigation systems and investments for sustainable energy at the local level. **Hon. Beatrice Anywar - Member of Parliament submitted a statement on behalf of Uganda.**

## H. SIDE MEETINGS BY UGANDA DELEGATION

The following meetings were held between the Uganda Delegation and other Parties and Agencies as follows:

- i) The Minister met with the Morocco Delegation regarding the SSS initiative (Security, Sustainability and Stability) an African initiative led by Morocco. Uganda expressed interest to join the initiative and promised to forward a letter of confirmation after the COP 14.
- ii) At a meeting with the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, Uganda Delegation Handed over the Uganda LDN target setting High-level Note Signed by the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as well as a request letter signed by the Minister requesting for support to develop two LDN transformative Projects on Sugarcane and Coffee Value Chains. A further request was also made to the UNCCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism to assist Uganda develop a National Drought Plan. Uganda to forward a follow up communication to the UNCCD Secretariat
- iii) The Minister MAAIF met with the Chief Labour Migration officer of the International Labour Organization, with regard to ongoing initiatives on creation of Green Jobs. The Minister emphasized the opportunities in Agriculture and Natural resource sectors in Uganda particularly in the area of Value addition and Agro processing and agreed to communicate to Integrate the sectors as opportunities for the initiative in Uganda.
- iv) Uganda Delegation also met with the UNEP representative at the COP, discussed and agreed on implementation activities for the Alignment of the National Strategies for DLDD to the UNCCD 2018- 2030 Strategic Framework and support to monitoring capacity for National LDN Targets with financing from the GEF.

## F: FOLLOW UP ACTION

1. Uganda should initiate expression of interest for partnership with existing and new initiative under the UNCCD to enhance national efforts to address LDN and drought. Key among the initiatives are the following:



- i) India's initiative for enhanced South-South Cooperation that aims to share India's experiences with cost-effective and sustainable land management strategies
  - ii) the Changwon Initiative,
  - iii) the Ankara Initiative,
  - iv) the Peace Forest Initiative, and other complementary initiatives.
  - v) the Group on Earth Observations LDN Initiative,
  - vi) the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration,
2. Urgently follow up action to the bilateral meetings held with partners and stakeholders at COP 14.
  - 3.
  4. A wide sharing of the outcome of COP 14 with Stakeholders to ensure broad and national wide participation in implementation of the key decisions of COP14
  5. Develop a roadmap for implementation of agreed COP decisions at National Level.
  6. A workshop to disseminate the outcome of the UNCCD COP 14 jointly organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries is being organized to take place on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, to map out the way forward in operationalizing the decisions from COP 14.
  7. Follow up on Support to develop a national Drought Plan with the UNCCD Global Mechanism
  8. Follow up on the Development of LDN Transformative Projects with the UNCCD Global Mechanism on the 2 Concepts Namely:
    - a) Land Degradation Neutrality through Climate Smart Coffee Based Farming Systems in the Albertine Rift
    - b) Enhancing Integration and Sustainability measures to improve Resilience and social equity in sugarcane-dominated landscapes of Busoga region

**Dr. Juliet Sentumbwe, Head, Technical Segment**  
**Uganda Delegation, UNCCD COP 14 - New Delhi India**