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Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Ms. Juliet Hay (New Zealand)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 19 (see [A/68/438](#), para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 32nd and 40th meetings, on 6 November and 6 December 2013. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records ([A/C.2/68/SR.32](#) and 40).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions [A/C.2/68/L.22](#) and [A/C.2/68/L.64](#)

2. At the 32nd meeting, on 6 November, the representative of Fiji, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" ([A/C.2/68/L.22](#)), which read:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution [67/211](#) of 21 December 2012, as well as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in 11 parts, under the symbol [A/68/438](#) and Add.1-10.



“Recalling also the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled ‘The future we want’, in which the Conference, inter alia, recognized the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil in dry lands, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, eradicating poverty, women’s empowerment, addressing climate change and improving water availability, stressed that desertification, land degradation and drought are challenges of a global dimension and continue to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all countries, in particular developing countries, stressed also the particular challenges this poses for Africa, the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries, expressed deep concern at the devastating consequences of cyclical drought and famine in Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region, and called for urgent action through short-, medium- and long-term measures at all levels,

“Recalling further that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation and, in view of this, for striving to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development, which should act to catalyse financial resources from a range of public and private sources,

“Concerned by the devastating consequences of extreme weather phenomena in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions, characterized by recurrent and long spells of drought, flooding and increasing frequency and severity of dust storms and sandstorms, and their negative impact on the environment and the economy,

“Noting that avoiding additional land degradation in semi-arid, arid and dry sub-humid areas while restoring degraded land is crucial in order for the rural poor to achieve food security and access to energy and water,

“Noting also the need for enhanced coordination and cooperation at all levels among the parties to and the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, while respecting their individual mandates,

“Emphasizing the need to promote sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and the restoration of degraded lands in order to combat desertification, land degradation and drought,

“Underlining the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, including its economic, social and environmental dimensions, and in this regard inviting all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in supporting an effective response to those challenges,

“Welcoming the organization of the third special session of the Committee on Science and Technology, during the second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference, held in Bonn, Germany, from 9 to 12 April 2013,

“*Noting* the eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, held from 15 to 19 April 2013 in Bonn, Germany, at which the Committee reviewed information relating to all performance and impact indicators of the 10-year strategic plan and framework, as well as information on financial flows for the implementation of the Convention, submitted by the parties and other reporting entities,

“*Stressing* the importance of the further development and implementation of scientifically based, sound and socially inclusive methods and indicators for monitoring and assessing the extent and impact of desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as the importance of efforts under way to promote scientific research in accordance with the Convention,

“*Welcoming* the organization by the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Meteorological Organization, in collaboration with a number of United Nations agencies and relevant United Nations offices, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, of a high-level meeting on national drought policy held in Geneva from 11 to 15 March 2013, and taking note of the declaration adopted at that meeting,

“1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 67/211 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

“2. *Calls upon* Member States to take urgent action to reverse desertification, land degradation and drought, as appropriate and in accordance with the mandate of the Convention, with the assistance of the United Nations system, relevant regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies, major groups and other stakeholders;

“3. *Reaffirms* its resolve, in accordance with the Convention, to take coordinated action, nationally, regionally and internationally, to globally monitor land degradation and restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, also reaffirms its resolve to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance its implementation (2008-2018), including by mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources, notes the importance of mitigating the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought, including by preserving and developing oases, restoring degraded lands, improving soil quality and improving water management in order to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication, encourages and recognizes in this regard the importance of partnerships and initiatives for the safeguarding of land resources, and also encourages capacity-building, extension training programmes and scientific studies and initiatives aimed at deepening understanding and raising awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable land management policies and practices;

“4. *Emphasizes* the importance of giving appropriate consideration to the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought, in accordance with the Convention, as well as to dust storms and sandstorms, in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

“5. *Expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude* to the Government of Namibia for successfully hosting the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Windhoek from 16 to 27 September 2013, and welcomes the offer made by Turkey to host the twelfth session in 2015;

“6. *Notes* the recent appointment of the new Executive Secretary, and pays tribute to the outgoing Executive Secretary for his role in advancing the cause of the Convention;

“7. *Welcomes with appreciation* the decision of the eleventh Conference of the Parties to establish an intergovernmental working group:

“(a) To establish a science-based definition of land degradation neutrality in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas;

“(b) To develop options relating to arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas that parties might consider should they strive to achieve land degradation neutrality;

“(c) To advise the Convention on the implications for its current and future strategy, programmes and resource requirements;

“8. *Takes note* of the decision of the eleventh Conference of the Parties to establish a science-policy interface to facilitate a two-way science-policy dialogue and to ensure the delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice on desertification, land degradation and drought;

“9. *Takes note with appreciation* of the decision of the Conference of the Parties to relocate the Global Mechanism from the International Fund for Agricultural Development, in Rome, to Bonn, to be co-located with the secretariat of the Convention, as well as the decision to establish a liaison office in Rome with appropriate staff;

“10. *Reiterates* the need for cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, forecasting and early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as to dust storms and sandstorms, at the global, regional and subregional levels, and in this regard invites States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems;

“11. *Notes* the importance of the participation of civil society organizations and other stakeholders, including the private sector, in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its subsidiary bodies in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, as well as the involvement of those stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention;

“12. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to ensure equitable allocation of resources to the Convention, and urges donors to continue the effective replenishment of the Facility to ensure that it is adequately funded in order to allow sufficient and adequate allocation of resources to its land degradation focal area;

“13. *Decides* to include in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2014-2015 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for the biennium;

“14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make provisions for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies in his proposal for the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015;

“15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-ninth session, under the item entitled ‘Sustainable development’, the sub-item entitled ‘Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa’;

“16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.”

3. At its 40th meeting, on 6 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled “Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa” ([A/C.2/68/L.64](#)), which was submitted by the Rapporteur of the Committee on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution [A/C.2/68/L.22](#).

4. At the same meeting, on the proposal of the Chair, the Committee agreed to waive the relevant provisions of rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and proceed to take action on the draft resolution.

5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution [A/C.2/68/L.64](#) had no programme budget implications.

6. Also at its 40th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.2/68/L.64](#) (see para. 8).

7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution [A/C.2/68/L.64](#), draft resolution [A/C.2/68/L.22](#) was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

8. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [67/211](#) of 21 December 2012, as well as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

Recalling also the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”,¹ in which the Conference, inter alia, recognized the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, eradicating poverty, women’s empowerment, addressing climate change and improving water availability, stressed that desertification, land degradation and drought are challenges of a global dimension and continue to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all countries, in particular developing countries, stressed also the particular challenges this poses for Africa, the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries, expressed deep concern at the devastating consequences of cyclical drought and famine in Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region, and called for urgent action through short-, medium and long-term measures at all levels,

Recalling further that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation and, in view of this, for striving to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development, which should act to catalyse financial resources from a range of public and private sources,

Concerned by the devastating consequences of extreme weather phenomena in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions, characterized by recurrent and long spells of drought, flooding and increasing frequency and severity of dust-storms and sandstorms, and their negative impact on the environment and the economy,

Emphasizing the need to promote sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and the restoration of degraded lands in order to combat desertification, land degradation and drought,

Noting that avoiding additional land degradation, especially in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, while restoring degraded land, is crucial in order for the rural poor to achieve food security and access to energy and water,

¹ Resolution 66/288, annex.

Noting also the need for enhanced coordination and cooperation at all levels among the parties to and the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change² and the Convention on Biological Diversity,³ while respecting their individual mandates,

Underlining the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, including its economic, social and environmental dimensions, and in this regard inviting all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, within their respective mandates, in supporting an effective response to those challenges,

Welcoming the organization of the third special session of the Committee on Science and Technology, during the second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference, held in Bonn, Germany, from 9 to 12 April 2013,

Noting the eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, held from 15 to 19 April 2013 in Bonn, Germany, at which the Committee reviewed information relating to all performance and impact indicators of the 10-year strategic plan and framework, as well as information on financial flows for the implementation of the Convention, submitted by the parties and other reporting entities,

Welcoming the organization by the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Meteorological Organization, in collaboration with a number of United Nations agencies and relevant United Nations offices, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, of a high-level meeting on national drought policy held in Geneva from 11 to 15 March 2013, and taking note of the declaration adopted at that meeting,

Expressing its deep appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Namibia for hosting the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Windhoek from 16 to 27 September 2013, and welcoming the offer of the Government of Turkey to host the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in 2015,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 67/211 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;⁴

2. *Calls upon* Member States to take urgent action to reverse desertification, land degradation and drought, as appropriate, with the assistance of the United Nations system, relevant regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies, major groups and other stakeholders;

3. *Reaffirms* its resolve, in accordance with the Convention, to take coordinated action, nationally, regionally and internationally, to globally monitor land degradation and restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

⁴ A/68/260, sect. II.

areas, also reaffirms its resolve to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance its implementation (2008-2018), including by mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources, notes the importance of mitigating the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought, including by preserving and developing oases, restoring degraded lands, improving soil quality and improving water management in order to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication, encourages and recognizes in this regard the importance of partnerships and initiatives for the safeguarding of land resources, and also encourages capacity-building, extension training programmes and scientific studies and initiatives aimed at deepening understanding and raising awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable land management policies and practices;

4. *Encourages* giving appropriate consideration to the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

5. *Stresses* the importance of the further development and implementation of scientifically based, sound and socially inclusive methods and indicators for monitoring and assessing the extent of desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as the importance of efforts under way to promote scientific research in accordance with the Convention;

6. *Invites* the parties to the Convention to provide the new Executive Secretary of the Convention with full support in the fulfilment of her mandate and in promoting the implementation of the Convention;

7. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts of the outgoing Executive Secretary in advancing the cause of the Convention;

8. *Takes note with appreciation* of decision 8/COP.11 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to establish an intergovernmental working group to follow up the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and decision 23/COP.11 of the Conference of the Parties to strengthen the Convention's scientific basis and improve the science-policy dialogue;

9. *Takes note* of decision 6/COP.11 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to relocate the Global Mechanism from the International Fund for Agricultural Development, in Rome, to Bonn, Germany, to be co-located with the secretariat of the Convention, as well as the decision to establish a liaison office in Rome with appropriate staff;

10. *Reiterates* the need for cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, forecasting and early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as to dust-storms and sandstorms, at the global, regional and subregional levels, and in this regard invites States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems;

11. *Also reiterates* that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development reaffirmed women's vital role and full and equal participation and leadership in all areas of sustainable development, and in this regard invites donors and international organizations, including the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as international financial institutions, regional banks and major

groups, including the private sector, to integrate fully commitments and their considerations on gender equality and women's empowerment and to ensure the participation of women and effective gender mainstreaming in their decision-making in combating desertification, land degradation and drought;

12. *Notes* the importance of the participation of civil society organizations and other stakeholders, including the private sector, in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its subsidiary bodies in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, as well as the involvement of those stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention;

13. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility, in further enhancing resource allocation during future replenishments, to consider increasing allocations to the Convention, depending on the availability of resources, and further invites donors to the sixth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility to strive for a robust replenishment of resources, including for the land degradation focal area;

14. *Decides* to include in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2014-2015 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for the biennium, and requests the Secretary-General to make provisions for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies when submitting the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015;

15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-ninth session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa";

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.
