

Decision 23/COP.11

Measures to enable the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought

The Conference of the Parties,

Bearing in mind the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) contained in the annex to decision 3/COP.8 and, in particular, the implementation framework of the Committee on Science and Technology,

Recalling that Parties at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties did not finalize the choice of one of four options for scientific advice as contained in ICCD/COP(10)/CST/6,

Recalling further decision 20/COP.10 to set up an ad hoc working group, taking into consideration regional balance, to further discuss the options for the provision of scientific advice focusing on desertification/land degradation and drought issues, taking into account the regional approach of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD),

Emphasizing the need to mobilize scientific and technical expertise both at the global and regional levels to address the problems of desertification and land degradation, and mitigate the effects of drought,

Acknowledging the work done by the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology with the collaboration of the UNCCD secretariat in the finalization of the assessment of how to organize regional, international and interdisciplinary scientific advice as well as in the overall arrangement to support the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group to Further Discuss the Options for the Provision of Scientific Advice Focusing on Desertification/Land Degradation And Drought Issues (AGSA),

Commending with appreciation the work undertaken by the AGSA for improving scientific advice to UNCCD,

Having considered the recommendations made by the AGSA on the most suitable components that would shape an integrated scenario for providing scientific advice to the UNCCD focusing on desertification/land degradation and drought issues, taking into account the regional approach of the UNCCD,

Having reviewed documents ICCD/COP(11)/CST/3 (which contains the conclusions and recommendations of the AGSA), ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.1 and ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.2,

Having also reviewed document ICCD/COP(11)/CST/CRP.1 and *acknowledging* the contribution of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, with the support of the secretariat, provided to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services work programme development process,

Taking note of document ICCD/COP(11)/21 containing the report by the Intersessional Working Group on the Mid-term Evaluation of The Strategy,

Considering the recommendations made by the AGSA toward an integrated scenario for the provision of scientific advice to the UNCCD,

1. *Decides* to establish a Science-Policy Interface to facilitate a two-way science-policy dialogue and ensure delivery of policy-relevant information, knowledge and advice on desertification/land degradation and drought;
2. *Also decides* that the Science-Policy Interface will function up to the end of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, at which time it will be reviewed;
3. *Further decides* that the mandate of the Science-Policy Interface is to: (i) establish the approach to deliver each task assigned to it by the Committee on Science and Technology; (ii) analyse, synthesize and translate relevant scientific findings and recommendations from desertification/land degradation and drought-related scientific conferences, including upcoming UNCCD scientific conferences, the roster of independent experts, as well as from relevant stakeholders and networks into proposals to be considered by the Committee on Science and Technology for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties; (iii) interact with existing multiple scientific mechanisms, in particular the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soil and other new and existing scientific networks and platforms; and (iv) assist the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology in organizing the UNCCD scientific conferences and assessing their results;
4. *Decides* that the membership of the Science-Policy Interface should comprise: (1) members of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology; (2) five scientists, one nominated by each Regional Implementation Annex regions; (3) ten scientists selected by the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology through an open call taking into account regional and disciplinary balance; and (4) three observers: one from a civil society organization, one from an international organization and one from a relevant United Nations organization;
5. *Also decides* that the Science-Policy Interface will be co-chaired by the Chair of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology and a scientist chosen by the members of the Science-Policy Interface;
6. *Further decides* that the UNCCD secretariat will provide administrative and secretariat support to the Science-Policy Interface and that allocation of resources to support its basic functions be included in the core budget of the Convention;
7. *Encourages* the formation of (1) an independent consortium of scientific networks on desertification/land degradation and drought; and (2) regional science and technology platforms that can interact with the Science-Policy Interface for the provision of scientific advice in stepwise manner;
8. *Urges* scientific organizations and networks to volunteer to coordinate the independent consortium of scientific networks on desertification/land degradation and drought mentioned in paragraph 7 above;
9. *Invites* this consortium to analyse, synthesize and communicate to the Science-Policy Interface scientific inputs on desertification/land degradation and drought issues;
10. *Requests* the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology to develop and adopt the terms of reference of the Science-Policy Interface to be consistent with the mandate described in paragraph 3 above and the text of the Convention and its Regional Implementation Annexes;

11. *Calls upon* the regional scientific networks/institutions, regional groups and Regional Implementation Annexes to support and strengthen existing or newly established regional networks/institutions that can coordinate the regional science and technology platforms and inform the Science-Policy Interface accordingly;
12. *Invites* Parties to promote targeted scientific research on desertification/land degradation and drought, including scientific cooperation at national, subregional, regional and international levels, harness traditional knowledge, and use the results of targeted research in policies and decision-making to benefit public, private and civil society efforts to address desertification/land degradation and drought;
13. *Requests* the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, as requested by the Committee on Science and Technology, to provide input to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soil with support from the Science-Policy Interface;
14. *Calls upon* international science-advisory bodies, scientific institutions and networks, the scientific community, and other relevant stakeholders to support the work done in the provision of scientific advice in order to make the UNCCD a global authority on scientific and traditional knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and drought;
15. *Invites* Parties, organizations and the private sector, with the interest and capacity to do so, to make voluntary and in-kind contributions to support the activities of the Science-Policy Interface, independent consortia of scientific networks and regional science and technology platforms for the provision of scientific advice to UNCCD processes;
16. *Requests* the secretariat to report to the Committee on Science and Technology at its twelfth session on the implementation of this decision.

*3rd plenary meeting
20 September 2013*