Table of Contents

Overview .................................................................................................................................................. 2
Chronology of the UNCCD History ........................................................................................................ 3

Overview

The international community has long recognized that land degradation/desertification is a major economic, social and environmental problem of concern to many countries in all regions of the world. In 1977, the United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD) adopted a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PACD). Despite this and other efforts, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) concluded in 1991 that the problem of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas had intensified, although there were “local examples of success”. As a result, the question of how to tackle desertification was still a major concern for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Conference supported a new, integrated approach to the problem, emphasizing action to promote sustainable development at the community level.

The Rio Conference called on the United Nations General Assembly to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INCD) to prepare, by June 1994, a Convention to Combat Desertification, particularly in Africa. In December 1992, the General Assembly agreed and adopted resolution 47/188 on this matter. Working to a tight schedule, the Committee completed its negotiations in five sessions. The Convention was adopted in Paris on 17 June 1994 and entered into force on 26 December 1996, 90 days after the 50th ratification was received. 193 countries, and African and European Unions are Parties as at April 2015. The Conference of the Parties (COP), which is the Convention’s supreme governing body, held its first session in October 1997 in Rome, Italy. So far, the COP has had twelve regular and one extraordinary session, the latest of which (COP 12) took place in Ankara, Turkey, in October 2015.

At the Eighth Conference of the Parties in Madrid in September 2007, the UNCCD entered a new phase with the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy). This new development has taken the
Convention to new ground. Most importantly, Parties have laid out a clear vision for a period of ten years in The Strategy, which is to forge global partnerships to reverse and prevent desertification and land degradation. These partnerships are also meant to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas. Coupled with the vision is a Strategy mission: To provide a global framework to support the development and implementation of national and regional policies that are to contribute to the reduction of poverty.

COP 12 which followed the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2015 development agenda has further defined the importance of the UNCCD as a key instrument in the efforts to achieve sustainable development. Indeed the Convention is set to play a major in supporting the achievement of SDG 15 concerning “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.” Additionally the UNCCD shall now take the lead in supporting the efforts of countries to achieve land degradation neutrality.

Additional important information:

http://www.unccd.int/en/about-the-convention/history/Pages/default.aspx

Chronology of the UNCCD History

Early '70s - Drought in Sub-Saharan Africa - Over 200,000 people and millions of animals died.

September 1973 - Inter-State Permanent Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) established by 9 Sahelian countries.

August - September 1977 - United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD) held in Nairobi, Kenya - Desertification addressed as a worldwide problem for the first time and a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PACD) adopted.

June 1992 - United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - The Earth Summit and Agenda 21 call on the UN General Assembly to
set up an inter-governmental committee to prepare for a legally binding instrument that addresses the problem of desertification.


**December 1996** - The UNCCD enters into force, 90 days after the 50th ratification is received.

**October 1997 COP 1** - In Rome, Italy - Rules governing the COP and its subsidiary bodies established, the functions of the Global Mechanism set forth and the permanent secretariat designated.


**January 1999** - Permanent Secretariat of the UNCCD established in Bonn, Germany

**November 1999** - COP 3 in Recife, Brazil. "Recife Initiative" on commitments to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD launched.

**December 2000** - COP 4 in Bonn, Germany - Implementation Annex for Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V) adopted and the "Declaration on the commitments under the Convention", as follow up to the "Recife Initiative" approved.

**March - April 2001** - Intersessional meeting of the ad hoc working group (AHWG) in Bonn, Germany. Building on a review of national and other reports, a comprehensive report on further steps in the implementation of the Convention is adopted and submitted to COP 5.

**October 2001** COP 5 - in Geneva, Switzerland - CRIC established as a subsidiary body of the COP. Reform of the CST is adopted and a Group of Experts is established.

**August - September 2002** - World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, South Africa - Governments call on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to become a financial mechanism of the UNCCD.
October 2002 - Second Assembly of the GEF in Beijing, China, adopts a decision to designate land degradation as its fifth focal area and to establish the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD.

November 2002- CRIC 1 in Rome, Italy - Innovative solutions to combat desertification are identified and shared. A report is adopted and will be submitted to COP6.

August - September 2003 - COP 6 in Havana, Cuba - The Global Environment Facility (GEF) designated as a financial mechanism of the Convention; CRIC 2 recommendations on ways to improve the implementation of the Convention endorsed.

May 2005 - CRIC 3 in Bonn, Germany. New ways mapped to mainstream desertification.

October 2005 - COP 7, CST 7 and CRIC 4 are held in Nairobi, Kenya.

2006 - International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

March 2007 - CRIC 5 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

September 2007- COP8, CST 8 and CRIC 6 are held in Madrid, Spain. Country Parties adopt the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018, the Strategy). In November, an extra session of the COP is held in New York for budget considerations.

November 2008- CST S-1 and CRIC 7 are held in Istanbul, Turkey.

September 2009 - First UNCCD scientific conference is held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on the theme "Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management".

September 2009 - COP 9, CST 9 and CRIC 8 are held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Parties decide on the framework for assessing the implementation of the Strategy and further define the work of the subsidiary bodies.
February 2011- CST S-2 and CRIC 9 are held in Bonn, Germany. First review of performance towards the operational objectives of the Strategy is carried out. CST continues the development of impact indicators.

September 2011- United Nations General Assembly high level meeting on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) brings together world leaders to debate on the importance of addressing DLDD for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

October 2011- COP 10, CST 10 and CRIC 10 are held in Changwon, Republic of Korea; with largest-ever number of participants. Parties agree on tools for the first UNCCD impact monitoring and continue the institutional reform. Several partnerships addressing land degradation from different aspects, including the "Changwon Initiative", are launched.

September 2013 - COP 11, Windhoek, Namibia

March 2015 - CRIC 13 Bonn, Germany

25 - 27 September 2015 - The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda held

October 2015 - COP 12 Ankara, Turkey

Further Reading:

1. The text of Convention
3. Rio+20 The Future We Want - the United Nations
4. Final Reports of the Conferences of the Parties