

# United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

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**In News:** A unique global initiative to promote peace through land restoration was signed today by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Korea Forest Service (KFS).

## About UNCCD

- Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
- The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.
- The new UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in order to restore the productivity of vast expanses of degraded land, improve the livelihoods of more than 1.3 billion people, and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations
- The Convention's 197 parties work together to improve the living conditions for people in drylands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought.
- The UNCCD is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.
- The UNCCD secretariat facilitates cooperation between developed and developing countries, particularly around

knowledge and technology transfer for sustainable land management.

- As the dynamics of land, climate and biodiversity are intimately connected, the UNCCD collaborates closely with the other two Rio Conventions; the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to meet these complex challenges with an integrated approach and the best possible use of natural resources.

## **UNCCD goals**

- Focus on key themes such as adaptation to climate change, security and migration, reporting and increasing land and soil productivity for food security.
- Focus on practical (work plan) needs like capacity building for stakeholders, knowledge management, science, policy and planning.
- Prioritize partnerships with those organizations that can leverage transformative influence and change, such as: Technical organizations, networks, CSOs and the private sector
- Move towards multi-stakeholder partnerships where an increasing number of partners work together on joint projects.
- Deliver better on existing partnership commitments.

## **Mandate**

- The Global Mechanism (GM) was established under Article 21 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to assist countries in the mobilization of financial resources to implement the Convention and address desertification, land degradation and drought.

## **What We Do**

- As an operational arm of the Convention, the GM provides

advisory services and works together with developing countries, private sector and donors to mobilize substantial resources for the implementation of UNCCD.

### **The Conference of the Parties (COP)**

- The COP was established by the Convention as the supreme decision-making body; it comprises ratifying governments and regional economic integration organizations, such as the European Union.
- To date, the COP had held fourteen sessions; it has been meeting biennially since 2001.
- The UNCCD COP 14 ended on 13 September 2019, after ten days of meetings, 11 high-level, 30 committee and over 170 stakeholder meetings, 44 exhibitions and 126 side events.
- The Conference adopted the Delhi Declaration in which parties expressed commitment for a range of issues, including gender and health, ecosystem restoration, taking action on climate change, private sector engagement, Peace Forest Initiative and recovery of 26 million hectares of degraded land in India.

### **The Bonn Challenge**

- Ahead of the COP-14, MoEFCC launched a flagship project, part of a larger international initiative called the Bonn Challenge, to enhance India's capacity for forest landscape restoration (FLR).
- The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land under restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.
- It will be implemented during a pilot phase of three-and-a-half years in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Karnataka.
- The project will aim to develop and adapt the best practices and monitoring protocols for the country, and

build capacity within the five pilot States.