

**Meeting of the Bureau of the COP  
Milan, Italy  
Date: 16 June 2015**

**COP Bureau/Inf. 11  
Item IX (a)**

## **IX (a). Note of the secretariat on the SDG process**

### **I. Introduction and background**

1. This note has been prepared to brief and update the Bureau members on developments in the UN General Assembly relating to follow up to the outcomes of Rio plus 20, since September 2014, when the last meeting of the bureau took place.
2. On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the report of the Open Ended Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG on SDGs) vide resolution 68/309 and decided that the “proposal of the Open Working Group contained in the report would be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda, while recognizing that other inputs will also be considered, in the intergovernmental negotiation process at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly”.

### **II. Consideration by the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals and target related to desertification, land degradation and drought**

3. As usual, the present session of the General Assembly has considered the report of the UN Secretary-General on the implementation of the Convention. In its resolution 69/221, the General Assembly recalled 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 and noted “in this regard” that combating land degradation, desertification and drought, including through sustainable land management, can contribute to easing forced migration flows influenced by a number of factors, including economic, social, security and environmental concerns, which can in turn reduce the current and potential fighting over resources in degraded areas.

### **III. Intergovernmental negotiations on the post 2015 development agenda**

4. Intergovernmental negotiations on the post 2015 development agenda were launched at UN headquarters in January 2015, and so far four sessions have taken place. The first session met from 19-21 January 2015 and focused on a stock-taking of the deliberations and outcomes of the OWG on SDGs which took place the previous year and on charting the way ahead. The second session of intergovernmental negotiations took place from 19-21 February 2015. The meeting had before it a draft elements paper, prepared by the Co-Facilitators of the process. Statements made by delegations were along the lines of positions expressed during the OWG process. Strong support for consideration of DLDD issues and an SDG/target on

land degradation neutrality was articulated by a number of key groups and countries, including G77, the Group of Friends on DLD, the Group of LDCs and others.

5. The third session of the intergovernmental negotiations, which took place from 23 to 27 March 2015, focussed on the SDGs and targets and the issue of technical proofing of the targets. While all member states supported the 17 SDGs and the bulk of the targets, there was disagreement on whether some of the targets needed to be reviewed from a technical perspective.

6. The third session also took up the issue of indicators. UNCCD secretariat, along other UN entities forming the Technical Support Team, were requested by the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and through the UN Statistical Commission, to prepare a preliminary list of indicators for the SDGs. Heeding the request, the secretariat submitted a proposal on indicators with respect to the goal of halting and reversing land degradation. It was proposed that the indicator on target 15.3 on achieving a land-degradation-neutral world (halt land degradation) would be formulated as trends in land degradation (ha/km<sup>2</sup> or proportion of total land area). It was ascertained that trends could be either negative (degradation) or positive (improvement) and that the baseline would be the year 2015 as reference for measuring and evaluating future trends in land degradation, whereas the scale would be national and subnational as determined by capacities and development priorities.

7. The fourth session of the post 2015 intergovernmental negotiations took place from 21 to 24 April with a focus on means of implementation and a global partnership for development. The session also discussed the interlinkages with the financing for development process. The fifth session of the post 2015 intergovernmental negotiations took place from 18 to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015. The main focus of the session was on ascertaining the views of member states on modalities for review and monitoring of the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda after it had been adopted at the forthcoming September summit.

8. Additional sessions of the intergovernmental negotiations have been scheduled for the coming weeks, the objective being to conclude the said negotiations well in time, ahead of the September Summit which is scheduled to adopt the post-2015 development agenda.

#### **IV. Modalities of the UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda**

9. On 8 January 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 69/244 on the modalities for the organization of the UN Summit in September 2015 for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. As provided for by that resolution, the summit will take place from 25-27 September 2015 and will revolve around a plenary and parallel interactive sessions. For the proceedings, the Heads of State of the countries of which the PGA of the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> sessions are nationals, will jointly preside over the Summit, which is expected to adopt the post 2015 development agenda and the SDGs.

10. With respect to the substantive discussion and as discussed during the fifth session of the intergovernmental negotiations of post-2015 development agenda, there will be an interactive dialogue between heads of state and governments with six themes to be featured. Of direct relevance to the UNCCD is the fourth theme. Entitled “Protecting our planet and combatting climate change: Promoting resilience and disaster risk reduction; promoting sustainable consumption and production; ensuring conservation and sustainable use of

oceans, seas, biodiversity and ecosystems; addressing land degradation and desertification; and supporting sustainable cities and human settlements”, the theme provides a platform for advancing issues relating to land degradation and a land-based approach to adaptation.

#### **V. Possible action by the COP Bureau**

11. The Bureau may wish to take note of the prominence accorded to DLDD issues in the report of the OWG and the intergovernmental negotiations so far and the call for a target to strive towards land degradation neutrality and keep the situation under review, including through consideration of this issue on the agenda for their next meeting. The COP Bureau may wish to request the Executive Secretary to remain seized of the matter, including by actively attending the upcoming September Summit and pay a special attention to the theme directly relevant to DLDD issues.

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