

Decision 26/COP.14

Land tenure

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions 5/COP.13, 7/COP.13, 27/COP.13 and 30/COP.13,

Noting the importance of land tenure within the framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Also noting the relevance of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, endorsed by the United Nations Committee on World Food Security, to the implementation of the Convention,

Recognizing that tenure rights should take into account the rights of others and matters of public interest that promote general welfare, according to national legislation,

Also recognizing that responsible land governance is a fundamental component of sustainable land management and is important to addressing desertification/land degradation and drought,

Welcoming the work of the Science-Policy Interface on this issue, particularly the technical report on “Creating an Enabling Environment for Land Degradation Neutrality and its potential contribution to enhancing well-being, livelihoods and the environment”,

Also welcoming the initiative taken by civil society organizations to promote the discussion of land tenure in the context of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Taking note of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators that are relevant to tenure rights to land,

1. *Encourages* the Parties to follow the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security principles, taking into account the principles of implementation, in the implementation of activities to combat desertification/land degradation and drought and achieve land degradation neutrality;
2. *Invites* Parties to review and, where appropriate, adopt national land governance legislation and procedures in order to support sustainable land use and land restoration;
3. *Encourages* Parties to recognize legitimate tenure rights, including customary rights, consistent with the national legal framework;
4. *Invites* Parties to legally recognize equal use and ownership rights of land for women and the enhancement of women’s equal access to land and land tenure security as well as the promotion of gender-sensitive measures to combat desertification/land degradation and drought and achieve land degradation neutrality, taking into account the national context;
5. *Encourages* the Parties to provide effective, timely and affordable access to justice and transparent dispute resolution mechanisms;
6. *Also encourages* the Parties to recognize and promote fair and inclusive community-based conflict resolution mechanisms;
7. *Invites* the Parties to ensure that measures to combat desertification/land degradation and drought are carried out in a non-discriminatory and participatory way so that they promote equal tenure rights and access to land for all, in particular vulnerable and marginal groups, within the national context;
8. *Encourages* Parties to promote responsible and sustainable private and public investments in combating desertification/land degradation and drought, including restoration programmes that adhere to environmental and social safeguards in line with the Voluntary

Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, and national legislation;

9. *Requests* the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, to explore options for the integration of existing globally agreed Sustainable Development Goal indicators relevant to land governance into the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification reporting process, with a view to avoiding duplication of reporting efforts and ensuring the widest reach among different national contexts;

10. *Also requests* the secretariat and *invites* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant partners to collaborate to produce a technical guide on how to integrate the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the implementation of the Convention and land degradation neutrality, taking into account national contexts for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth session;

11. *Further requests* the secretariat to explore options to be presented at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties on how, within its scope and mandate, to promote awareness-raising on responsible land governance for combating desertification/land degradation and drought among all stakeholders, particularly among vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples and local communities;

12. *Requests* the secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at future sessions on the implementation of the present decision.

*14th plenary meeting
13 September 2019*