



Report: UNDP at UNCCD COP13

Ordos, Inner Mongolia, China

6-16 September 2017

The 13th meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP13) was attended by around 4,000 representatives from 196 country parties, international organizations and nongovernmental organizations with the objective of approving the new Strategic Framework of the Convention for 2018-2030. UNDP's participation in COP13 was a well-coordinated team effort that resulted in excellent visibility and positioned us as a valued partner for global sustainable land management work.



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



The 13th Conference of Parties (COP 13) Highlights

The UNCCD COP13 adopted several key decisions: the 2018-2030 Strategic Framework of the Convention; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its implications for the UNCCD; effective implementation of the Convention at national, sub-regional and regional levels; and linking scientific knowledge with decision making. Specifically:

- The COP adopted the [UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework](#) and called on parties to apply this framework in their national policies, programmes, plans and processes relating to Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD).
- The COP adopted the [Policy Advocacy Framework on Gender Equality](#) to support gender-responsive implementation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework. It requested parties to further mainstream gender equality into DLDD-related policies and activities.
- In addition, the COP adopted the [Drought Resilience, Adaptation and Management Policy Framework](#), inviting parties to use this framework to strengthen their capacity to enhance drought preparedness and provide appropriate response to drought.

Through these decisions, the COP endorsed the scientific conceptual framework for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and called upon parties to consider the guidance from this framework; invited parties to identify case studies on LDN implementation to be included in a synthesis to COP14; and requested the Science-Policy Interface to use the synthesis to report on lessons learned. The COP also launched the LDN Fund and the Global Land Outlook. There is high potential for ensuring synergies between the UNDP-GEF sustainable land management portfolio and projects to be supported by the LDN Fund.



The COP invited parties that formulate voluntary targets to achieve LDN to: ensure that their LDN targets and the activities to achieve these targets are directly linked to their national SDG agendas and create leverage and synergies with their countries' climate and biodiversity agendas, ideally through joint programming of the three Rio Conventions; and use the monitoring and evaluation approach adopted in the Strategic Framework of the Convention, including the progress indicators therein.

During the high-level segment, ministerial roundtables addressed the following three themes: *“Land degradation: a challenge to development, prosperity and peace”*; *“Drought and sand and dust storms: early warning and beyond”*; and *“Land degradation neutrality: From targets to action - what will it take?”*. The high-level segment also included dialogues with representatives from civil society organizations, local governments, and the private sector.

UNDP Inputs to COP13

UNDP played an active role in supporting the preparation of COP13. Prior to the Conference, a position paper entitled “*Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality for People and Planet*” was prepared for UNDP’s participation. UNDP’s statement, highlighting the key messages of the position paper, was very well received during the opening session with delegates commending UNDP’s position. During the Conference, an exhibition booth, open throughout the COP-period, showcased UNDP’s support to the implementation of the UNCCD and to sustainable land management and restoration efforts across the world. Meanwhile, several side events were led or co-led by UNDP, while team members participated as speakers in various panels and discussions.

- In partnership with the UNCCD Secretariat and UN Women, UNDP Global Policy Centre for Resilient Ecosystems and Drylands (GC-RED) co-organized: 1) Gender Day under the theme “[Care about DLDD? Make Gender Your Agenda!](#)” on 8 September and 2) a Pre-COP capacity building workshop (4-5 September) on “[Gender Mainstreaming in the Implementation of UN Convention to Combat Desertification](#)”.



Through GC-RED, UNDP also provided technical support for the elaboration of the “[Gender Plan of Action](#)” to support gender-responsive implementation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework. The Gender Plan of Action was adopted by the COP (COP(13)/L.23),



following a sustained policy advocacy effort initiated at COP11 in Windhoek, Namibia and supported by the UNCCD Secretariat, GC-RED and UN Women.

- In partnership with the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and Governments of China, Kenya and Lebanon, the side event “[Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality – Setting the Stage for Implementation](#)” was organized on 13 September and showcased the establishment of LDN targets under different policy, institutional and socio-ecological environments. It was broadly attended with stimulating discussions regarding the constraints of the LDN approach and the opportunities for its implementation on the ground.



- On the same day, UNDP-GEF co-organised a side event on ‘Listening to Our Land’ with the Government of Namibia, the GEF and UNCCD with participation from the Governments of Bhutan, Cuba and Mongolia, at which a new UNDP-GEF publication [Listening to our Land: Stories of Resilience](#) was launched.



Launch of GEF publication: Listening to Our Land – Stories of Resilience

The book highlights the impacts of sustainable land management (SLM) projects supported by UNDP and funded by the GEF in eight selected countries. UNDP shared highlights of the type of support to countries under this portfolio and the SLM approaches promoted through GEF-financed UNDP-supported projects, and how they have contributed to the restoration of degraded lands and institutionalising SLM approaches. The GEF published a [webstory](#) about the side event to announce the launch of the publication.

- UNDP-GEF was also invited by the GEF to facilitate a session on “Country Ownership and



Empowerment in SLM” during the “GEF Day” at the Rio Pavilion sessions. The session looked back on previous GEF investments in the Land Degradation focal area and reflected on how the area has evolved, what countries have learned in the process and what future programming could look like, considering the current discourses within the UNCCD, the current global development challenges (e.g. food insecurity and migration) and the global development goals, SDG15.3, in particular.

- On 12 September, the first edition of the “[Global Land Outlook](#)” was launched. It is a landmark report on the current and future state of the world’s land resources published by the UNCCD in partnership with UNDP. [In his remarks](#), the Head of the UNDP Delegation Mr Sekhran welcomed this strategic publication which provides “a new and transformative vision for land management policy, planning and practice at global and national scales”. [The press release](#) included a quote from the UNDP Administrator stating that “Achieving land degradation neutrality can provide a healthy and productive life for all on Earth, including water and food security”.



Remark by Nik Sekhran at the Launch of the First GLO

- The GEF-Small Grants Programme (SGP) was very visible particularly in relation to the civil society organizations’ (CSO) and the GEF side events. On 8 September, SGP organized an event on “*Community Approach for LDN*”. The speakers highlighted the important role of SGP in supporting local communities on LDN, SGP’s key achievements under the 6th Operational Phase (OP6) and SGP’s strategic initiatives.

- During the side event, SGP together with UNDP, the GEF Secretariat and the UNCCD Secretariat, launched a new publication: [Community Approaches to Sustainable Land Management and Agroecology Practices](#) that identifies good practices and examples of how local communities tackle issues related to unsustainable land, forest, and resource management. The new publication was widely distributed to COP participants.
- At the UNCCD’s CSO Open Dialogue Session on 9 September, UNDP highlighted SGP’s support to local communities in combating desertification, adapting to climate change and conserving biological resources while empowering women, indigenous peoples and youth. The SGP team contributed to the discussions at “GEF Day”, where participants – particularly representatives of CSOs - expressed their strong appreciation of and support to the Programme.



UNDP GEF-SGP Side Event “Community Approach for LDN”

On 14 September, SGP co-organized a side event with SOS Sahel on climate change mitigation, sustainable land management and empowerment of women. The SGP engagement in COP13 was covered in [the ENB report](#).



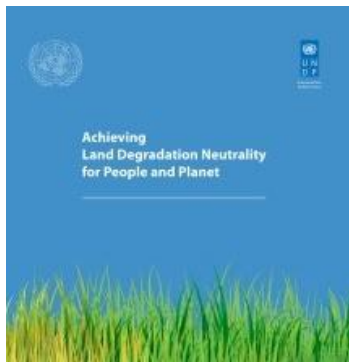
Ordos International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Inner Mongolia, China

Knowledge Sharing at UNDP Exhibition Booth

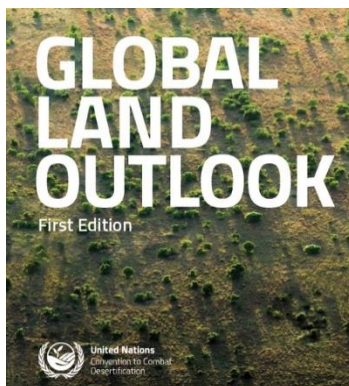
Throughout the COP-period, UNDP exhibition booth was open to all COP13 participants and showcased UNDP's support to the implementation of the UNCCD and to sustainable land management and restoration efforts across the world. The booth was equipped with story-telling picture panels and major publications of UNDP on sustainable land management and support to SDG implementation, demonstrating UNDP's contribution to SDG15 on terrestrial ecosystems and other related goals including poverty eradication, food security, water, and climate change. There was significant interest in the UNDP publications that were displayed at the booth.



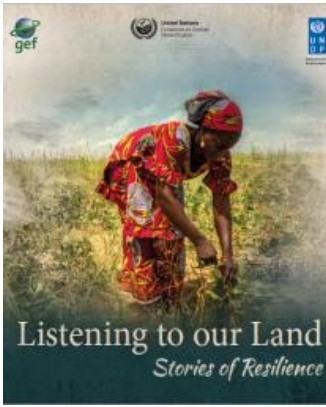
A short summary of the key publications UNDP launched at COP13 and featured at the Exhibition Booth:



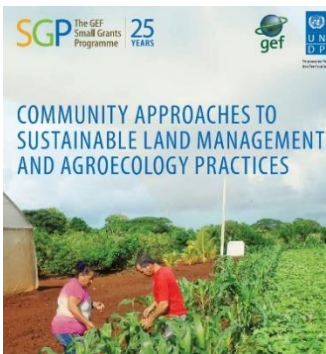
The publication "**Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality for People and Planet**" articulates UNDP's position on Land Degradation Neutrality. UNDP's support to countries on sustainable land management and restoration is designed to enhance livelihoods, secure food and water, build resilience and increase carbon storage and sequestration. Drawing on over 40 years of experience and expertise, UNDP assists countries to integrate land and related environmental concerns into national and sectoral development plans and strategies, secure resources, and implement programmes that advance inclusive, sustainable growth and development. This publication highlights UNDP's work on sustainable land management and restoration.



The **Global Land Outlook** is a landmark report on the current and future state of the world's land resources published by the UNCCD in partnership with UNDP. It is the first in-depth review of the multiple functions of the land viewed from a wide range of interrelated sectors and thematic areas, such as the food-water-land nexus, as well as the 'less obvious' drivers of land use change, notably the nature of economic growth, consumer choice and global trade patterns. It examines governance instruments that address a growing disconnect between the financial and socio-economic values of the land and their effects on the poor. The ability to manage trade-offs at a landscape level will ultimately decide the future of land resources, the report stresses.



The publication “**Listening to our Land: Stories of Resilience**” tells stories of people’s work on the land. Through descriptions of their relationship with their land and their efforts to improve its quality through sustainable land management (SLM) practices, this book highlights the impacts of SLM projects in eight selected countries. Each story has been chosen to demonstrate the effectiveness of a particular SLM approach, reflected through the personal perspectives of project beneficiaries. These accounts present evidence that investing in improved land stewardship is an effective tool for restoring and maintaining productivity and resilience of the land, strengthening adaptation to climate change, reducing conflict over natural resources and helping communities thrive.



“**Community Approaches to Sustainable Land Management and Agroecology Practices**” features four themes and reflects the key programming areas where communities and civil society organization have prioritized projects that meets their livelihoods needs and address global environment benefits. These themes and practices relate to agroecology and agribusiness, sustainable forest management, water and energy efficient technologies, management and rehabilitation of degraded pastoral lands. Up to 11 project examples are featured in the publication, illustrating how communities can be effective vehicles of and land managers for reversing degraded lands by using simple technologies, traditional knowledge and farm based inputs.

