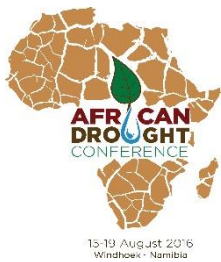


# The Windhoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Drought in Africa



## PREAMBLE

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We, the African Member States and Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Ministers, Heads of Delegation and Experts, attending the High Level Meeting of the first African Drought Conference (ADC);

Having met in Windhoek, Namibia from the 15 - 19 August 2016;

Congratulate the Government of Namibia and the UNCCD Secretariat for coordinating and organizing the first African Drought Conference, and thanking in particular NEPAD and all sponsors of the ADC.

Recognizing the alarming impacts of the recent 2015/2016 El Nino events as one of the most severe in recent decades across Africa.

Having adopted the Strategic Framework for Drought Risk Management and Enhancing Resilience<sup>1</sup>, in Africa, which proposes for a Drought Resilient and Prepared Africa (DRAPA) to be implemented at national level and guided by the following six principles:

1. Drought policy and governance for drought risk management;
2. Drought monitoring and early warning;
3. Drought vulnerability and impact assessment;
4. Drought mitigation, preparedness, and response;
5. Knowledge management and drought awareness; and
6. Reducing underlying factors of drought risk.

Reaffirming the call made for “a stronger UNCCD for a Land Degradation Neutral (LDN) world”, under the Namib Declaration adopted during the UNCCD COP 11 in Windhoek, September 2013, in which the Parties further decreed assurance to enhance sustainable land management and improve livelihoods at global, regional, national and especially at the local level.

Recognising that drought resilience is imperative to achieving LDN, and that due to drought and desertification, arable land is being lost and that Africa is the most impacted continent. As part of the international community, African countries endorsed LDN in October 2015, and committed to strive to halt desertification and restore degraded land by 2030. In this regard, we the African countries agreed to tackle drought in the framework of LDN and climate change implementation processes.

Recalling the proclamations, decisions and resolutions and other international agreements, inter alia:

- i. Final Declaration adopted by the High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP) held 11 - 15 March 2013 in Geneva;
- ii. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and Yaoundé Declaration for the implementation of the Sendai Framework in 2015;
- iii. Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015;
- iv. Decision 3/COP.12; 9/COP.12 of the UNCCD in 2015;
- v. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, particularly Goal 15, Target 15.3;
- vi. Agenda 2063 The Africa We Want; and
- vii. United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) 2/24 Resolution in 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to editorial changes.

Recognizing that regional economic groupings, private sector partners, international governmental, civil society, and other organizations (with observer status at the ADC) are integral in building a proactive drought risk management approach for Africa, thus count and enlist their support and partnership to join us in our efforts to build a drought resilient and prepared Africa.

Working towards the implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in particular Principle 3 emphasising that the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations, reaffirming that all our endeavours shall contribute to poverty eradication, inclusive equitable economic growth and development, enhance ecosystem management, environmental health and human well-being.

Underscoring that there are interdependencies in addressing issues of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD), biodiversity conservation, and climate change, henceforth increasing synergies and complementarities among the three Rio Conventions and other international agreements can achieve mutual co-benefits for member states.

Taking note of the outcomes of the third Africa Drylands Week which took place in Windhoek, from the 08 - 12 of August 2016.

## OPERATIONAL

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### We declare commitment to:

- 1) Implement the Strategic Framework for Drought Risk Management and Enhancing Resilience in Africa, which proposes a Drought Resilient and Prepared Africa (DRAPA);
- 2) Request the African Group Chair in collaboration with Namibia and the UNCCD African bureau members to ensure that a draft decision for the next Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) be submitted and considered for negotiation and adopted by the next UNCCD Conference of Parties (COP);
- 3) Request the AU Commission with support from the Government of Namibia to ensure that the Strategic Framework for Drought Management and Enhancing Resilience in Africa be adopted by the relevant bodies of the African Union (AU) and its subsequent endorsement at the AU Summit;
- 4) Call upon the AU Heads of State and Governments to adopt a decision under the framework of the UNCCD to develop a binding protocol on Drought Risk Management for Enhancing Resilience to be submitted for consideration to COP 13 in 2017;
- 5) Establish a core team in Africa, under the leadership of an appropriate organ of the AU, to support operationalization of the Strategy and the pronouncements contained in this Declaration;
- 6) Establish a continent-wide African Network with national institutions for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning Systems, and strengthen existing regional, sub-regional, and national EWSs, with a view to facilitate timely drought information, vulnerability and impact assessment, and mitigation measures at the country, regional and continental levels.
- 7) Explore existing and innovative financing opportunities, systematically and strategically tap into existing financing opportunities, in particular the climate change adaptation financing and other financing mechanisms including private sector;
- 8) Allocate adequate resources for enhancing African drought resilience within the existing regional, sub-regional, and or national investment funds, and explore options to:
  - a. Catalyse and strengthen existing drought, emergency and disaster funds; and
  - b. Appeal for a window for enhancing African drought resilience within the LDN Fund and any others.

- 9) Request all African countries and partners to ensure that the implementation of the Strategic Framework is considered as part of national SDG implementation frameworks and enhance synergies amongst the existing international agreements and other Conventions particularly amongst the Rio Conventions, i.e. the UNCBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC.
- 10) Promote an inclusive empowerment agenda in all aspects targeting the vulnerable groups, such as the people living with disability, indigenous and marginalized communities, youth, the elderly men and women, in drought resilience building to ensure that they are fully equipped (systemically, institutionally and individually) to deal with drought.
- 11) Operationalize Article 19 of the AU Youth Charter on Sustainable Development and Protection of the Environment by engaging with the youth as future African leaders, ecosystem stewards, and change-makers to enable transformation in combating drought, and addressing the interrelationships between DLDD, water use and management through generational continuity and further to facilitate an African Youth Environmental Conference.
- 12) Invite all International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the AfDB, Bilateral and Development Partners, the UN Agencies, amongst others, the WMO, UNCCD, FAO, UNDP, UNOOSA, WFP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, public and private sector, and civil society to take into account the outcomes of the ADC and support Member States to implement DRAPA at continental, regional, sub-regional, and national levels consistent with the national regulatory frameworks.
- 13) Request the UNCCD Secretariat and its Global Mechanism and partners including the Global Environmental Facility, Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, and other funding mechanisms to support each country to develop a National Strategic Framework for Drought Management and Enhancing Resilience in Africa as part of enabling activities;
- 14) Convene biennial African Drought Conference to be held concurrently with the African Drylands Week to consider progress of the implementation of the Strategy adopted in Windhoek in August 2016, in order to promote investment opportunities.

Adopted on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2016  
Windhoek  
Namibia