

WORKSTREAM 4: FROM POLICIES INTO ACTION

Lead Organizations:



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

»»» A LOOK BACK AT THE PAST 10 YEARS

Drought conditions have worsened around the globe over the last decade and are now expanding into areas where such climate calamities were formally unknown. Even though considerable progress was made in setting up drought-risk mitigation schemes, most countries are still not well prepared and struggling to bring the necessary drought policies into practice that would help to proactively mitigate risks. So far, only a few governments have set in place the necessary measures to deal effectively with the complex and often cascading effects of drought. And yet, the struggle is regional and global in scale, where essential instruments, funding arrangements, cross-sectorial coordination and knowledge measures too often remain insufficient and underdeveloped.

On a global level, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding convention that addresses desertification and drought. In addition to the UNCCD and its sister conventions (UNFCCC & CBD), several United Nations agencies work globally on drought risk management. Notably, among others, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Global Water Programme and World Food Programme (WFP) all play prominent roles in this field. They provide technical expertise, knowledge sharing platforms and support for monitoring and prevention of droughts.

The High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP) in 2013 marked a watershed moment for the efforts. It was the turning point away from solely reactive drought measures towards the promotion of proactive management approaches and investment schemes long before a disaster strikes. On an institutional level, the [Integrated Drought Management Programme \(IDMP\)](#) as well as the [UN-Water Initiative](#) were inaugurated in 2013. Now, 10 years later, many drought management initiatives and partnerships have been created since the 2013 meeting. Progress has been made worldwide with a shift away from a reactive, crisis-oriented approach towards a proactive, forward-looking approach to integrated drought management.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Even though drought has yielded greater attention at major political forums, in many cases the political will, policy design, coordination and implementation that is required to buffer the worst effects is not yet sufficient. Furthermore, the increasing systemic nature of the problem asks for new approaches, policy tools and the operationalization of national drought plans according to the principles of proactive and integrated drought management. In the foreseeable future, under all climate change scenarios, the incidence of drought will only increase in frequency, intensity and duration. A failure to turn drought policies into action will have devastating effects.

THE WAY FORWARD

- Provide an updated status report on global and national drought policies, their design and implementation status
- Outline established or innovative measures to determine policy effectiveness
- Identify shortcomings and bottlenecks for successful transformation of policies into action
- Highlight success stories that illustrate policy implementation, resulting in multiple cross-sectorial benefits
- Discuss potential ways forward to enhance policy design processes, implementation and effectiveness
- Evaluate best possible monitoring and participation mechanisms
- Outline necessary actions to be taken on a national, regional and global stage





A few questions can be further discussed to explore more solutions, improvements and implications for actions:

- How did drought policies and their implementation evolve since the last High-level Meeting on National Drought Policies?
- What were favorable political environments and drivers that enabled the design and implementation of drought policies? What challenged and hindered such processes?
- What kind of policy environments enhance drought finance for proactive risk mitigation and what kind of experiences/achievements have been made so far?
- Which synergies amongst other UN-institutions and conventions remain underdeveloped and how could these be strengthened?
- How useful is the UNCCD drought Toolbox and how could it be further improved?
- Which measurable socio-economic benefits can be shared on a national case-study level that highlight the success of proactive drought policy measures?
- What are the strategic learnings from the session and how to best present and disseminate these to policy-makers in the various fora, conferences, national governments and conventions?
- What are the new benchmarks to be achieved for the Drought Resilience +20 in 2033?