



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Climate Change

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- Signed by Canada 1994
- Ratified by Canada 1995
- In force in Canada 1995
- In force internationally 1996
- Canada withdrew in 2014, rejoined in 2016, became a full party on March 21, 2017

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Global Affairs Canada

Partners: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Web Links:

- [UNCCD Homepage](#)
- [UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework](#)
- [Canada to rejoin the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification](#)

Contacts:

[GAC Media Relations Office](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

January 2020

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

The impacts of desertification can be felt both in Canada and abroad. The UNCCD is one of the three Rio Conventions adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 - the others being UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Climate Change. The UNCCD is the only legally binding agreement that brings together the environment, development, and sustainable land management. Canada engages with the UNCCD, along with the other 197 parties, to limit desertification, drought, and land degradation. Since rejoining in 2017, Canada has played a leadership role in the negotiations, including for the adoption of UNCCD's Gender Action Plan.

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this agreement are to improve the living conditions of people living in drylands, to lessen the impacts of drought, and to promote sustainable land management to help achieve a land degradation-neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

KEY ELEMENTS

The Convention relies on national action plans and sub-regional action plans as key instruments for its implementation. These plans are designed to align national initiatives with the overarching UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The Convention is expected to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality in efforts to restore the productivity of degraded land, minimize the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations and improve the lives of more than 1.3 billion people. The UNCCD has an important role to play in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 15.3. Canada is working with the UNCCD to ensure women and girls, through access to innovative technologies and reinforcement of land rights, are able to support and contribute to the restoration of degraded land.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

This Convention is important to Canada given the damaging environmental, social and economic impacts of desertification. With its dryland areas in Western Canada,

Canada is considered an affected country party under the Convention. Canada supports developing countries in meeting the objectives of the Convention through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which is a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, and a number of other multilateral environment agreements. Canada is the sixth-largest contributor to the GEF. The GEF allocates approximately 10 percent of its \$4.1-billion budget to support efforts to combat land degradation.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

The Canadian delegation attended the UNCCD Fourteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties in New Delhi, India, in September of 2019. The main objective of COP14 was to underline the importance of 'investing in land', with a focus on opportunities for people. A key message out of COP14 was the critical importance of land restoration as a cost-effective means to address climate change and biodiversity loss.. Canada is providing a \$6 million contribution to the UNCCD over 5 years for institutional support and help integrate gender equality in the UNCCD and the Convention's Gender Action Plan.

Reports

- [Overview of SDG 15](#)
- [UNCCD Knowledge Hub: SDG Indicator 15.3.1](#)
- [Fourteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties](#)

Results

Canada played an active role during the last UNCCD Conference of the Parties, in India, to ensure continued support for gender mainstreaming and implementation of the Convention's Gender Action Plan. Other decisions taken in India include the inclusion of land tenure as a new agenda item in the Convention; measures to advance the understanding of scientific and technical matters related to desertification, land degradation and drought; and the establishment of an inter-governmental working group (IWG) on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD. Canada will continue to work with its international partners, both under the UNCCD and in other fora, to remain firmly engaged in the Convention's areas of work, particularly gender, youth and land rights, as well as UNCCD's emphasis on the critical role of land in meeting climate action and biodiversity goals.