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## **Secretary-General's report on the Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration**

### **INPUTS OF**

#### ***United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)***

#### **TO**

#### ***the SGSR Office for International Migration***

The amount of productive land lost every year combined with unprecedented population growth suggests that a safe, orderly and regular migration will be hard to reach unless there is a significant and coordinated action that addresses youth employment and reintegration of vulnerable individuals in fragile and conflict-sensitive areas.

Viable solutions to these challenges are anchored in sustainable development and inclusive growth. This entails balancing economic growth with environmental benefits along with social inclusion. Innovative measures need to be implemented to encourage effective and sustainable management of natural assets, address the imbalances and provide alternatives to distressed migration. Land rehabilitation and sustainable land management are measures that can reduce the adverse factors that motivate people to move out of necessity in unsafe, often desperate and dangerous, conditions.

In line with the informal consultations held in New York on the 23 and 24 May 2017, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) shares its suggestions on addressing the drivers of migration. In view of the coordinating role that the Global Compact will have, the UNCCD secretariat intends to bring to the attention of the SGSR Office for International Migration three key aspects that can give a substantial contribution to the Global Compact:

**1) The decision on “*The positive role that measures taken under the Convention can play to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that causes migration*”** approved by the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Ordos, China on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Recalling the provisions in the Convention text<sup>i</sup> and its annexes<sup>ii</sup>, the UNGA resolution 71/229 adopted on the 21 December 2016 as well as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the UNGA on the 19 September 2016, the decision invites the Parties of the Convention to

- (a) promote the positive role that measures taken under the Convention can play to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that causes migration;



- (b) Enhance international cooperation that aims to promote the positive role that measures taken under the Convention can play to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that causes migration;

and requests the UNCCD secretariat to:

- (a) Support Parties, upon request in implementing the actions mentioned above
- (b) Commission, in consultation with the Bureau of the Convention of the Parties, subject to the availability of resources, a study on the role that measures taken under the Convention can play to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that causes migration;
- (c) Support regional and international cooperation and initiatives that aims to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that causes migration;
- (d) Strengthen cross-sectorial cooperation with other United Nations agencies and programmes, regional and international organizations, and stakeholders to share information on the linkages between desertification/land degradation and drought and migration.

## 2) The “Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security in Africa” (3S Initiative)

With regard to point (c), the UNCCD secretariat has already been entrusted to act as secretariat of the “*Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security in Africa*” (3S Initiative),<sup>iii</sup> an African inter-governmental initiative launched by Morocco and Senegal at COP 22 in Marrakesh and based on the recommendations of the MIDWA Ministerial meeting (ECOWAS Ministers of Security) that met in Abidjan on the 25 August 2016.<sup>iv</sup>

The 3S Initiative aims at addressing the environmental drivers of migration by creating new jobs for the most vulnerable populations through investments in large scale on land rehabilitation and sustainable land management. The Initiative will be led by a “*Task Force*” composed by a geographically balanced group of 10 - 12 countries (indicatively two per region plus the co-chairs). Each country is represented by senior officials directly appointed by the heads of government.

The Task Force will act as “board” of the initiative. It will meet 2 to 3 times a year to frame common positions to be presented at relevant African and international processes on migration, peace and security and monitor the implementation of the activities. The first official Task Force meeting scheduled for July 2017 will prepare position papers for key international processes and event on migration, including the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

## 3) The UNCCD-IOM partnership on addressing the drivers of migration.

On 26 November 2014 in Geneva, IOM and UNCCD signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The MOU signature officially launched a structured collaboration on the land-migration nexus. The partnership aims to increase understanding of



challenges and opportunities related to the interlinkages between human mobility and land degradation and create political momentum to bring these questions across global policy agendas. The IOM-UNCCD strategy for action focuses on three key areas of collaboration: (a) climate change adaptation; (b) land rights and security; and (c) sustainable development.

Over the last three years, IOM and UNCCD have made important progresses towards achieving the goals established for the partnership. While the issue of migration driven by land degradation has been progressively recognized by the international community, UNCCD and IOM have renewed their commitment in delivering joint messages on the importance to address the environmental root causes of human mobility and displacement.

To facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration, efforts should be focused on coordinating inputs with a view of becoming an inter-face between the technical and political level.

In terms of actionable commitments to address the drivers of migration and promote the reintegration of vulnerable migrants, it is suggested to consider, among others, the following actions:

- i. create jobs for the vulnerable groups, in particular young people, migrants, displaced populations, through the investment in the restoration and sustainable land management;
- ii. strengthen land access and tenure rights to ensure the increased ownership of the land and sense of belonging to a specific community and place, particularly in fragile areas;
- iii. prevent forced migration by enhancing early warning systems to predict the effects of drought and other natural disasters and extreme weather events, thus reinforcing the adaptive capacities of the targeted populations.

Based on the mandate received by its Parties on addressing the drivers of migration, UNCCD secretariat stands available to support the Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration and suggest promoting and empowering regional inter-governmental initiatives (such as the 3S Initiatives) to work on the future pillars of the framework and ensure implementation and follow up.

In this context, inter-agency cooperation, such as this between UNCCD and IOM could be deployed, if requested, in supporting countries to conceptualize, implement or review the regional initiatives.

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<sup>i</sup> “Mindful that desertification and drought affect sustainable development through their interrelationships with important social problems such as poverty, poor health and nutrition, lack of food security, and those arising from migration, displacement of persons and demographic dynamics” (Preamble of the UNCCD Convention);



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in Art. 17, Parties agreed that *“they would support research activities that take into account, where relevant, the relationship between poverty, migration caused by environmental factors, and desertification”*

<sup>ii</sup> In Annex I, Parties of the African region convened in Art. 3 that *“they shall adopt a basic approach that takes into consideration the difficult socio-economic conditions, exacerbated by deteriorating and fluctuating terms of trade, external indebtedness and political instability, which induce internal, regional and international migrations”*; in Art. 8, Parties recommend that *“National action programmes shall, as appropriate, include measures to improve the economic environment with a view to eradicating poverty, defining and applying population and migration policies to reduce population pressure on land”*; in Art. 11, Parties agreed that *“priority areas for sub-regional action programmes shall, as appropriate, focus on early warning systems and joint planning for mitigating the effects of drought, including measures to address the problems resulting from environmentally induced migrations”*;

Art. 2 of Annex II of the Convention invites the Parties of the Asian region Recalling that of to *“take into consideration the significant impact of conditions in the world economy and social problems such as poverty, poor health and nutrition, lack of food security, migration, displaced persons and demographic dynamics in carrying out their obligations under the Convention”*;

In Art. 2 of Annex III, Parties of the Latin American and Caribbean region agreed that the region will have to *“adopt an integrated approach to problems of desertification and drought by promoting sustainable development models that are in keeping with the environmental, economic and social situation in each country, taking into consideration that from the social point of view, the results of desertification and drought are impoverishment, migration, internal population movements, and the deterioration of the quality of life”*.

<sup>iii</sup> The Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security (3S) in Africa was also endorsed by the African Heads of States and Government at the African Action Summit held in Marrakesh on 16th November 2016.

<sup>iv</sup> Final report of the ministerial meeting of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA): recommendation 11. a) and d) suggests measures to address the consequences of DLDD on migration and recommendation e) requests the political commitment of the African continent through Ministers in charge of Environment/Climate Change at the COP 22 in Marrakesh in November 2016 to propose practical measures to address the impact of climate change and land degradation on migration and to promote green jobs.