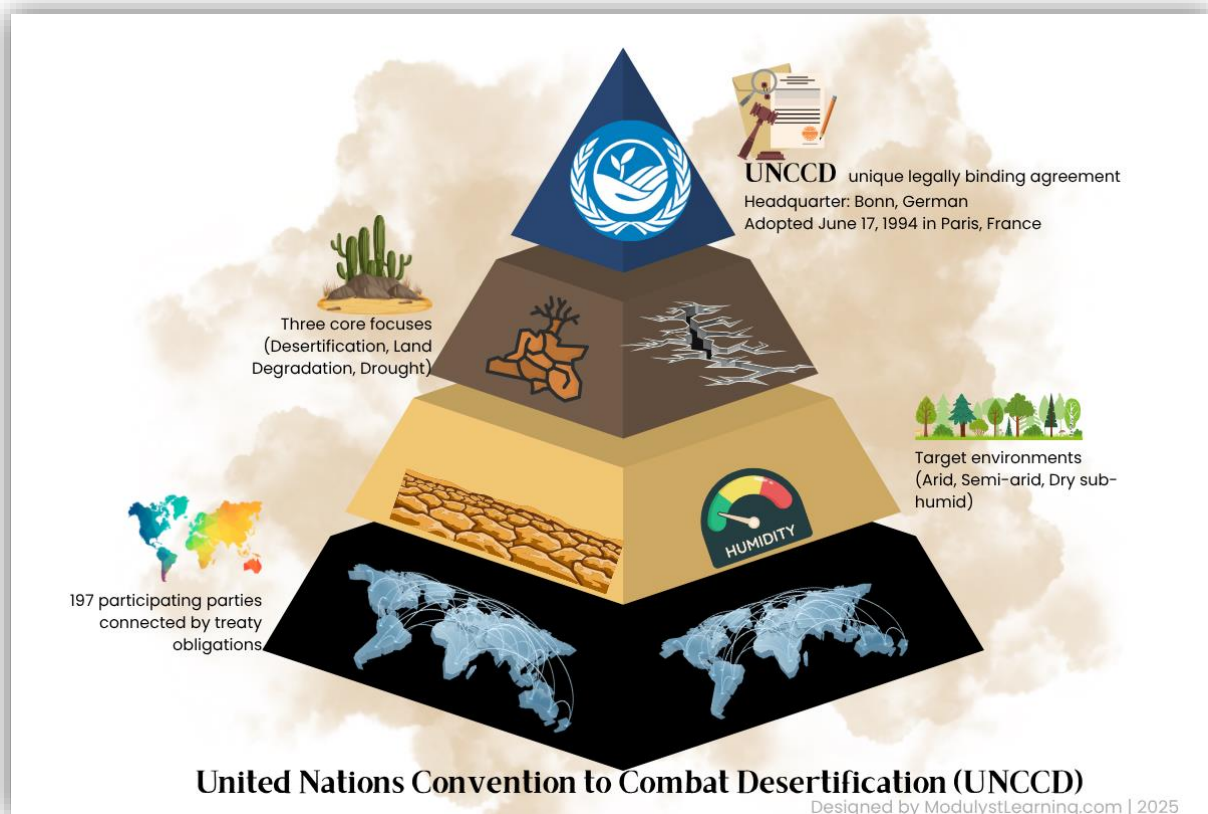


UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)



1. The UNCCD, a unique and legally binding international agreement, is dedicated to combating desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD) in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas, commonly referred to as drylands. It stands as the only international treaty that directly addresses the intersection of environment, development, and the sustainable management of land.
2. UNCCD was adopted on 17th June 1994 in Paris. It was implemented on 26 December 1996 and hosted by the United Nations. The Parties include 197 parties (196 countries and the EU), with the Secretariat located in Bonn, Germany.
3. The context is triggered by the 1992 Earth Summit (Rio Conference). It is Complementary to other Rio Conventions –
 - UNFCCC (Climate Change)
 - CBD (Biological Diversity)
 - Recognised desertification as a global problem with local solutions

4. Aim of the UNCCD

- It tackles desertification and land degradation
- It mitigates the effects of drought
- It promotes sustainable land management (SLM)
- Support poverty reduction, particularly in dryland areas
- It assures long-term productivity of land

5. Core Principles

- It involves the engagement of local communities.
- It employs a holistic approach that integrates environmental, economic, and social aspects.
- Global cooperation and alignment
- National ownership of implementation

6. Key Provisions and Frameworks

- Each country develops a National Action Programme (NAP) to fulfill the objectives of the UNCCD.
- Regional Action Programmes (RAPs) are collaborative strategies used for regional cooperation.
- Sub-Regional Action Programmes (SRAPs) are targeted initiatives implemented within particular sub-regions.
- CRIC (Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention) assesses how countries are implementing the convention.
- CST (Committee on Science and Technology)

7. Important Developments

- In 2007, UNCCD adopted a 10-year Strategy (2008 – 2018)
- In 2015, UNCCD is in line with UN SDG 15.3: “Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)”
- In 2018 onwards, focus on achieving LDN by the year 2030
- In 2022, COP 15 was held in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

8. Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)

It was introduced as part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15.3. LDN aims to:

- Maintain or enhance the quantity and quality of land resources.

- Offset land productivity losses through restoration or enhancement.
- Acts as the primary goal for implementing the UNCCD.

9. India's Role in UNCCD

India has been an active participant in the UNCCD since 1996, hosting COP 14 in New Delhi in 2019. The country has set an ambitious target to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, with Prime Minister Modi declaring India's intention to lead global restoration efforts. Notable initiatives include the National Afforestation Programme, Watershed Development Programme, CAMPA, and the Desert Development Programme.

10. UNCCD COPs (Conference of the Parties)

The COP is the supreme decision-making body that:

- Held every two years
- Implementation of reviews
- Implemented new strategies and programs

11. Notable COPs –

- COP1 occurred in 1997 in Rome, Italy, and its main result was the creation of rules of procedure.
- COP 10 in 2011, held in South Korea, established key objectives for mobilizing resources.
- The COP14 in 2019, hosted in New Delhi, featured the Delhi Declaration on LDN.
- COP15 in 2022 is taking place in Côte d'Ivoire, with an emphasis on drought resilience and funding strategies.

12. Challenges –

- Funding for land restoration is insufficient.
- Many countries face weak institutional structures.
- It's limited awareness and education.
- Its intricate connections with climate change and the decline of biodiversity underscore the urgency of the UNCCD's work. As these global challenges intensify, the UNCCD's role in tackling desertification and achieving Land Degradation Neutrality becomes increasingly crucial.

- Gaps in data collection and monitoring

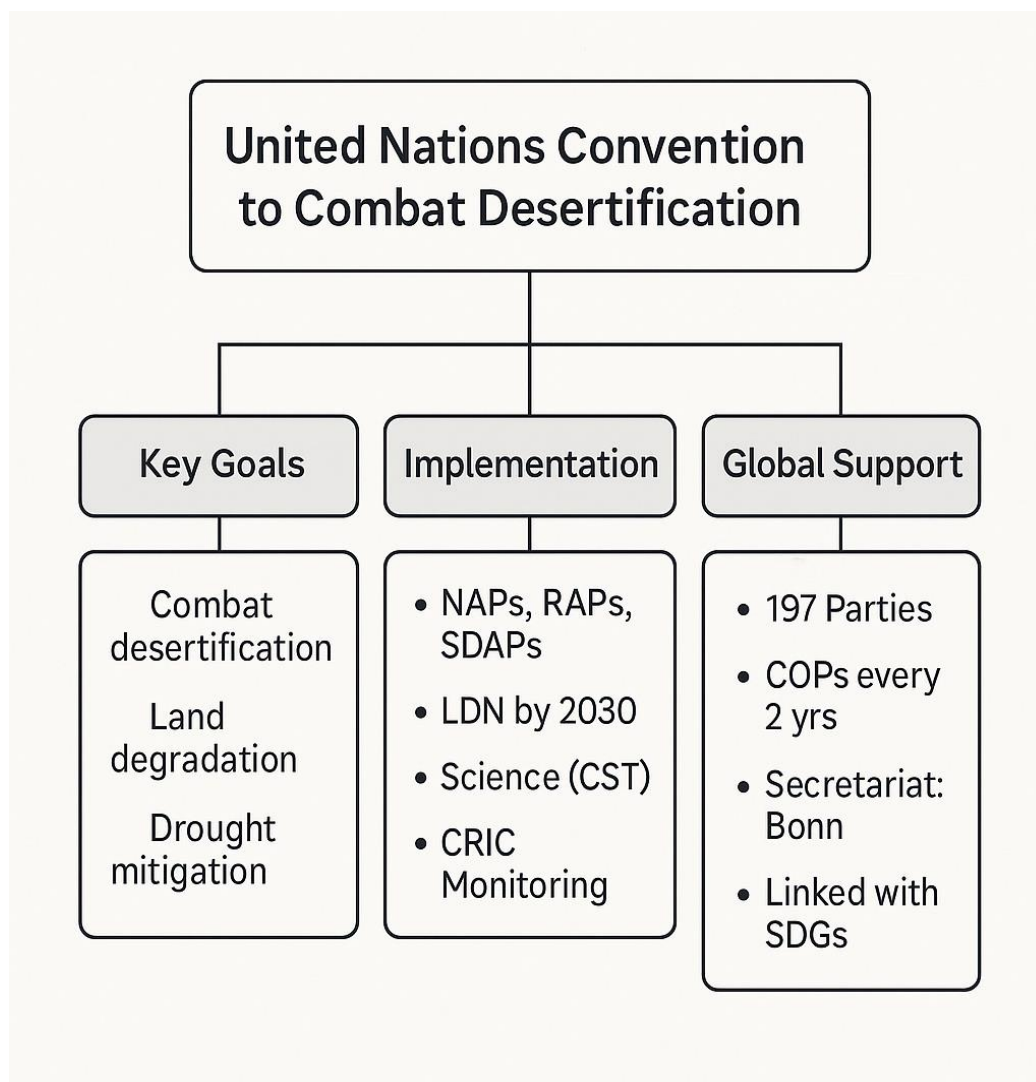
13. Delhi Declaration (COP14, 2019) – Important Points

- It encourages investment in land restoration.
- It promotes land-centered strategies to combat climate change.
- It highlights the importance of community-driven land management.
- It highlights the significance of youth and innovation.
- It highlights the partnership with UNFCCC and CBD.

14. UNCCD and Sustainable Development

- SDG Goal 15.3 involves attaining land degradation neutrality (LDN).
- SDG 13 focuses on addressing climate change through land-based solutions.
- SDG 1 aims to reduce poverty through sustainable land use practices.
- SDG 2 promotes food security by enhancing soil productivity.
- SDG 6 safeguards watersheds and ecosystems related to water.

The UNCCD is a key international treaty that links environmental sustainability, economic development, and human well-being, particularly in fragile drylands. As global issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity intensify, tackling desertification and achieving Land Degradation Neutrality are more crucial than ever.



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