

# 3. COP16 of UNCCD: Results & Conclusions 2-13 Dec. 2024, Riyadh

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- 3.1. Context, stakes and objectives
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## 3.1. Context, stakes and objectives

- KSA ambitions to make it a landmark COP
- Heavy sequence: 3 COP + INC5 + GEF CM68
- Many uncertainties (USA, Africa, KSA, ...)
- Adoption of first EU Council Conclusions on DLDD & COP16 (Oct. 2024):  
[Combating desertification in the EU: Council urges action for a sustainable future – Consilium](#)
- Some worrying trends:
  - 40% Global Lands = degraded
  - Drought intensity, frequency and duration : increasing on each continent



## 3.2. Participation, HLS and Ministerial Dialogues

**Figures on participation: COP16 = largest COP by far**

- 24.000 pers. for the Blue Zone / 23.000 for the Green Zone
- 600 side-events organised

**Participation level in the High Level Segment :** 141 High-level Representatives: HofS/ HofG/ Ministers/ Deputy Ministers/ Special Envoys, for:

**3 Ministerial Dialogues + Gender Caucus + Youth Caucus**

Announcement and launch of the **Riyadh Drought Resilience Partnership:**  
historical level of pledges: 12,15 billion USD from Arab Coordination Group

Adoption of the **Riyadh Political Declaration**





## 3.3. Main decisions adopted

- Implementation of the 2018-2030 Strategic Framework: establishment of a IWG to prepare the next Strategic Framework (2030-2040)
  - Budget for biennium 2025-2026: 8% increase + use of savings
  - Adoption of 3 sets of SPI recommendations + Strengthening of the role and resources of the SPI → SPI = permanent body!
  - CSO involvement: establishment of two new Caucus: IP Caucus & LC Caucus; but no agreement about the Contact Groups
  - 1<sup>st</sup> decision on Agriculture lands + on Rangelands and Pastoralism
- Huge disappointment on Drought: no decision!
- Dec. postponed to COP, based on progress achieved at COP16



## 3.3. Main decisions adopted (next)

- **Collaboration with the GEF (BE/FR)**

→ Usual language (Synergies, Integrated Program, GGW, WOCAT...)

→ New para. from EU: more support from the GEF e.g. to:

- Policy coherence (EHS), Agroecology & Agroforestry;
- Review the « public expenditures » and incentives (contributing to DLDD)
- « invitation to the GEF to prioritize the resources allocation to the Proactive Management of Drought »
- Calls for a robust GEF9 Replenishment with an increase in the resource allocation dedicated to DLDD

- **2 dec. about the GM and the financial flows: (BE/FR)**

→ Publication of the 1st **Financial Needs Assessment** + related **Res. Mob. Strategy:**

[Investing in land's future: Financial needs assessment for UNCCD | UNCCD](#)

→ Emphasis on need to eliminate/ repurpose the **EHS**





## 3.4 Contributions of Belgium

- Reminder : Active role in the preparation of the **EU CC** (under BE Presidency of the EU Council)
- Nomination of a new Science & Technology Correspondent (STC) to contribute to the **CST/SPI dec.:**
- **4 decisions negotiated by BE on behalf of the EU:**
  - Collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (**GEF**)
  - Thematic issue : **Drought**
  - 2 decisions related to the **Global Mechanism** :
    - (A) Assess of the Financial Flows & (B) Progress made in the mobilization of resources
- Active contribution to the **decisions of the CST thanks to our STC**
- Participation to a **side-event** (How to unlock more support to restore the drylands)
- Participation of **APEFE** to showcase their support to the GGW National Coordination in BKF
- Good collaboration with various CSO + Accreditation of 2 Belgian NGO (APEFE and Humundi)
- **Huge difference from the past...**



## 3.5 Some conclusions

- Acknowledgement of a **successful COP** even if no dec. on Drought (Riyadh GDRP + level of pledges / Turnout & level of participation/ important decisions: Budget/ IP caucus/ New issues covered)
- **From EU/ BE perspectives:**
  - significant progress concerning AE & AF (ref. in 5 dec.)
  - some progress on the Environmentally Harmful Subsidies (EHS) ;
  - balanced deal on the budget.
- Some **disappointments**, on: Drought/ Gender/ CSO involvement/...
- Really glad of our contribution to this COP (despite limited delegation)





# Thank you!

## Any questions?

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**Useful links :** [www.unccd.int](http://www.unccd.int)

Compendium of the 37 decisions: [\\*ICCD/COP\(16\)/24/Add.1](#)

IISD/ Earth Negotiations Bulletin/ Report of COP16 UNCCD : [Summary report 2–13 December 2024](#)

## Some press releases/ articles:

- UNCCD media: [United Nations conference in Riyadh charts a path for global action on land, drought | UNCCD](#)
- Forbes: [Riyadh's COP16: A Milestone In The Fight Against Drought, Experts Say](#)
- TMG Think Tank: [Against the odds: Advancing land tenure and synergies at COP16](#)
- VRT: [Verwoestijning neemt toe en wordt ook in Europa een steeds groter probleem, blijkt op VN-top | VRT NWS: nieuws](#)
- The Guardian: [Drylands now make up 40% of land on Earth, excluding Antarctica, study says | Climate crisis | The Guardian](#)





