

UNCCD

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UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)

Context: The 16th Conference of Parties (COP16) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, recognized the **crucial role of indigenous peoples** in combating desertification.

Background

- Other COPs, such as those under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), have already acknowledged the value of **indigenous communities' traditional knowledge** in addressing environmental challenges.
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Key Takeaways

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):

- **Purpose:** A global agreement to tackle desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD) through sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration.
- **Established:** Adopted in 1994, effective from 1996.
- **Secretariat:** Based in Bonn, Germany.
- **Significance:** It is the **only legally binding treaty** connecting environment, development, and sustainable land management.

Focus Areas:

- **Desertification Prevention:** In drylands (arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid regions).
- **Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN):** Working towards sustainable land use and recovery.
- **Community Engagement:** Promoting indigenous and local participation in land management.

Strategic Framework (2018-2030):

- Aligned with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly **SDG 15.3**, which aims to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

India and UNCCD

- **Ratification:** India ratified the convention in 1996.
- **Key Role:** Hosted **COP14 in 2019** in New Delhi.

Indian Initiatives Aligned with UNCCD:

1. **Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas (2021):** A comprehensive mapping of land degradation across states.
2. **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC):** Combines multiple missions for environmental sustainability.
3. **National Afforestation Programme:** Focused on restoring degraded ecosystems through tree planting and afforestation.

Relevance of Indigenous Communities:

The recognition at COP16 emphasizes that **indigenous knowledge and practices** are invaluable in combating desertification and promoting sustainable land use, reinforcing their integral role in achieving global environmental goals.



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