

United Nations Coalition on Combatting Sand and Dust Storms (SDS) Terms of Reference

May 2019



Figure 1- Member organisations of the SDS Coalition

Background

The General Assembly, through its resolution 72/225, invited the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (hereafter UNEP), to consider initiating an inter-agency process involving relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and existing resources, and taking into account United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/21 of 27 May 2016 and other relevant resolutions and decisions, to prepare a global response to sand and dust storms (hereafter SDS). The General Assembly, in its 73rd session, welcomed the intention of the Executive Director of UNEP to establish an inter-agency network and which can be used as an inter-agency framework for medium- or long-term cooperation.

In response to that, in September 2018, the 24th Meeting of the EMG Senior Officials (issue note) agreed to form a Coalition to Combat Sand and Dust Storms including UN agencies and other non-UN organizations and research institutes, to address this growing challenge.

UN agencies have nominated their focal points to the Coalition (annex) following an invitation by the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme.

The first meeting of the Coalition was held by videoconference on 14 February 2019 and agreed areas of focus, modalities and a workplan of the Coalition.

Mandate

To promote and coordinate a collaborative United Nations system response to the growing issue of SDS, on local, regional, and global scales, ensuring unified and coherent action is taken.

To facilitate exchange of knowledge, data, and best practices among Coalition members to promote effective and coherent action on SDS across the UN-system.

To encourage and promote collaboration on initiatives and action within the Members of the Coalition on SDS, including advocacy and funding initiatives.

To facilitate dialogue and collaboration amongst affected countries and the UN system in addressing SDS issues collectively

To facilitate the capacity building of Member States, raise their awareness and enhance their preparedness and response to SDS in affected regions.

Key Objectives

The key objectives of the Coalition include:

- Prepare a global response to SDS, including a strategy and an action plan, which could result in the development of a United Nations system-wide approach to addressing SDS. Identifying entry points to support SDS-affected countries and regions in the implementation of cross-sectoral, and transboundary risk reduction and response measures for SDS¹.
- Provide a forum for engaging with partners and enhancing dialogue and collaboration among affected countries and the UN system agencies at global, regional and sub-regional level.
- Provide a common platform for exchange of knowledge, data, information and technical expertise and resources for strengthening preparedness measures and strategies for risk reduction, consolidated policy, innovative solutions, advocacy and capacity building efforts, and fund-raising initiatives.

¹ The entry points can be defined by applying frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework of four Priorities of Action.



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- Identify, mobilize and facilitate access to financial resources for joint responses to sand and dust storms including through new and innovative resources and mechanisms

Structure and Approach

Four main cross cutting work areas will be addressed by the coalition:

1. Facilitation of information exchange among stakeholders (e.g. data collection, knowledge sharing and innovative solutions)
2. Capacity building and training
3. Mobilizing resources and fund-raising initiatives
4. Advocacy and awareness raising

To be able to advance these work areas in a coherent and efficient matter, five working groups will be established following a disaster risk management (DRM) and SDS lifecycle approach. Each working group will cover a specific part of the DRM and SDS lifecycle (Figure 1). The working groups will focus on all four work areas in a cross-cutting manner. Each working group will be led and co-led by the respective agency or entities which have the most experience and knowledge of that subject area. These working groups will each focus on their own expertise while assuring regular communication and flow of information among groups in the framework of the Coalition's strategy. It is understandable that there might be some overlap in the activities of the working groups and specific issues might need simultaneous attention from several working groups. Since the five working groups may contribute to several objectives, it is considered advisable that a mapping of actions anticipating a series of clear outcomes be developed.

The five working groups will cover:

1. Adaptation and mitigation
2. Forecasting and early warning
3. Health and safety
4. Policy and governance
5. Mediation and regional collaboration ²

² To support the development of regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, inter-governmental and expert dialogues on shared vulnerabilities and risks, with a view to apply region-specific approaches to SDS. A neutral support could also be provided to assist in addressing complex cross-boundaries issues, including amongst countries with difficult bilateral relations through the use of specialized communication.

Coordination and Reporting

UNEP with the support of the EMG Secretariat will coordinate the work of the Coalition and report on its progress to the relevant bodies. This will be achieved in the following ways:

1. Reporting on Coalition-wide meetings, and sharing these meeting reports with each focal point, as well as on facilitating and reporting on Working Group meetings as needed.
2. Reporting on the progress of the Sand and Dust Storm Coalition over time and ensuring that these reports are shared with the focal points of the Coalition.
3. Produce a mapping report which maps the current initiatives focused on SDS, and which highlights the gaps in these initiatives for future opportunities.
4. Prepare an action plan, including dates and durations of activities, to be approved by the Coalition focal points before the official launch of the Sand and Dust Storm Coalition at the UNCCD CoP in Delhi, India, in September 2019. This action plan can continue to be subject to revisions following the meeting with representatives from concerned Member States to discuss the Coalition, as well as national expectations at the launch of the SDS Coalition.



2- Disaster Risk Cycle with suggested Working Groups focusing of specific stages of the cycle (Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery)

Leads or Co-Leads for Working Groups as concluded in the first meeting of the focal points on 24 February 2019:

1. **Forecasting and early warning:** WMO, UNEP
2. **Health and safety:** WHO, WMO
3. **Policy and governance:** UNCCD, UNEP
4. **Mediation and regional collaboration:** ESCAP, UNECE and other regional commissions
5. **Adaptation and mitigation:** UNDP, UNCCD, FAO, ESCWA (co-lead)

The Working Groups will be responsible for agreeing on when and how they meet, but if desired by their chairpersons, these meetings can be coordinated and facilitated by the EMG. Each Working Group will work towards the goals of the work areas highlighted below.

Activities under each work area	
<p>1. Facilitate information exchange among stakeholders (e.g. data collection, knowledge sharing and innovative solutions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping and documenting success stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mapping all available models and tools. Looking at the whole lifecycle of SDS starting from early warning to mitigation, including risk and impact assessments and sources. ○ Documenting all existing research findings, data bases, models and outputs. ○ Gap analysis to enhance cooperation opportunities throughout the value chain. • Urgent Need for social science research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enabling more effective and successful projects by identifying reasons for lack of implementation of SDS source and impact mitigation practices by key stakeholders including locals. ○ SDS impact on gender, livelihoods and humanitarian aspect as well as the associated political risks. Risk assessment, vulnerability assessment, economic impact assessment, a GIS-based vulnerability mapping in line with the methodology frameworks presented to in the UNCCD technical guide, and other related UN technical reports and guides.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Science bottom up approach and real time reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. Interactive maps where citizens upload pictures and map events and severity (impact assessment); this could be done through an app with early warning and WMO forecast • Need for innovative approaches with clear priorities to be tested as pilot projects
<p>2. Capacity building and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of trainings at national/regional levels targeting different government sectors in line with SDS's cross sectoral nature and multidisciplinary impacts. This may include capacity building for countries on implementing source and impact mitigation measures, strengthening governance and regional cooperation mechanisms etc. • Organization of trainings for the international humanitarian and aid groups on advice given to local communities. • Multidisciplinary training programmes. Possibly building on and with the support of UNCCD's SDS training modules for National Focal Points and UNCCD-stakeholders as well as the modules and opportunities available from other Coalition members. The training focuses on how to assess a country's vulnerability to sand and dust storms and mitigate the negative impacts, including the methodology frameworks for the economic impact assessment, risk assessment, vulnerability assessment including those related to transboundary origins and impacts, and a GIS based mapping, source mitigation strategy, impact mitigation and preparedness, national/regional plan and policy and early warning.
<p>3. Mobilizing resources and fund-raising initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added value in collaboration with private weather services to uptake UN system data and create private-public partnerships dealing with SDS. Enhances effective communication with local communities. • Need for increased collaboration with the UN agencies and organizations involved in agriculture and rangeland management at county level (FAO, UNDP, IFAD...), linkages with the Rio conventions



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	<p>and other global and regional commitments of land degradation and desertification, climate change, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNCCD / Global Mechanism assists countries in the development of a transformative Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) project targeting multiple funding sources including banks, GCF, GEF etc. There is great potential for SDS-related projects on source mitigation in the context of LDN that can be explored.• Possible financial resources can be secured through WMO SDS Warning Advisory and Assessment System (WAAS) Project Trust Fund to support efforts on combating SDS. Other potential sources could be the Green Climate Fund, South-South Foundation et al.• Uzbekistan jointly with UN organizations launched the UN Multi- Partner Trust Fund with the goal to respond the Aral Sea disaster affected area which is increasingly becoming an origin of sand and dust storms in Central Asia.
<p>4. Advocacy and awareness raising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing an effective communication strategy with targeted audience (e.g., an app that enables healthcare advice and information on SDS, possibly to be launched at the UNCCD CoP-14).• Creating a possible step-by-step roadmap (infographic) for addressing SDS challenges at policy level and/or local level.• Presenting the coalition at relevant events to promote the integration of SDS in global agendas.



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Annex: List of focal points

Name	Agency
Sanjay Srivastava	ESCAP
Carol Chouchani Cherrane	ESCWA
Roula Majdalani	ESCWA
Stephan Baas	FAO
AbdelHamied Hamid	FAO
Feras Ziadat	FAO
Vanessa Gray	ITU
Jonathan Davies	IUCN
Utchang Kang	UNCCD
Anne Juepner	UNDP
Batyr Hajiyev	UNECE
Gary Lewis	UN Environment
Siamak Moghaddam	UN-Habitat
Angus Mackay	UNITAR
Craig M. Meisner	World Bank
Paul D. EGERTON	WMO
Alexander Baklanov	WMO
Jane Hupe	ICAO
Pending answer	WHO