

Examples of UN agencies, mandates, programmes and initiatives in relation to sand and dust storms

- UN Environment, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), prepared the Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms in 2016. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the global distribution of sand and dust storms and recommends an integrated policy framework to guide further mitigation.
- The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification developed a Policy Advocacy Framework for Sand and Dust Storms in collaboration with UNEP and WMO in 2017. It highlights a three pillar approach in policy development and implementation for sand and dust storms at all scales, including cross-cutting and integrated actions, and proposes goals and objectives for sand and dust storms policies.
- UNCCD COP decision 31/COP.13 (2017) invited Parties to use the Policy Advocacy Framework. Parties to the UNCCD are also invited to mainstream sand and dust storms issues in national disaster risk reduction policies, explore options to integrate anthropogenic source mitigation measures into national voluntary land degradation neutrality target setting, promote cooperation on sand and dust storms, and facilitate information exchange and knowledge sharing and transfers.
- Furthermore, decision 31/COP/13 requested the UNCCD secretariat to collaborate with other relevant UN entities and specialized organizations in the process of assisting Parties in implementing the Policy Advocacy Framework to combat sand and dust storms, in particular anthropogenic sand and dust storms source mitigation and strengthening of resilience. It invited the relevant UN entities to assist affected country Parties in developing and implementing national and regional policies on sand and dust storms.
- The UNCCD COP 13 also adopted two decisions that include provisions for sand and dust storms. Decision 8/COP.13 requested the secretariat to continue fostering partnerships to facilitate capacity development for risk and vulnerability assessments and mitigation of the impacts of sand and dust storms. Decision 9/COP.13 requested the secretariat to build on and strengthen collaboration with relevant United Nations entities and the Rio conventions secretariat, as well as development partners and relevant international organizations, to support activities on sand and dust storms.
- The UN Convention to Combat Desertification Ordos Declaration in 2017 urges a proactive approach to enhance cooperation and collaboration at global, regional and sub regional levels to address the causes and impacts of sand and dust storms including through promotion of sustainable water use and land management, to reduce future risks and impacts.
- The UNCCD secretariat has been developing and testing, in collaboration with UN Environment and the World Meteorological Organisation, methodology frameworks to be used in development and implementation of sand and dust storms policy by countries.
- UN Environment, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Meteorological Organisation, prepared the Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms in 2016. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the global distribution of sand and dust storms and recommends an integrated policy framework to guide further mitigation.

- The World Health Assembly resolution on air quality and health in 2015 highlights that the exposure to particulate matter posed a considerable health threat and was the leading environmental risk factor.
- The World Health Assembly resolution on a road map for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution. Knowledge gaps will be identified and research strategies promoted to improve evidence, as needed, in areas including the health impacts of sources of natural air pollution such as sand and dust storms.
- The UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (resolution 7277 in 2016) underlines regional cooperation and interagency cooperation with relevant UN agencies on sand and dust storms. The Commission devised multi-country coordinated policy actions that are in line with Sendai Framework, and that have already had reported positive impacts.
- The World Meteorological Organization was one of the first UN Agencies, that started addressing the problem of sand and dust storms, their observations, assessments and forecasting since 2004 in response to the intention of more than 40 WMO member countries. The 15th World Meteorological Congress in 2007 highlighted the importance of the SDS problem and endorsed launching of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Sand and Dust Storm Warning Advisory and Assessment System (SDS-WAS). During last 14 years, since WMO started the SDS-WAS project, a great progress in its realisation has been achieved.
- The WMO SDS-WAS, is now a global federation of partners organized around regional nodes, integrates research and user communities (e.g., health, climate, energy, transport, aeronautical, and agricultural users). Its use for agricultural purposes is considered in cooperation with Food and Agriculture Organisation. Presently there are three Regional Nodes of WMO SDS-WAS: the Northern Africa-Middle East-Europe Node (with its Center hosted by Spain), the Asian Node (with its Center hosted by China) and the Pan-American Node (hosted by Barbados and the USA) with their global coordination by the SDS-WAS Steering Committee. The main objective of the SDS-WAS regional centers is to facilitate user access, particularly for national meteorological and hydrological services, to observational, assessment and forecast products, as well as to contribute to the enhancement of capacity-building. In February 2014, WMO established the Barcelona Dust Forecast Center, which operationally generates and distributes forecasts for North Africa, Middle East and Europe. In May 2017, WMO approved the second operational center for Asia, hosted by China.
- The World Health Organisation, UN Environment and the World Meteorological Organisation joined a global coalition on health, environment and climate change in May 2018 that addresses atmospheric dust as an important health risk. The coalition began with a joint focus on Air Quality outlining five areas of joint work. WMO's observing network, its Sand and Dust Storm Warning and Alert System (SDS-WAS) and its Global Atmosphere Watch stations, which monitor the atmosphere, will be underpinning to the global drive to improve air quality mapping and monitoring.
- UN Environment partnered with the Elion Foundation in China in June 2017 to establish a "Green Belt and Road Innovation Centre" in the Kubuqi Desert to promote practical cooperation in desertification control and green development. A key focus of the Innovation Centre is the

establishment of an International Platform on Green Desert Economy that concentrates on innovation and technology exchange.

- The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGW), launched in 2007 by 11 Sahelo-Saharan countries under the leadership of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall and the African Union, with is supported by international organisations such as the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Global Environment Facility and the UNCCD. By promoting the rehabilitation of degraded lands along an 8,000 km stretch across the Sahel from the Atlantic coast of Senegal to the east coast of Djibouti, the GGW should will contribute to source mitigation and the prevention of sand and dust storms A lack of basic data and understanding of some aspects of the sand and dust storm issue is still apparent. In response UNCCD Secretariat has been developing a global sand and dust storm source base map to provide input to baseline information in establishing and implementing national voluntary targets.
- Finally, assessing and mitigating disaster risk posed by sand and dust storms is linked to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.