

United Nations Coalition on Combatting Sand and Dust Storms

Concept note to facilitate discussions of the first focal point conference-call

14 February 2018 (15.00-16.00 CET)

The General Assembly, through its resolution 72/225, invited the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, 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. The General Assembly, in its 73rd session, welcomed the intention of the Executive Director of UN Environment 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 Coalition will meet at its first meeting by teleconference to seek preliminary views of the appointed focal points on the Terms of Reference, areas of focus, modalities and plan of work of the Coalition.

The Coalition is invited to consider the following objectives for its work:

- Provide a common platform for 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.
- Prepare a global response to sand and dust storms, including a strategy and an action plan, which could result in the development of a United Nations system-wide approach to addressing sand and dust storms.
- Convene and enhance dialogue and collaboration among affected countries and the UN system agencies at global, regional and sub-regional level.

Suggested structure and approach for the UN Coalition to combat sand and dust storms:

Taking advantage of the UNCCD and WMO workshop in October 2018, the following ideas were proposed on the structure and approach of the Coalition.

Accordingly, four main work areas can be envisaged to be addressed by the coalition:

1. Data collection, knowledge sharing and innovative solutions
2. Capacity building and training
3. Mobilizing resources and fund-raising initiatives
4. Advocacy and awareness raising

UN Environment is suggested to be lead coordinator of the Coalition with the support of the Environment Management Group Secretariat, for the development of a mapping report and gap analysis and action plan. This will allow a coherent and effective approach to be implemented by the relevant agencies (individually or jointly) in assisting the affected countries, within their respective mandate, programme of work and existing resources, in accordance with the General Assembly resolutions.

To be able to take forward the work areas mentioned above in a coherent and efficient matter, it is suggested to create working groups covering specific stages of the disaster risk management and SDS lifecycle (figure 1). It is suggested that each working group is led and co-led by the respective agency or entities who have the most experience and knowledge of that subject area. These working groups will each focus on their own expertise while making sure that there is constant communication and flow of information among groups in the framework of the Coalition's strategy.

Possible working groups may include:

- Adaptation and mitigation
- Forecasting and early warning
- Health and safety
- Policy and governance
- Mediation and regional collaboration



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Figure 1- Disaster Risk Cycle with suggested working group focusing of specific stages of the cycle



Suggested activities under each work area	
<p>1. 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 value chain of SDS starting from early warning to mitigation, including risk and impact assessments. ○ Documenting all existing 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 of lack of implementation of mitigation practices by locals.○ SDS impact on gender and humanitarian aspect.○ Political risk assessment.● Civilian 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) – 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
2. Capacity building and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Training of international humanitarian and aid groups on advice given to local communities.● Multidisciplinary training programmes. Possibly building on UNCCD's SDS training modules for National Focal Points and UNCCD-stakeholders. The training focuses on how to assess a country's vulnerability to sand and dust storms, including the methodology for the economic impact assessment.
3. Mobilizing resources and fund-raising initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Added value in collaboration with private weather services to uptake UN system data and create PPPs dealing with sand and dust storms. 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...).● Possible financial resources can be secured through WMO Trust Fund to support efforts on combating sand and dust storms, Green Climate Fund, South-South Foundation, ...
4. Advocacy and awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Developing an effective communication strategy with targeted audience (e.g. app that enables healthcare advise).● Creating a possible step by step road map (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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Workplan 2019									
Timeline	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Conference call of focal points	█								
Mapping relevant actors and initiatives on SDS	█	█	█						
Drafting ToR and Action Plan			█	█	█				
Follow up conference call of focal points to discuss ToR and Action Plan					█				
Finalizing ToR, Action Plan 2019-2020 and a position paper					█	█			
Setting up working groups						█	█	█	
Reporting Progress to SOM								█	
Meeting of focal points and signing ceremony (possibly in the margins of UNCCD COP in October 2019)									█

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