

Biodiversity
Climate Change
Desertification

**A Basic Guide
On National Obligations
For Senior Decision Makers
In The Caribbean**

The Trust For Sustainable Livelihoods

www.sustrust.org

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Purpose of this Guidance Note

The purpose of this document is to provide senior decision makers with a basic understanding of the Government's obligations under the selected multilateral environmental agreements. It is also intended to help senior decision makers focus on areas for priority attention and to guide the integration of elements of these conventions into national programme development.

Focus of this Guidance Note

This document is written in a simple style and focuses on what governments have agreed to do for themselves under the Conventions of Biological Diversity, Climate Change and Desertification. This document is not an analysis of the Conventions. It summarises the intent of the Conventions and outlines the articles that should be integrated into national programmes as a matter of priority, in order to ensure compliance. Articles of the Conventions that were not directly related to implementation at the national level or those that provided further details on elements already described, were excluded from this summary.

Further Guidance

Users of this document are encouraged to consult the full text of these Conventions for definitions of technical terms, administration and other details.

Usefulness

If you find this Guidance Note MEAL useful or you think that some modification is needed to make it more useful to you or your organization, do send us your comments at the following email address: info@sustrust.org

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Acknowledgement

We thank all of our colleagues who in one way or another convinced us that there is a need for this type of document. We also thank those colleagues who suggested that such a document would find limited usefulness, since their comments encouraged us to improve this guideline so that it will find favour among a larger target audience.

We are grateful to Anu Lakhan for editing the language of the conventions into a more user-friendly style that allows an easier grasp of the intent of national obligations.

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UN Convention on Biological Diversity

The full text of this convention is available at
www.biodiv.org

Note: Articles of this Convention that were not directly related to implementation at the national level or which provided further details on implementation of articles already summarized were excluded from this summary.

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY:

With a focus on sustainability and equity, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity aims to make the best use of, and mitigate the threats to, biological diversity. This summary highlights the obligations and responsibilities of the Government as a Party to this agreement.

Article 1: Objective

The Convention on Biological Diversity aims to:

- conserve biological diversity,
- make sustainable use of its components and,
- equitably share the benefits of the use of genetic resources.

Article 3: Principles

- States have the right to make use of their own resources according to their environmental policies and the responsibility to ensure their activities bring no damage to other areas outside their jurisdiction.

Article 6: General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use

- The conservation and sustainable use of the products of bio diversity should be integrated into national planning; states may adapt existing strategies or develop their own national plans to be implemented across all sectors.

Article 7: Identification and Monitoring

Gather and collate data on the following:

- The components of biological diversity that are important for conservation and sustainable use,
- The components that require most urgent attention,
- The activities that have a significant adverse impact on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Article 8: Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity – *In situ*

- Use guidelines, tools and processes necessary for identifying, monitoring, regulating and conserving biological diversity; including the establishment and management of a system of protected areas.
- Principles of conservation and sustainability should be put into practice both within and outside of protected areas.

- Rehabilitate endangered species, prevent the introduction of alien species and control or eliminate those that threaten ecosystems or species.
- Maintain local knowledge and practices relevant to sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Maintain the legal/regulatory framework to protect endangered species and develop programmes for their recovery.

Article 9: Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity – *Ex situ*

- Establish and maintain facilities for ex-situ conservation of and research on plants, animals and micro-organisms; these should not threaten in-situ populations
- Support efforts for the multiplication and reintroduction of threatened species into their natural habitats.

Article 10: Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity

- In attempting to conserve and sustainably use the products of biological diversity, Countries should encourage cooperation between the public and private sectors.
- Impacts on biological diversity should be taken into consideration in the preparation and implementation of national plans and programmes.
- Local communities should be encouraged and supported in taking remedial action in degraded areas.

Article 11: Incentive Measures

- Incentives that are economically and socially sound should be offered to encourage the conservation and sustainable use of components of biological diversity.

Article 12: Research and Training

- Countries should encourage and share the results of research that will help to better understand local biodiversity and assist in its management.
- Technical training in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity should be established and maintained.

Article 13: Public Education and Awareness

- The Government should undertake education and awareness-raising programmes on issues related to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and collaborate with other States and organisations in developing awareness programmes.

Article 14: Impact Assessment and Minimizing Adverse Impacts

- Impact assessments should be undertaken, allowing public participation, with a view to minimizing adverse effects on biological diversity.
- Ensure that the environmental consequences of programmes and policies on biodiversity are taken into consideration.
- Encourage the development of bilateral or multilateral agreements which promote consultation, notification and exchange of information on any of their activities that impact on the biodiversity of other territories.
- Emergency responses to incidents that endanger biological diversity should be designed.

Article 15: Access to Genetic Resources

- While states have sovereign rights over their natural resources, they are encouraged to facilitate access to genetic resources for environmentally sound uses by other countries, under mutually agreeable conditions.
- Governments are also encouraged to cooperate in scientific research and to share equitably any benefits arising from such research and to take legislative, administrative and policy measures to ensure the sharing of benefits.

Article 16: Access to and Transfer of Technology

- Pursuant to the objectives of this Convention, the Government must facilitate the share and transfer of technology relevant to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Legislative and administrative frameworks, across sectors, should be established to enable this sharing of information.

Article 17: Exchange of Information

- Facilitate the exchange of information from public sources, taking into account its special needs as a developing country, including technical, scientific and socio-economic research, as well as information on training and surveying programmes, specialized knowledge, indigenous and traditional knowledge.

Article 18: Technical and Scientific Cooperation

- Technical and scientific cooperation between states to implement and achieve the aims of this Convention should be promoted.

- Joint activities in accordance with policy and legislative frameworks must also be considered.

Article 19: Handling of Biotechnology and Distribution of its Benefits

- Legal and administrative measures should enable effective participation in biotechnological research activities by those countries that provide the genetic resources for such research.
- Measures should be taken to ensure access by Contracting Parties, especially developing countries, to the results and benefits arising from research on genetic resources provided by those Parties.
- Anyone distributing a living modified organism must provide information regarding the handling, nature and potential effects of such threats to the receiving country.

Article 20: Financial Resources

- The Government undertakes to provide financial support and incentives to activities intended to achieve the objectives of this Convention, according to its national plans.

Article 26: Reports

- The Government must present to the Conference of the Parties reports on measures which it has taken for the implementation of this Convention and their effectiveness in meeting its objectives.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

The full text of this convention is available at
www.unfccc.int

Note: Articles of this Convention that were not directly related to implementation at the national level or which provided further details on implementation of articles already summarized were excluded from this summary.

CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE:

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change aims to control and reduce the effect on the environment of greenhouse gas emissions (gases produced, for example, in industrial operations, vehicle emissions, burning of organic materials). This summary highlights the obligations and responsibilities of the Government as a Party to this agreement.

Article 2: Objective

- To stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent interference with the climate system that could prove dangerous to human health, investments, settlements, food security and natural areas and wildlife.

Article 3: Principles

- While sharing a common desire to protect the climate system for present and future generations, individual countries have different needs and resources. These should receive full consideration so countries' programmes and strategies promote sustainable development while combating climate change.
- All efforts - preventative, precautionary or mitigating - should be cost effective.

Article 4: Commitments

The Government undertakes to:

- Make available national inventories of emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases;
- Take issues of climate change into consideration in overall national planning;
- Enact national and regional programmes to mitigate the effects of, or adapt to, climate change;
- Cooperate and share information on processes and practices to deal with mitigation of, or adaptation to, climate change, including research across disciplines and sectors;
- Promote sustainable management and conservation;
- Encourage public awareness, education and participation on climate change.

Article 6: Education, Training and Public Awareness

- At the national and regional levels, the Government must encourage public awareness and participation, access to information and appropriate training of personnel.

- At the international level, cooperation between Governments should ensure sharing of educational and public awareness material as well as expertise on institution building and personnel training.

Article 12: Communication of Information Related to Implementation

- The Government must communicate to the Conference of the Parties an inventory of emissions and a description of how it intends to implement the Convention.

UN Convention to Combat Desertification

The full text of this convention is available at
www.unccd.org

Note: Articles of this Convention that were not directly related to implementation at the national level or which provided further details on implementation of articles already summarized were excluded from this summary.

CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION*:

This summary highlights the obligations and responsibilities of the Government as a Party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It is concerned with reducing drought and eradicating poverty.

Article 2: Objective

- To combat desertification and lessen the effects of drought by improving land productivity, and the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources.

Article 3: Principles

- To achieve the aims of this Convention awareness, participation and cooperation on community, national, regional and international levels are desirable, heeding the special needs of developing countries.

Article 4: General obligations

- Combating desertification and drought calls for approaches to research and resource management that are:
 - inter-disciplinary (using the skills of a range of knowledges, for example: economic, social, geographic, scientific)
 - inter-sectoral (cutting across different segments of the economy, for example: public sector, private sector) and
 - long-term.
- Cooperation and participation must be facilitated at all levels and programmes must include strategies for poverty eradication.
- There are existing financial mechanisms to aid in these efforts and affected developing countries are eligible for assistance in the implementation of the Convention.

Article 5: Obligations of the Government

- Make desertification and drought priority issues, identify the underlying causes and attempt to manage them within a framework of sustainable development.

* Desertification refers to land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities.

- The legislative and administrative environment should enable these activities.
- Community participation, particularly of women and youth, is encouraged.

Article 8: Relationship with Other Conventions

- Where possible, the Government should cooperate to achieve the objectives of this and related Conventions and avoid duplication of effort.
- Of particular relevance here are the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Article 9: Basic Approach

- Affected countries must enact national action programmes as detailed to the Permanent Secretariat.
- Such programmes may be built on existing models and updated through ongoing participatory research.
- These programmes should make use of national and international institutional and financial support.

Article 10: National Action Programmes

- National action programmes should identify causes of desertification and drought as well as appropriate remedial action.
- They should detail the roles of different stakeholders and the resources needed, through a participatory and cooperative approach.
- Strategies should be long-term, flexible and focus on preemptive action, and should be subject to regular review.
- National action programmes may include development of early-warning systems, better drought preparedness, food security systems, alternative livelihood projects and irrigation systems.

Article 11: Sub-regional and Regional Action Programmes

- Regional and sub-regional cooperation should complement national programmes in areas such as the sustainable management of trans-boundary natural resources, scientific and technical cooperation, and strengthening of relevant institutions.

Article 14: Coordination in the Elaboration and Implementation of Action Programmes

- To maximize the use of resources, and to avoid duplication of effort, the Government is encouraged to cooperate and facilitate information sharing.

Article 15: Regional Implementation Annexes

- Action programmes shall be suitable to the socio-economic, geographical and climatic factors of affected countries or regions, as well as to their level of development.
- Guidelines for the preparation of action programmes and their exact focus and content for particular sub-regions and regions are set out in the regional implementation annexes.

Article 19: Capacity Building, Education and Public Awareness

- To achieve the goals of this Convention, the Government appreciates the need to build capacity by facilitating participation, increased training and research, information sharing and by identifying alternative energy sources and livelihoods.
- Efforts to improve education and public awareness, including that of women and children, should promote interdisciplinary understanding and sustainable practices.

Article 20: Financial Resources

- The Government undertakes to make available such funding as necessary to implement its action plans, making full use of all national and international resources and encouraging the support of the private sector.
- To do this, the Government must ensure the most efficient use of resources already committed to reducing desertification and drought.

Article 26: Communication of Information

- The Government must communicate to the Conference of the Parties its proposed measures for combating desertification and drought, and details of how these are to be implemented.

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