

Draft Concept Note

Capacity-Building Workshop on Addressing Desertification and Land Degradation in North-East Asia: Impact of Climate Change and Sectoral Policies

24-26 September 2025

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Background

Desertification and land degradation (DLD) pose major threats to sustainable development in North-East Asia, severely affecting ecological health, economic sustainability, and community livelihoods. Concomitantly, climate change further exacerbates droughts and land degradation, increasing the risks of displacement, resource scarcity, and food insecurity. While desertification is a critical concern for the sustainable development of arid and semi-arid areas, addressing land degradation more broadly is essential for preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as for ensuring long-term food security, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihoods.

Recognizing these growing challenges, the 27th Senior Officials Meeting of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) held in Beijing in December 2024, emphasized the need for targeted capacity-building initiatives and policy dialogue to address DLD in the subregion.

In response, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), through its East and North-East Asia Office (SOENEA), is implementing a project titled “*Strengthening the Capacity to Address Desertification and Land Degradation for Sustainable Development in North-East Asia*”. This project is part of ESCAP’s Regional Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) and aims to strengthen the capacity of government officials and stakeholders and promote regional cooperation to combat DLD.

The Capacity-Building Workshop is scheduled to take place from 24 to 26 September 2025. On the first day, participants will attend a Subregional Forum on Desertification and Land Degradation, jointly organized with the National Forest Agency of Mongolia and the DLDD-Northeast Asia Network (DLDD-NEAN). The Forum will provide an

opportunity to gain insights into the desertification and land degradation policies of North-East Asian countries and to learn about recent research findings. The following two days will be dedicated to **technical sessions** aimed at enhancing participants' knowledge and capacity on the subject. The workshop will promote technical and policy knowledge-sharing, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and support the development of collaborative initiatives in North-East Asia, contributing to broader regional efforts, including preparations for the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), which will be held in Mongolia in 2026.

Objectives

- Enhance the technical and policy capacity of North-East Asia government officials and relevant stakeholders to address DLD and climate change impacts.
- Promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and good practices in sustainable land management in the subregion.
- Facilitate dialogue and strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms to address DLD.
- Promote joint initiatives and actions among countries in North-East Asia.

Expected Outcomes

- Improved knowledge and technical capacity to address DLD.
- Enhanced policy dialogue and coordination, including the sharing of good practices and identification of opportunities for joint actions.
- Strengthened subregional networks to support ongoing cooperation on DLD.

Targeted Participants

- Government officials from forestry, environmental, agricultural, and sustainable development agencies.
- Experts from UN agencies and regional institutions.
- Representatives of research institutes, civil society organizations, and international partners.

Tentative Programme

24 September (Wednesday) – *International Forum on Combating Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought: Addressing Land and Natural Disasters*

Time	Programme
09:30 - 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:30	Opening session Introduction of Main Guests Opening and Welcoming Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E. Minister, MECC, Mongolia - ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office - DLDD-NEAN Secretariat Group Photo
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 12:30	Session 1. Policies / Projects to Combat Desertification and SDS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative of China - Representative of Japan - Mr. Oyunsana Bymbasuren, Director General, National Forest Agency of Mongolia - Ms. Hwa Young Park, Deputy Director, Korea Forest Service - Ms. Tatiana Kuderina, Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences - Ms. Letizia Rossano, Director, Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), ESCAP (video recorded) - Ms. Heimata Louisa Karika, Regional Liaison Officer – Asia, UNCCD Secretariat
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Session 2. Research on Desertification and SDS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert from China - Ms. Anarmaa Sharkhuu, Assistant Professor, National University of Mongolia - Mr. Kihyung Park, Research Scientist, National Institute of Forest Science, Republic of Korea - Mr. Otto Chkhetiani, Deputy Director, Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Russian Academy of Sciences
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee break

15:30 – 16:30	Session 3. Panel Discussion Moderator: Ms. Ariuntuya Dorjsuren, Mongolia (MOFA/MECC) - UNCCD COP17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panelists from China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea & Russian Federation Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head of ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office UNCCD Secretariat (TBC)
---------------	--

25 September (Thursday) – Technical Sessions

Time	Programme
14:00 – 14:15	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening remarks by Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head, East and North-East Asia Office, ESCAP Welcome remarks by Mr. Oyunsana Bymbasuren, Director General, National Forest Agency of Mongolia Remarks by Mr. Jap Van Hierden, UN Resident Coordinator for Mongolia
14:15 – 15:45 (90 mins)	Session 1: Best practices on managing desertification and land degradation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Dashtseren Avirmed, Director of the Institute of Geography and Geoecology, Mongolia Mr. Cheng LeiLei, Associate Professor, Chinese Academy of Forestry Mr. Park, Ki-hyung, Researcher, National Institute of Forest Science, Republic of Korea Ms. Tatiana Kuderina, Senior Researcher, Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences
15:45 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 17:30 (90 mins)	Session 2: Climate change and DLD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Jun Yu, Regional Officer, WMO Regional Office for Asia and North-Western Pacific Representative from the Government of Mongolia Mr. Wang Changke, Researcher, National Climate Centre, China Meteorological Administration Mr. Otto Chkhetiani, Deputy Director, Institute of atmospheric physics, Russian Academy of Science Mr. SungEun Kim, Programme Management Officer, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office

26 September (Friday)

Time	Programme
09:30 – 09:35	Recap of Day1
09:35 – 10:45 (70 mins)	Session 3: SDS Policies addressing DLD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Letizia Rossano, Director, Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), ESCAP • Ms. Mandakh Nyamtseren, Consultant, UNDP Mongolia • Mr. LinChang An, Senior Engineer, National Meteorological Centre, China Meteorological Administration
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:30 (90 mins)	Session4: Agricultural and Livestock Policies addressing DLD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Representatives from the Government of Mongolia • Mr. Guang Lei Gao, Professor, Beijing Forestry University, China • Mr. Jungyo Lee, Korea Forest Service • Mr. Chunsheng Yao, GEF Officer, FAO China
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:30 (150 mins)	Session5: International cooperation and way forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Heimata Louisa Karika, Regional Liaison Officer - Asia Global Policy Advocacy and Regional Cooperation, UNCCD • Ms. Ariunna Chadraabal, UN RC Office for Mongolia • Ms. Javkhlan Nyamjav, Project Manager, GIZ • Mr. Jungyo Lee, DLDD-NEAN Secretariat • Mr. SungEun Kim, Programme Management Officer, ESCAP/NEASPEC <p>Panel discussion on collaborative areas and preparations for UNCCD COP17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator: Ms. Ariuntuya Dorjsuren, Mongolia (MOFA/MECC) - UNCCD COP17
16:30 – 17:00	Evaluation / Wrap-up and Closing