

(Attached Document)

Overview and key outcomes of the 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP17)

1. Overview of the Meeting

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD; official title: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa) is held every two years.

UNCCD COP17 was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from August 17 to 28, 2026, with the participation of approximately 140 Parties (*) out of 196 country Parties and regions, as well as United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and others.

(*) number of Parties that submitted credentials

(1) Date: August 17 to 28, 2026

(2) Location: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

(3) Participants: Representatives of Parties, United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and others

(4) Participants from the Government of Japan

The Japanese Government delegation was headed by AOYAMA Shigeharu, State Minister of the Environment, and included officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Professor TSUNEKAWA Atsushi, Vice President of Tottori University, also attended as an expert on the Convention.

2. Key outcomes

(1) High-Level Segment

State Minister AOYAMA introduced the technical cooperation by the Ministry of the Environment on combating desertification in Mongolia, and the SATOYAMA Initiative, which is also effective for rangeland management.

Prior to the high-level segment, State Minister AOYAMA held bilateral meetings with Mr. SANDAG-OCHIR, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia, and Mr. NAIDALAA, Minister of Energy of Mongolia, and exchanged views on future environmental cooperation.

(2) High-Level Dialogue on Rio Synergies

State Minister AOYAMA introduced the resolution on promoting synergies among the three Rio Conventions, which was proposed by Japan and adopted at the seventh session

of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) in December 2025, as well as the “Asia-Pacific Synergies Report,” which was launched by the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with international organizations and others in June 2026.

The three Rio Conventions are the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which were opened for signature at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio Earth Summit), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, for which the commencement of treaty negotiations was decided at the Rio Earth Summit.

(3) Major agendas

▪ Consideration of the future strategic framework beyond 2030

The final report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the UNCCD beyond 2030 (IWG-FSF) was discussed. As a result of the discussions, it was determined that the strategic framework beyond 2030 required further consideration, and discussions would continue in the IWG-FSF during the period leading up to the next COP.

▪ Drought

The importance of risk management, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building in responding to drought was discussed. Parties shared the recognition that further consideration among Parties was required regarding a future institutional framework, and discussions would continue at the next COP.

▪ Avoiding, reducing and reversing land and soil degradation of agricultural lands

A decision was adopted confirming, among other matters, the importance of promoting sustainable land management, including regenerative agriculture and Nature-based Solutions (NbS), and of improving soil health and advancing land restoration through private-sector participation and public-private partnerships.

For the programme and an overview of the conference, please see the following websites.

○ Official press releases (UNCCD secretariat):

<https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/press-releases>

○ Conference coverage and photographs (IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin):

<https://enb.iisd.org/convention-combat-desertification-unccd-cop17>

(4) Side event hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan

The Ministry of the Environment of Japan co-hosted the following side event with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia. Speakers on the Japanese side included experts involved in Japan’s project to combat desertification and officials from the Ministry of the Environment, and on the Mongolian side, the head of the National Forest Agency of Mongolia, an expert from the National University of Mongolia, and local herders. Approximately 70 participants attended in person.

Date and time: August 24, 2026, 13:00–14:30 (local time)

Venue: Meeting Room MET-02 (within the COP17 venue)

Title: Community-based Ecosystem Management for Combating Desertification in Mongolia

(5) Side event hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan co-hosted the following side event with the Tottori University International Platform for Dryland Research and Education (IPDRE) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Date and time: August 21, 2026, 13:00–14:30

Venue: Meeting Room MET-30 (within the COP17 venue)

Title: Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable Land Management: Japan's Innovative Technologies and Approaches

An event summary can be seen on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan:

https://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/inter_relate/2608_unnccd_cop17_side_event_summary.html

Reference 1: The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was adopted in 1994 and entered into force in 1996. Japan accepted the Convention in 1998, and it entered into force for Japan in the same year. The Convention provides, among other matters, that countries and regions experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, prepare and implement action programmes to combat desertification, and that developed country Parties support such efforts. There are 197 Parties to the Convention, consisting of 196 countries and the European Union.

Reference 2: Support for Measures to Combat Desertification in Mongolia

As part of its support for countries affected by desertification, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan has provided long-term technical assistance in Mongolia since 2004.

Currently, with the aim of restoring and conserving saxaul forests in Bogd Soum, Bayankhongor Province (saxaul (*Haloxylon ammodendron*) is a shrub native to Mongolia and is used by herders, including as a feeding area for livestock), the Ministry of the Environment of Japan is supporting the preparation of community-based restoration and conservation plans and conducting surveys to provide technical information.