



United Nations – United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Junior Professional Officer Program (JPO) Chiffre Nr. 2026-2-38

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. General Information

Title: JPO Junior Policy Officer

Sector of Assignment: Drought Resilience, Sustainable Land Management & Food Security

Organization/Office: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) / The Global Policy Advocacy and Regional Cooperation (GPARC) Unit

Country and Duty Station: Bonn, Germany

Duration of assignment: 2 years with possibility of extension for another year. The extension of appointment is subject to yearly review concerning priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance

Please note that for participants of the JPO-Programme two years work experience are mandatory! Relevant work experience can be counted. In order to assess the eligibility of the candidates, we review the relevant experience acquired after obtaining the first university degree (usually bachelor's degree).

II. Supervision

Direct Supervision by:
Programme Officer (Drought)

Content and methodology of supervision:

Establishment of a Work Plan: During the first month of the assignment, the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) will work jointly with his/her direct supervisor to finalize an agreed upon work plan. The final work plan will be discussed and mutually agreed to by the JPO and his/her supervisor.

Evaluation: The United Nations Performance Evaluation System (e-performance) will serve as a primary platform to evaluate the JPO's performance. He/she will have daily contact with the supervisors. Desired results and anticipated problems will be discussed beforehand with the incumbent. Depending on the incumbent's progress, regular feedback on the progress of activities will be given by the supervisor. He/she will have a work program and will be assessed according to the implementation of the program.

III. Duties, Responsibilities and Output Expectations

Under the direct supervision of the Programme Officer (Drought), and in close collaboration with colleagues in the Global Policy, Advocacy & Regional Coordination Unit as well other units, the Junior Policy Officer will:

1. Policy and Technical Support

- Contribute to political initiatives, policy research and drafting on drought resilience, land degradation, and land-based approaches to food security.
- Provide inputs into UNCCD documents to strengthen the focus on food security and agricultural systems under stress.
- Engage with the UNCCD Community of Learning and Practice to exchange knowledge, identify emerging trends, and support evidence-based policy recommendations on drought resilience and land management.
- Support capacity-building initiatives for national and regional stakeholders, facilitating exchange of good practices through workshops, webinars, and the UNCCD knowledge sharing platforms.

2. Explore synergies between land, climate and (agro)biodiversity

- Contribute to analysis and reporting at the interface of the UNCCD, UNFCCC, and UNCBD on topics such as sustainable land management, land-based adaptation, ecosystem restoration, and agroecology.
- Monitor and analyze outcomes of the UNCCD COP sessions on drought and related topics to inform policy advocacy and programme development.
- Reach out and liaise with other relevant initiatives, i.e. the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership.

3. Gender Mainstreaming

- Support gender analyses related to drought vulnerability, land use, and food systems.
- Assist in identifying and documenting good practices in women's empowerment in drought risk reduction and sustainable agriculture.
- Document and disseminate lessons learned on women's empowerment in drought risk reduction through the UNCCD knowledge-sharing platforms.

4. Project and Partnership Support / Interface with Global Mechanism

- Support coordination and monitoring of drought and food security-related projects, including follow-up with implementing partners.
- Liaise with external partners (e.g., FAO, IFAD, WFP, UNFCCC, CBD) as needed.

IV. Qualifications and Experience

Education:

Master's degree in international development, sustainable land management, natural resources management, land governance, Development Economics or a related field. Additional qualifications in communications or political and social sciences would be an advantage.

Work experience:

A minimum of two years of relevant professional experience in one or more of the following areas: food security, sustainable agriculture, drought resilience, sustainable land and water

management, or environmental policy. Familiarity with multilateral processes, including the UN and Rio Conventions, is an advantage.

Languages:

For this position, fluency in English is required. Knowledge of another UN official language is an advantage.

Other Skills:

Excellent interpersonal skills, specifically in a multicultural working environment, written and oral communication, multitasking and analytical skills. Experience researching, drafting, and editing complex documents for publication is desirable. Good understanding of the policy and technical dimensions of drought, food security, and land degradation. Knowledge of gender-responsive and transformative approaches in development or environmental contexts. Ability to work effectively in a multicultural environment and across teams. Strong organizational and time management skills. Proficiency in Microsoft Office and collaborative platforms (e.g., SharePoint, Teams).

UN competencies:

PROFESSIONALISM: Shows pride in work and in achievements; Demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; Is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; Is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; Shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; Remains calm in stressful situations.

COMMUNICATION: Speaks and writes clearly and effectively; Listens to others, correctly interprets messages from others and responds appropriately; Asks questions to clarify, and exhibits interest in having two-way communication; Tailors language, tone, style and format to match the audience; Demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed.

PLANNING & ORGANIZING: Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies; Identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required; Allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work; Foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning; Monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary; Uses time efficiently.

Workforce Diversity

The United Nations believes that an inclusive culture attracts the best talent and encourages all qualified applicants, regardless of gender, disability, sexual orientation, cultural or religious backgrounds, to apply.

V. Learning Elements

On completion of the assignment, the JPO will have/be able to:

- Gain practical experience in international environmental diplomacy and policy processes.
- Develop technical and policy expertise on land degradation, drought resilience, and food systems.

- Build familiarity with intergovernmental coordination, including collaboration across the UNCCD, UNFCCC, and CBD.
- Expand professional networks with UN agencies, civil society, academia, and governments.
- Be able to develop and assess project proposals and understand project cycle management and draft budgets according to UN standards.
- Understand intergovernmental negotiations in a multilateral environmental agreement.
- Work effectively across teams in a diverse and multi-cultural environment

VI. Background Information

Desertification, along with climate change and the loss of biodiversity were identified as the greatest challenges to sustainable development during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), one of the three “Rio conventions” is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The UNCCD provides the foundation for its 197 Parties to work together to combat desertification, land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought; maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and improve the living conditions for people.

Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking the environment and development to sustainable land management. The vision of the UNCCD and its 197 Parties is to realize “a future that avoids, minimizes, and reverses desertification/land degradation and mitigates the effects of drought in affected areas at all levels – and to achieve a land degradation-neutral world consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” The objective of the Convention is to support countries and communities with the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions.

The escalating frequency and severity of droughts, exacerbated by climate change, emphasize the urgent need for enhanced drought resilience. Droughts also pose significant threats to ecosystems and livelihoods, causing more deaths than any other weather-related disaster and resulting in substantial economic losses.

The 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held in Riyadh from December 2 to 13, 2024 underscored the mounting global challenges of drought, leading to substantial financial commitments and the recognition for the need of strengthening capacities and developing innovative tools and technologies to tackle this pressing global challenge. UNCCD Parties also adopted specific decisions on building drought resilience of affected Parties, requesting the Global Mechanism (GM) and the secretariat of the UNCCD to support Parties in creating an enabling environment at the national level to (i) facilitate the implementation of national drought plans or other policies and frameworks related to drought; (ii) forge specific partnerships to mobilize technical and financial support for projects and programmes on drought; and (iii) collaborate with relevant programmes and to support Parties in leveraging finance through relevant mechanisms (Decision 3/COP.16).

Drought and land degradation are increasingly undermining **agricultural productivity, rural livelihoods, and ecosystems health**. These stressors have profound implications for **food security**, particularly in drought-prone and resource-scarce regions. The UNCCD works at the intersection of the **Rio Conventions** (UNCCD, UNFCCC, and UNCBD) to address these challenges through integrated, land-based solutions.

Bitte senden Sie Ihre JPO-Bewerbung direkt an das Büro Führungskräfte zu Internationalen Organisationen (BFIO) unter Angabe der Chiffre Nr. 2026-2-38 auf dem Bewerbungsbogen