



## Governance and Combating Desertification – an ACP-EU Perspective

An event in the context of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers  
under the German EU Presidency

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»Governance and Combating Desertification – an ACP-EU Perspective«  
held in Brussels on May 23, 2007  
in cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.



The speeches and discussions have been edited for reasons of space.

The conference was held in the framework of the  
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## Foreword

Desertification, soil erosion and drought are increasingly menacing a large part of the world. Today, it affects 110 countries in Europe, Africa, Australia and North and South America, and threatens the livelihoods of more than 1.2 billion people. Most of these affected are among the poorest in the world and depend largely on small-scale agriculture for their subsistence.

The risks of desertification are substantial, especially under the present scenarios of global climate change and loss of ecosystem services. The challenges posed by desertification have also major socio-economic and environmental consequences. In poor countries, desertification not only undermines the land's fertility but also leads to food insecurity, social, economic and political tensions.

In 1994, The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was elaborated with the specific mandate of addressing and combating the risks of desertification and land degradation.

The Convention aims to resolve a global environmental problem and addresses at the same time the issue of poverty reduction in affected countries. Its comparative advantage is that it is the only international instrument to systematically address both environment and development issues. It introduces a series of approaches and tools that can reshape the development process, both at the local and the national level.

To combat desertification and land degradation good governance is essential. Good governance is not referred to explicitly in the UNCCD, yet principles of good governance are established within the Convention.

The 2007 Brussels conference follows on from the 2006 conference »The Role of Governance in Combating Desertification« held in Berlin on the occasion the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. It brings together African, European and North American experts from the academic and political

community and from government and non-governmental organizations to examine the advantages, the shortcomings and the challenges of the UNCCD.

Together, the conference participants have tried to assess the progress achieved by the UNCCD more than ten years after the entry into force of the Convention. They highlighted the need to increase good governance, the role of civil society and laid out possible instruments of implementation to make sure countries comply with the Convention.

This conference has convened at a time when parties to the UNCCD have stressed the need for strategic guidance and targets, in order to foster the implementation of the Convention. An international working group has been established to provide the Convention with a strategy to foster implementation for the next ten years.

The conference has been organised by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) together with the Secretariat of the Convention and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Brussels. The conference is relevant in the sense that it also marks the period of the German EU Presidency.

It is hoped that the proceedings of the following conference will inform readers about the role and future of UNCCD and pave the way for the forthcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD to be held in Madrid, Spain in early September 2007.



Sem T. Shikongo (IIWG), Mohamadou-Mansour N'Diaye (UNCCD), Ute Schaeffer (DW), Christoph Kohlmeyer (BMZ), Christian Henckes (World Bank/GTZ)

## Summary

It has been ten years since the entry into force of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). However, the Convention is still beleaguered with problems of implementation since it has not been sufficiently able to introduce sustainable land use systems and reduce poverty in those regions affected by desertification.

The main theme of the 2007 Brussels Conference centres on the role of governance in combating desertification. The conference also questions the role of the UNCCD and its current validity in the international development environment. In Brussels, all the speakers agreed that the Convention is important and has a role to play since it is the only binding agreement for sustainable land use in the current international political context and it contains the link between poverty reduction and environment protection.

As Ralf Wyrwinski, German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development underlines, there is no agreed definition on global governance. However, there are measures that need to be taken to ensure good governance, including decentralisation, improved cooperation between state and civil society organisations, policy coherence, increased coordination of donors and efficient management of funds. There is also a need for a multi-sectoral approach that addresses environment and development in equal measure and which considers the participation of civil society as indispensable.

For an effective implementation of the UNCCD, Wyrwinski suggests that the governance elements of the Convention such as institutions, rules and procedures, must be newly interpreted with regards to a changing development context. First, the UNCCD needs to develop a reduced action catalogue which technically and politically can achieve the highest priority in combating desertification. Second, it needs agreement on target values as well as on monitoring systems within a standardised evaluation. Thirdly, the UNCCD

needs to be incorporated with other operational implementation mechanisms such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and linked to other institutions like the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development.

As outlined in Antonio Pires' opening remarks, the core of the Convention process is the formulation and implementation of action programmes. These programmes provide a framework to combat desertification in the affected countries. They place particular emphasis on the establishment of an enabling environment that encourages political, institutional, regulatory and financial arrangements, and reforms that are necessary to combat desertification. The UNCCD underlines that successful programmes to combat desertification must originate at the local level and benefit from the experiences and knowledge of those populations that depend on and maintain the fragile dryland ecosystems. Therefore, improving governance is a key factor in improving the guiding principles of development cooperation.

A good understanding of the role of governance in combating desertification will help policy makers in those countries affected to better incorporate the guiding principles of the UNCCD.

Another theme that emerged from the conference in Masse Lo's intervention is the role of civil society and democratic governance. Indeed, the UNCCD is an international legal agreement that grants major importance to the action of civil society and the application of principles of democratic governance. The implementation of action programmes to combat desertification can favour the application of more democratic governance as a response to the request of the international community.

The Convention promotes the principle of participation of civil society, equal opportunity for all actors in the participation of activities to combat desertification and capacity building and awareness-raising among women. The Convention equally enhances the capacity of institutions to respond to the needs of local communities, their accountability, consistency and efficiency. However, compared to the other two environmental conventions, The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), it still lacks political support.

The implementation of the UNCCD relies on linkages with other international regimes. As Christian Henckes from the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development points out, while it is still early to have an overview on the impact of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, there have been recommendations towards countries' increased ownership, improvement of budget processes and lead capacity development efforts. On the donors' side, it is expected that there will be an improvement of predictability of aid flows, a reduction of transaction costs, division of labour and delegated cooperation, alignment and harmonization of vertical programmes. While the Paris Declaration cannot be a blueprint for every country, sector and situation, it can provide guidance for improving overall aid effectiveness in developing countries.

National Action Programmes for Climate Adaptation are, according to Emmanuel Seck from the Environmental Development Action in the Third World, a chance to build on previous experiences and lessons learned as well as on the achievements of the National Action Programmes to combat desertification. It is in fact sometimes difficult to dissociate the activities undertaken to combat desertification from those designed for the adaptation to climate change.

Finally, the Conference focuses on how the Convention should reposition itself internationally. Sem Shikongo, chairman of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group, outlined how the UNCCD's mission is to forge a global framework to support the development and implementation of national and regional policies, programmes and measures to prevent, control and reverse land degradation and desertification and mitigate the effects of drought through scientific and technological excellence. The Convention needs to further raise awareness among the populations, set standards, undertake advocacy, resource mobilisation and contribute to poverty reduction.

Four strategic objectives have been defined: to improve the living conditions of affected populations; to improve the condition of affected ecosystems; to generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD; to mobilise adequate, timely and predictable financial, technical and technological resources from the domestic and international, public and private sources, including substantial resources from developed country parties.

Alternatives for compliance and enforcement were discussed by Thomas Higdon of the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development (IGSD). A guide to implementation, clear expectations, model legislation and model projects were all suggested to ensure compliance with the UNCCD by affected and non-affected countries. The issue of normative theory was also addressed as a way of obtaining compliance through a sense of obligation that operates without normative sanctions. There is a need to look beyond the states and involve civil society in active compliance.

The point was further emphasized by Christoph Kohlmeyer, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. To allow the Convention to succeed where it has so far failed, the current discussion needs to go beyond conventional approaches to negotiation and adopt a model of compliance to which the affected countries can subscribe. The global issue needs to be reflected at local and national levels so that countries can fulfil obligations to the Convention.



## Opening remarks

**By Ralf Wyrwinski** – Desk Officer Unit 314,  
German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Today's event focuses on the United Nation's Convention to Combat Desertification, a Convention which is often praised as a model for implementing the spirit of the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. However, the Convention has not been able as yet to contribute sufficiently to the introduction of sustainable land use systems and the reduction of poverty in those regions of the earth affected by desertification.

In this context improving governance is an important factor for improving the guiding principles of development cooperation. And this applies not only to the cooperation undertaken with individual countries, but also to instruments of global environmental governance, notably the three international environmental Conventions on climate, biodiversity and desertification. The »role of governance in combating desertification« event today provides a platform for exchanging ideas on these highly topical development issues. Representatives from the fields of politics of Germany and Europe as well as from German and international development institutions will give us an overview of the problems and perspectives of the UNCCD in a changing development policy context where the fight against of all types of man-made land degradation remains one of the big challenges for international development cooperation and for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Let me conclude my first remarks with a few words about the organisation of this workshop. It has been organised by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development or BMZ, the UNCCD Secretariat, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Brussels and last but not least, by the German technical cooperation (GTZ). I wish you an interesting conference full of new ideas and opinions.



## The role of good governance for implementation of the UNCCD

**By Antonio Pires** – Senior Advisor, Executive Direction and Management,  
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

It is indeed a great honour to have been invited to attend this important conference. On behalf of the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), we would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the authorities of the Government of Germany for this special honour and the opportunity to discuss with this distinguished group a topic which has been recognized among the most challenging for all those countries affected by desertification and drought. Our gratitude goes in particular to Dr Kohlmeyer and his collaborators from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also thank the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung for the continued close collaboration with the UNCCD which has given us great support since we have moved from Geneva to Bonn.

Germany has always been and remains at the forefront of international cooperation for sustainable development. It has played a unique role in moving forward the process of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

Desertification affects all regions and puts at risk the livelihoods of more than 1.2 billion people in 110 countries. Most of them are among the poorest in the world.

The risks of desertification are substantial especially under present scenarios of climate change and loss of ecosystem services. The challenges posed by desertification often lead to major socio-economic and environmental impacts. In poor countries desertification not

only undermines the land's fertility but it also leads to food insecurity, social, economic and political tensions.

The economic costs of desertification are enormous. According to UNEP, the global economy is losing US\$ 42 billion each year as a result of the process of land degradation. The cost of inaction is yet to be assessed. What is new in this Convention is that it is the only international instrument to systematically address problems related to desertification and development. It introduces a series of approaches and tools that can reshape the development process, both at the local and the national level.

At the core of the Convention process is the formulation and implementation of action programmes to combat desertification. These programmes provide a framework for effective action to combat desertification in the affected countries. They place particular emphasis on the establishment of an enabling environment that encourages political, institutional, regulatory and financial arrangements and reforms that are necessary to combat desertification.

**Germany has always been and remains at the forefront of international cooperation for sustainable development. It has played a unique role in moving forward the process of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.**

The UNCCD underlines that successful programmes to combat desertification must originate at the local level and benefit from the experiences and knowledge of those populations that depend on and maintain the fragile dryland ecosystems. A good understanding of the role of governance in combating desertification would no doubt help policy makers in those countries affected by desertification to better incorporate the guiding principles of the UNCCD. To those of us working to combat desertification and land degradation, »good governance« is the key, since it links all the spheres connected to the UNCCD: the economical, the political, the social and the environmental.

Every country affected by desertification is aware of the importance of good governance. Way before good governance became fashionable in the development aid community, both governments and civil society realized that sustainable development issues were becoming increasingly transboundary in nature and becoming global. In many respects, the paradigm of global environmental governance was the international community's first attempt to better address sustainable development issues. It is therefore important to note that what has been accomplished to date in the area of global environmental governance may help us find our way in the discussions on the role of governance in combating desertification.

Multilateral institutions from the United Nations to the international development banks have promoted the role of good governance in many strategic action areas and have even created major units, which link up good governance and sustainable development issues including land degradation and desertification combating.

At an academic level good governance has become a major factor considered when talking about international environmental affairs. It is a major topic of academic inquiry and teaching in areas such as political science and economics.

The United Nations has sponsored a series of milestone events related to sustainable development issues including the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. In this context, how should we assess the progress achieved by the UNCCD, more than ten years after the entry into force of the Convention?

And how can good governance be fully translated in the effort to address a challenge such as desertification and land degradation?

Despite the important efforts undertaken at a country level the transition to a sustainable development in dryland areas is yet to materialize. Good governance can help a faster outcome for the UNCCD's agenda.

We are at early stages of the journey to sustainability in dryland areas if we consider that most of the national action programmes are yet to be implemented on the ground.

The sustainable development paradigm incorporates the needs of all countries, big and small alike; a commitment from the strong to help the weak; a concern with both environment and development and a realization that the state and the international community must intervene on behalf of the public interest to attain greater social equity and bring about more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. In our view, a focus of this conference could be on identifying a set of criteria that suggests how good governance could help reversing the trend of desertification, particularly in developing countries.

Which could be the practical measures to adopt so to monitor on a regular basis the progress of the UNCCD's implementation process?

Good governance should not be considered an additional constraint by policy makers and stakeholders. Rather, it is potentially beneficial to enhance the implementation of the action programmes to combat desertification.

This conference is timely in the sense that it is organised during the EU Presidency of Germany. It is also convened at a time during which parties to the UNCCD have stressed the need for strategic guidance and targets in order to foster the implementation of the Convention.

As you know, the forthcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD to be held in Madrid, Spain in early September 2007 will consider for adoption a report prepared by the established Intergovernmental Inter Sessional Working Group (IIWG) which is currently developing a draft ten year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

The ongoing work of the IIWG includes issues which are relevant to our discussion of today and we are therefore confident that the outcome of this event could also contribute to provide important input to the work of IIWG.

The Secretariat of the Convention trusts that this Conference, which brings together various expertise will emphasize in its final recommendations measures to favour sustainable policy susceptible of curbing the negative effects of drought and desertification.

**Good governance should not be considered an additional constraint by policy makers and stakeholders. Rather, it is potentially beneficial to enhance the implementation of the action programmes to combat desertification.**

## Panel I

### Desertification and global governance: Taking stock of the debate



The UNCCD needs to reposition itself within the new aid development architecture and redefine its action catalogue, quantifiable targets and an evaluation system to achieve real effectiveness. But above all, it must rely on the role of civil society and democratic governance for a better management of natural resources.



## Global governance and multilateral environmental agreements: Taking stock of the debate

**By Ralf Wyrwinski** - Desk Officer Unit 314,  
German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

What is global governance? According to scientific references global governance is an attempt to adequately describe the confusing and accelerating transformation of the international system of rules and processes. It can be seen either from an analytical perspective or as a normative concept as demonstrated by the following quotations.

It was James Rosenau in 1995 who said: »Global governance is conceived to include systems of rule at all levels of human activity – from the family to the international organization – in which the pursuit of goals through the exercise of control has transnational repercussions.« In contrast to this analytical approach we can find the normative perspective in a quotation from Messner/Nuscheler, 1997, that goes as follows: »Global governance is the establishment of networks from the local level to the global level, which are based on collective problem focuses, fair coordination of interests and values as foundation of stable institutional structures for the adaptation of problems and conflicts.«

This means that on the one hand, the discussion on global governance makes us aware of a plurality of forums of social organizations and political decision-making organizations which are not simply linked to the state central institutions, but include a variety of actors like multilateral organizations, NGOs or even individuals. On the other hand, we are confronted with a lot of recommendations on how society and problems should be solved under globalization. For today's event this means that when we are reflecting on UNCCD we should have in mind that there is no generally agreed definition on global governance, but rather, a confusing plurality of definitions of and approaches to it.

Therefore, we should find out first what the appropriate definition of »global governance« of UNCCD may be, before we start to reflect on the deficiencies of its implementation and possible ways how to get out of the muddle. And this means both scrutinizing the institutional arrangements of the UNCCD and looking at its connections to the new development policy framework.

As we know, the UNCCD is not the only international legally binding multilateral environmental agreement supposed to achieve an improved environmental protection all over the world. Without any doubt the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the so-called Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro 1992, was the milestone event where the most important achievements, namely the Climate Convention, the Convention on Biodiversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought or desertification particularly in Africa, the UNCCD, were initiated. However, since 1992 the world has completely changed due to globalization and now in 2007 we are confronted not only with an entirely new political context, but also with a new architecture of international development cooperation. This new landscape is determined by two major international challenges, namely the »Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)« and the »2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness«.

The UN Millennium Declaration sets four programmatic political arenas

- 1 Peace, Security and Disarmament;
- 2 Development and Poverty Reduction;
- 3 Conservation of the Environment;
- 4 Human rights, Democracy and Good Governance which disembody in the eight wellknown MDGs in the field of poverty reduction to be achieved by 2015.

Yet the Paris Declaration of 2005 affirms that this commitment is inseparably connected to an advanced quality and effectiveness of development cooperation. This declaration defines concrete standards for the implementation of the MDGs and the enhanced efficiency of development cooperation, primarily for harmonization of development coordination policies by means of programme approaches (instead of isolated single projects), partnerships between institutions and donors, communication about methodological and systemic monitoring and orientation towards increased policy coherence in partner countries. These five key principles (alignment, harmonization, managing for results, mutual accountability and ownership) are the main partnership commitments of the Paris Declaration.

Considering this background, let us ask ourselves what is the state of play, what are the problems of multilateral environmental agreements such as UNCCD?

Since the effects of human activities increasingly cross national boundaries and erode the environmental goods and services upon which all humanity depends, multilateral environmental agreements have become an important component of environmental governance to achieve the MDG 7. They have been applied for example to bring world-wide knowledge of financial resources to different countries; they have provided the mechanism to bring confidence among states on the need and the options of joint actions; they have been successful to enhance donor commitments and they have proven to function as an organizing framework to cohere national programmes and agreed global goals.

Nevertheless, the existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) were and still are criticised for many deficiencies. People complain, for example, about insufficient knowledge management, namely the lack of accurate data in many parts of the world or the insufficient transfer of data, reports and resources by those who follow the Convention processes to those working in the field. People also look critically at the trade-offs between international environmental problems. Each multilateral environmental agreement addresses particular sectors and activities within its mandate, but it is hardly considered how goals and implementation processes of one Convention affect others.

There are also problems with the implementation. Our aim is to make MEAs political effective instruments of environmental protection and development and to do so we need to strengthen the scientific, technical, legal and management skills necessary to analyze problems and to set priorities in a multi-sectoral context, including well integrated policy frameworks at national or international level.

Now what are the problems to tackle and the challenges ahead for the UNCCD? The UNCCD is the multilateral environment agreement to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. It came into force in 1996 and was ratified by 191 countries. The unique feature of the UNCCD is the establishment of a specific link between poverty reduction and resource protection. It defines an explicitly environmental goal by promoting sustainable land use systems in dryland areas of the world, but at the same time it focuses primarily on the economic problems of rural areas which are the most poverty-struck regions worldwide.

According to the Convention text the UNCCD demands »good governance« as an indispensable condition for measures to combat desertification, requesting for example cooperation between state and the civil society organisations, more policy coherence, an efficient coordination of donors and a more effective organisation of funds and measures. It demands also multi-sectoral approaches that address environment and development alike, and it considers the participation of concerned persons as essential. The goals and intentions of both the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 Paris Declaration can be traced back to the UNCCD. In the 1990s the UNCCD was in many ways a trendsetter for the new development cooperation architecture.

Nevertheless, the UNCCD has lost much of its significance for development policy. It has done so because there is a lack of precise regulations and procedures in the Convention and it is short of concrete instructions and quantifiable goals on how to combat desertification. But above all there is a particular antagonism, because sustainable land use is widely recognized as a global challenge and it is accepted that the MDGs cannot be met without considerable investment into environmental protection of rural areas. But on the other hand, the political agenda of those 191 ratifying countries has been barely influenced by the UNCCD; there is hardly any country where the UNCCD really is a very important actor or an instrument in development politics.

This leads me to a few conclusions in the form of three hypotheses on how to get the UNCCD out of its delicate situation.

- 1 Governance elements of the Convention, institutions rules and procedures can and must be newly interpreted and embellished with regards to the changed development context. We have to develop a clear profile for UNCCD; we need coherence of actions, more transparency and an efficient management on all levels as well as a detailed for-

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Ralf Wyrwinski (BMZ), Ute Schaeffer (DW), António Pires (UNCCD)

mulation of the necessary changes. What do we expect from UNCCD and what do we really want UNCCD to be within the new development architecture? These are the questions.

And a first answer is to focus on the essentials. UNCCD needs to develop a reduced action catalogue which gets technically and politically the highest priority in combating desertification. And the second point is that form follows function. Only when there are clear priorities established the UNCCD should start to re-organise its instruments and institutions.

- 2 Agreements on quantifiable targets and on monitoring systems with a standardised evaluation system have to be established for this is missing in the UNCCD context. Perhaps we should look at UNFCCC and UNCBD, how to set up a standardized evaluation system and how to improve the scientific back-bone of the UNCCD.
- 3 Sustainable land use has to be incorporated into major development strategies which is obviously the most difficult change to achieve. We need to connect UNCCD with different operational implementation mechanisms: for example, we must connect the implementation of the UNCCD to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) process which is the most relevant procedure today. And we will have to link the UNCCD with donor coordinating institutions like the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development. Additionally, we have to raise awareness that the UNCCD is not only a development Convention for African countries but that it is also an environmental Convention like UNFCCC and UNCBD. And last but not least, we have to standardise commitments for partner countries, and UNCCD institutions have to set standards on how to deal, for example with NAPs. Here we can perhaps look at the IIWG output – may be there are the ideas we urgently need.

Let me summarise all this. Do we actually need the UNCCD? Yes, I think we still need it because it is the only legally binding agreement for sustainable land use in the international political context, and because it contains – and that is still a quite modern idea – the demand to link poverty reduction with environmental protection. And finally, the UNCCD also comprises countries in which neither the MDGs nor the PRSPs essentially influence the political agenda, and it also makes us well aware of the global dimension of the problems of land degradation and desertification and that is why I think we should be ready to give UNCCD a second chance.



## Governance and combating desertification – what role for the civil society?<sup>1</sup>

By **Masse Lo** - Director of Programme Lead Afrique Francophone

### 1. Introduction

The text of the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) does not explicitly mention (good)<sup>2</sup> governance, or civil society. Nonetheless, to many observers, the Convention seems an appropriate tool for promoting principles that substantiate democratic governance as it affects the management of natural resources. This vision was reaffirmed on the occasion of the Berlin Conference<sup>3</sup> on the same issue in 2006 and, much earlier, in reflections on the opportunities offered by CCD for poverty reduction and development<sup>4</sup>.

The text of the Agenda 21 mentions for the first time ever the commitment of the international community to actually apply the basic principles stipulated in the Agenda as constitutive elements of good governance. These principles, which include participation of members of civil society, transparency, accountability and responsibility for activities, constitute the essential components required to guarantee the sustainable management of natural resources. The same principles were readopted for the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. In both cases, the governments, members of civil society and the private sector were invited to establish partnerships in order to jointly carry out ef-

<sup>1</sup> Text partly based on an article published by Masse Lo & Lene Poulsen, in «Governing global desertification», edited by Pierre Marc Johnson & all. Ashgate 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Democratic governance for the civil society. It presumes that the concept of good governance is connoted.

<sup>3</sup> »The Role of Governance in Combating Desertification«, September 7, 2006. Conference organised by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., for instance, Masse Lo & Oussouby Touré (2006). »Lutte contre la désertification : à la recherche d'un nouveau départ.«, Notre Planète, Vol 17, numéro 1, PNUE.

**Even if the concept of the civil society is not explicitly mentioned in the text of the Convention, the actors who form civil society are mentioned.**

efficient programmes for reducing poverty and assisting sustainable development. The action plan for implementing the Johannesburg resolutions recommends the establishment of a political, social and economic environment that favours investments, the introduction and /or strengthening of democratic institutions, the application of efficient anti-corruption laws and the promotion of gender equality.

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Desertification (INCD), established following a recommendation of the Agenda 21, has triggered a participatory process in which NGOs participate actively. As far as they had an observer status, these organisations had no voting right. But the concerns they communicated were actually taken into account. By the way, several national delegations also included representatives of NGOs and civil society.

In the spirit of the Convention, the concept of NGOs must be understood in its widest sense. It comprises all those actors who do not belong to public authorities (associations of women and youths, local communities, private sector companies, etc.). Even if the concept of civil society is not explicitly mentioned in the text of the Convention, the actors who form civil society are mentioned. Indeed, the CCD grants them the status of full partners of governments and development agencies.

The present communication reminds us of the principles of democratic governance quoted in the Convention, before examining the role of each civil society actor in promoting and implementing the fight against desertification in national action plans. And it attempts to define a certain number of fields where civil society's input could be fruitful for reflection on how to revive the CCD.

## **2. The Desertification Convention: an appropriate framework for the promotion of democratic governance**

Although the concept of democratic governance is very present in the international debate on environment and development, there is no commonly agreed definition. However, there is consensus on a number of principles considered to be the foundations of democratic governance. These comprise:

- I the principle of participation, where participation refers to the necessary involvement of civil society (local populations, women's movements, youth organisations, producer groups, etc.) in the planning and implementation of actions to combat desertification;
- II equity and equality of opportunities (Art. 5.2 obligation) for all categories of actors;
- III responsiveness or the possibility for local institutional structures to respond appropriately to the needs of local communities;

Sustainable land  
management for  
improved livelihood



Zeini Moulaye (Former Minister of Mali)

- IV accountability, which means the reliability of institutional arrangements and decision-making mechanisms for all; and finally
- V information and awareness raising, which are essential activities at all levels of preparation and implementation of the Convention.

### 3. The Role of the civil society in promoting the principles of good governance

The action programmes to combat desertification constitute the framework for the implementation of all measures stipulated by the Convention. It is advisable to examine the process of planning and implementing the National Action Programme to combat desertification (NAP), if one intends to assess the degree of implementation of the principles of good governance and the role played in this context by members of civil society.

Thanks to their involvement at practically all levels of preparation and implementation of the NAP, members of civil society, notably the NGOs, have been guarantors of the application of the principles of good governance. The analysis of this involvement shows the role played by these members in:

- I defining methods and approaches;
- II information and awareness raising; and
- III applying a participatory approach, predictability, etc.

**Definition of the methodologies of the approach:** Just like all international Conventions, the CCD is a consensual and descriptive text containing a certain number of dispositions that have to be implemented. But the text of the Convention does not clearly state the modalities of such implementation. This is the case, for instance, concerning the disposition obliging the affected countries to draft and implement national action programmes to combat desertification. Members of civil society who are aware of this situation have been mobilized from the start, suggesting methodologies for a participatory approach to drafting and implementing action programmes to combat desertification. This methodological modus operandi, defined in partnership with the development agencies and intergovern-

mental institutions, is the basis for the process of planning action programmes in several countries. It is also involved in the process of integrating the NAP in poverty reduction strategies and national development policies.

**Information and awareness rising among those involved** constitute one of the fields on which members of civil society concentrate their activities. This is due to the fact that compared with other agents they have an advantage in informing and sensitizing on the local level. In several countries, the information campaigns organised by civil society have been carried out by NGOs or in the context of national communication strategies on the environment. As these strategies have not been carried out long enough, the level of effectiveness on governmental and non-governmental actors remains fairly low. In a lot of affected countries the central governments continue to ignore desertification as a top development priority.

**Participation of the stakeholders:** The cross-evaluation of processed for drafting and implementing action plans to combat desertification by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and various observers clearly shows the important achievements in terms of the degree of participation of actors from civil society. It would be exaggerated to claim that all possible stakeholders were involved in the planning and implementation process to combat desertification. However, it should be stressed that the CCD process has already created a precedent in several countries, where for the first time ever an environment-related process involves various actors<sup>5</sup>, thus enabling a high level of political dialogue. The achievements recorded in terms of participation are among the most positive effects of the Convention. But these achievements do not conceal the failings which are affecting the feasibility of programmes to combat desertification.

There is a huge gap between the expectations that the draft action programmes to combat desertification have given to local communities and the most vulnerable groups, and the poor resources allocated to date for their implementation. The fact that the national programmes to combat desertification did not obtain the expected financial support certainly decreased the degree of participation of the actors.

The National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) have the advantage that their operational implementation is funded. However, only a few countries have achieved convincing results because these strategies and the action programmes to combat desertification are hardly articulated. The PRSP does not always succeed in integrating the interwoven aspects connected with the combat of desertification in the hierarchy of their priorities. Nevertheless, taking the necessary restoration of degraded soils into account would help to amplify the recorded effects in the field of poverty reduction too.

**Predictability and funding:** According to the general principles of the Convention, the countries have to develop long-term strategies for implementation of the Convention. The adoption of such a procedure can only be feasible if the countries concerned have predictable resources in the long run (Art. 20.1). Therefore, the Convention recommends consistent financial support for the action programmes to combat desertification, allowing for necessary long-term planning (Art. 13.1).

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<sup>5</sup> Rural producers (farmers, breeders, forest producers, etc.), associations of women, youth, trade unions, religious associations, etc.

**The links between desertification, the preservation of biodiversity and mitigation of the effects of climate change are obvious.**

In this sense, civil society actors have constantly attempted to mobilise the resources necessary for the implementation of the Convention, pleading at several stages. Initially, the NGOs played their role in the foreground during the debates on insertion of the concept of National Desertification Funds (NDF) into the Convention – those funds are designed to facilitate mobilisation of financial resources at country level and their transfer to local communities. Although they have not been created in all countries, the NDF constitute innovative mechanisms guaranteeing transparency of the management of resources allocated to combat desertification. When the Global Mechanism was introduced as a financing tool requested by the southern countries, members of civil society lobbied for a window to be opened at the level of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). That would be very helpful to support activities to combat desertification. It is obvious that the resources required to implement the Convention cannot come from a single funding source. Today, diversification of funding sources is targeted.

The links between desertification, the preservation of biodiversity and mitigation of the effects of climate change are obvious. And people feel increasingly less inclined to deny that desertification is a global phenomenon. But isn't there a contradiction between the wish to obtain acknowledgement of desertification as a global phenomenon and, on the other hand, the particular status or special status granted to Africa by the Convention?<sup>6</sup>

With regard to the other principles, the role played by members of civil society is more limited. In the field of equity and equality for instance, the attempts to define methodologies for an approach that would promote consideration of gender issues in the process of planning and implementing the NAP were hardly successful.

#### **4. Fields on which civil society should focus more in future**

Compared with the other Rio Conventions which establish quantifiable goals to be attained in a given period, the CCD lacks clear definition of its strategic objectives and their inscription/achievement in a realistic time frame. Yet the spirit is that of a development convention. As it encourages the integration of any environmental intervention in the logic of development, it counts on a change of development policies in countries affected by desertification and of cooperation policies with industrialised countries.

The appointment of an Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG) with the mandate to develop a ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance implementation of the Convention opens up new perspectives for implementing the action programmes to combat desertification. This new context offers an opportunity for civil society to demand:

- » the support of profound changes and reforms at the political and institutional level with a view to strengthening the process of decentralisation of the management of natural resources in the affected countries. The analyses of the organisational and institutional models in numerous countries show considerable discrepancies when comparing the governing institutions and their present work with the necessary institutional conditions of a policy of good governance;

<sup>6</sup> The title of the Convention reads: «United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa»



- » coordinated implementation of the MDGs and of the objectives of CCD; the application of measures recommended in the national action programmes to combat desertification can be used to further define the objectives of MDG 1 and MDG 7, which refer respectively to poverty reduction and the environment;
- » the development of synergies between the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in conjunction with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Convention, which calls for the application of more democratic governance and promotion of the principles of transparent management. The application of more democratic governance by the countries is an essential concern of the APRM, as it is for the implementation of the action programmes to combat desertification drafted in Africa.

The sustainable management of soils and water resources is a global challenge that requires the attention of all the international Conventions on the environment and sustainable development. This issue may help to specify the synergies between the Conventions, often mentioned, but which rarely materialises in reality.

These tendencies can only be realised within the framework of strengthened partnership between civil societies in both the North and the South. The forum Désertifications co-organised by CARI<sup>7</sup> and Both ENDS<sup>8</sup> (two civil society organisations in the North) and ENDA TM<sup>9</sup> (an organisation located in the South) underpin the need for strategic partnerships with these civil societies. Accentuating investment opportunities in arid zones is part of the new orientations defined by global civil society within the context of the review of the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

7 Centre d'Actions et de Réalisations Internationales

8 Environment and Development Service

9 Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde

## Conclusion

Compared with the other Rio Conventions – biodiversity and climate, CCD is an international legal agreement that allocates major importance to actions of civil society and to application of the principles of democratic governance.

The implementation of action programmes to combat desertification – in their present form or integrated in national poverty reduction strategies, or in connection with realisation of the Millennium Development Goals – can favour the application of more democratic governance as a response to the request of the international community. These programmes can also contribute to mitigating migration movements resulting from deterioration of the living conditions in arid zones. For all these reasons the lack of political support for the Convention – compared with the other two agreements – is astonishing.

How is it possible that a Convention that stands for a real project of society, »a Convention for life...«<sup>10</sup>, a Convention that sets the ground for more civil society participation in drafting and implementing development policies in the respective countries, that is better for example than the »Baule-Appel«<sup>11</sup> for the Francophone African countries, which strives for a democratic process and pluralism, has only been able to attract so little attention from the international community to date?

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<sup>10</sup> Opinion expressed by a representative of an NGO, COP 7 Nairobi, October 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Appeal launched by François Mitterrand on the France-Africa Summit in 1981.



Ralf Wyrwinski (BMZ) and Michael Schmitt (European Parliament)

## Panel I: Summary of discussion

Desertification is a global, rather than just a local problem. If desertification is not addressed in the countries affected there will be a forced migration towards Europe.

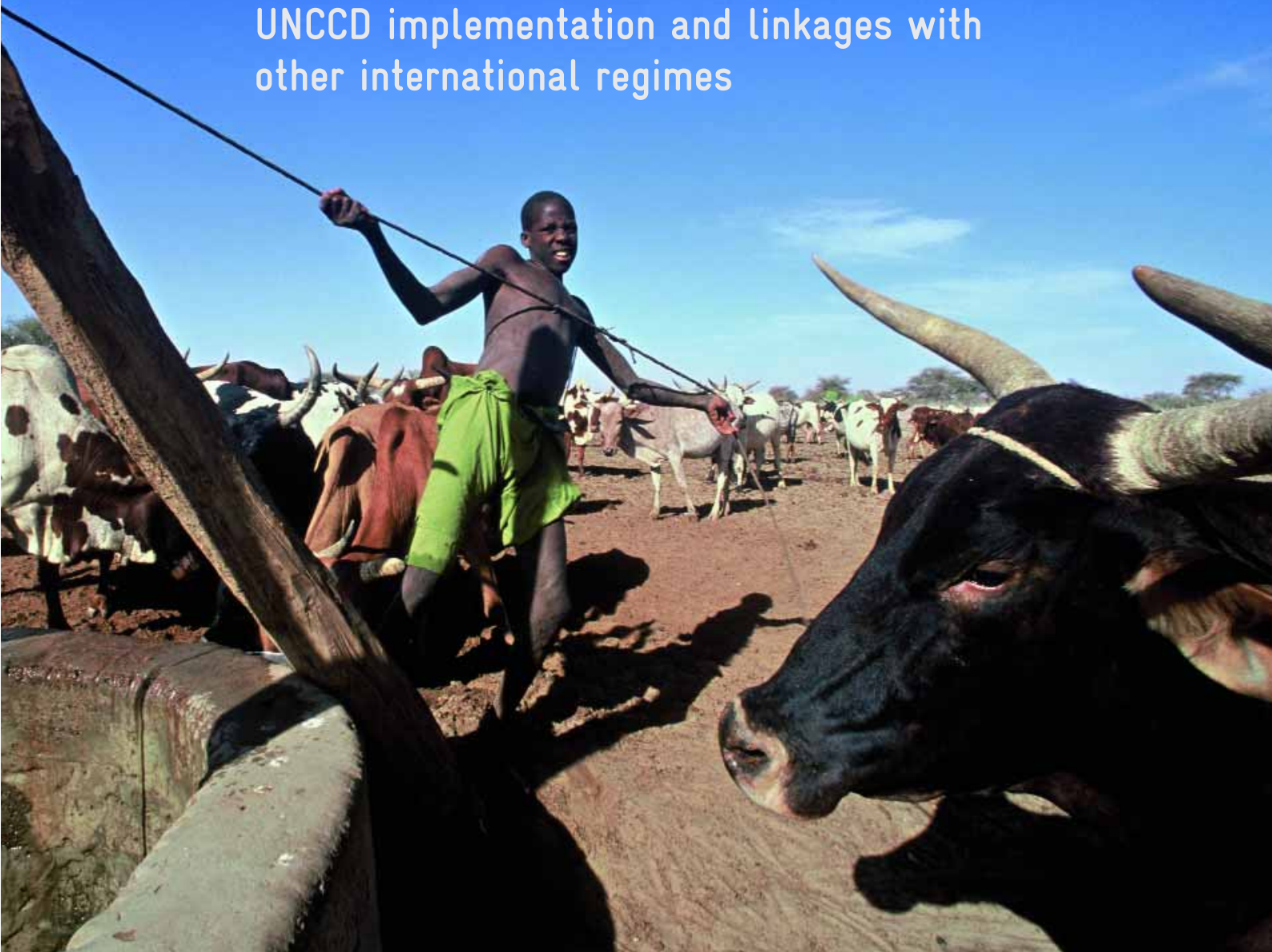
At the same time though, the environmental debate needs to be specific at a national level and include issues such as subsistence agriculture and agricultural production at large, forestry production, water availability and microclimate. Only by redefining the issue of environment can the UNCCD be truly effective in mobilizing resources.

In the countries affected there needs to be a coordination and enhanced cooperation among the different ministries, focal points and NGOs for a better implementation of the Convention. For example in Mali, the population is largely unaware of the Convention; therefore even if the ministries are working on it, the implementation is not successful as it could be, because of a lack of community participation. Evaluation and monitoring reports are conducted largely to satisfy the United Nations rather than for communicating to the communities affected. A solution could be a communication strategy backed by the UNCCD Secretariat that targets the national governments and the local population. Reports dealing with the implementation of the Convention could be sent on a regular basis to the government so that local leaders and local communities can be held responsible. There needs to be a decentralisation of assessment and evaluation structures, with more reports from the ground from the communities and the leaders in charge of implementing the conventions and there needs to be a link between environmental problems and developmental issues. These approaches should target not just the national level, but increasingly the local level, where the civil society can work actively to address the population's needs.

Yet there is a question as to whether sustainable land management, ownership and local engagement are jobs for the Convention or rather, for governments, bilateral aid and development cooperation. The Convention's role and responsibility needs to be defined, we cannot expect it to solve developmental issues which might be part of national and local processes. Also, the decentralised level of the affected countries suffers from a lack of capacity to deal with the issues, due to a shortage of mobilization of political support and finance.

## Panel II

### UNCCD implementation and linkages with other international regimes



The Paris Declaration has highlighted the need to reform the aid management system towards the principles of alignment, harmonization, coordinated capacity building and a programme-based approach. The aim is for countries to increasingly take action at a national level and synchronize efforts for the common objective of sustainable development. An example of a possible synergy is the way the National Action Programmes for Climate Adaptation (NAPA) can draw on the experience of the National Action Programmes to combat desertification (NAP) and their involvement with the civil society for an improved participatory approach.

## Two years on: How effective is the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

By **Christian Henckes** –

Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, World Bank/GTZ

When we talk about the Paris Declaration we should be aware that it is part of a wider process to reform the overall aid management system, starting with the MDGs in 2000 and a number of events such as the 2003 Rome Declaration and the 2005 Paris Declaration. We are now heading towards the High Level Forum on aid effectiveness in Accra in 2008. The overall process aims to achieve greater aid effectiveness. The reason why we talk so much about the Paris Declaration and less about other declarations, such as the Rome Declaration or the declaration following the Marrakech Roundtable on Results (2004), is that in the Paris Declaration we agreed on targets and indicators.

So why are we talking about reform of the aid management system and what situation are we facing? The forecast is for a 60 percent increase in net ODA disbursements from US\$ 79 billion in 2004 to US\$ 128 billion in 2010.

This time, compared with the past, the scaling up of aid is more likely to occur in real development programmes and less in debt relief. We can expect money to flow in the otherwise quite congested aid system. At the same time, we find that the implementation of development programmes is fragmented. We have more donors than before – the average is now 33 donors per country. We currently have over 230 international organizations, funds and programmes, and we have the issue of »vertical funds« such as global investment funds, and horizontal priority settings in countries. We also have 60,000 donor-funded interventions and activities.

The situation has become complicated because most of the programmes, donors and initiatives rely on their own planning, monitoring and implementation procedures, which are not synchronized and harmonized. The fragmented aid management system and the scaling up of aid are two issues that need to be resolved.

We are facing two key challenges. First, we have to harmonize the national, regional and global development priorities, and secondly, we need to strengthen capacities in recipient countries to use these resources efficiently and effectively. These challenges need to be addressed when we discuss reform of the aid management system.

When we consider the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, we must remember that the majority of subscribers to the Declaration were recipient and not donor countries. Fifty-six countries that receive aid subscribed to the Declaration, but only 35 donor countries. Civil society is still under-represented, but perhaps this can be discussed later.

**The fascinating aspects of the Paris Declaration are the indicators and targets, some of which were already described in the Rome Declaration. However, setting targets adds a weight of political pressure, which can be both positive and negative.**

The fascinating aspects of the Paris Declaration are the indicators and targets, some of which were already described in the Rome Declaration. However, setting targets adds a weight of political pressure, which can be both positive and negative. We have already talked about the principles of the Declaration, but additionally it sets 56 specific commitments and 12 indicators of progress.

I have been asked to talk about the effects and the effectiveness of the Paris Declaration. As it was only signed in 2005, it is too early to make a complete assessment, although we have just completed the first monitoring report which is a baseline survey and will have a description of the situation in 2006. Data were collected in 34 countries. As you can imagine, the process of collecting data about the aid management system in any given country can be difficult, and there is a certain resistance on the part of some governments and organizations. Here are some of the results of the 2006 survey:

#### **Ownership or leadership?**

I prefer the term leadership, which is expressed by the availability of national development plans. In the 34 countries that completed the data collection, only 17 percent of the national development plans meet the 2010 target.

#### **Alignment**

When we talk about alignment, i. e. the way donors use country systems, this more or less describes the public financial management (PFM) systems and the procurement systems in these countries. Currently only 40 percent of the aid flow is channelled through PFM.

A crucial issue here is the predictability of aid. If countries are highly dependent on foreign aid, it is essential for the planning and the accountability process that the country knows, over the years, what it can expect from donors. In the case of budget support, this is an annual cycle. Therefore the country knows only one year in advance how much money is available. This is not ideal. On this yearly basis, 73 per cent of aid is 'predictable'.

Coordinated capacity building or strengthening capacity are terms that are too abstract. We need to define clearly at a country level just what coordinated capacity building or coordinated technical assistance means.

There is also the issue of too many project implementation units (PIUs), and the need to reduce them to 607 by 2010 in order to achieve the target.



### Harmonization

So far only 43 percent of aid flow is provided within the framework of programme-based approaches. The 2010 target is to reach 66 percent. Out of 10,400 programmes only 1,750 (representing around 17 percent) are coordinated, meaning that different donors are assessing the same programme jointly with the government. Only 40 percent of analytical work studies were performed jointly, and the 2010 objective is 66 percent.

### Managing of results and mutual accountability

Seven percent of the countries surveyed actually have a performance assessment framework, but the proportion of countries without transparent and monitorable performance should be reduced by one third by 2010.

All partners should have mutual frameworks for assessing progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness in place by 2010. So far 40 percent have such a framework in place.

So if we consider these results, what are the major efforts that must be undertaken in the run-up to the forthcoming Accra forum? The question of leadership/ownership seems to be weak. The financial management systems in countries need to be further improved, and the area of capacity development needs to be defined, especially how it is undertaken, coordinated and processed.

As already mentioned, donors should improve the predictability of aid flow. They should also further reduce transaction costs, improve the division of labour, and selectively delegate cooperation. That means having small groups of partners acting on behalf of others who are involved in policy dialogue and in negotiating with country governments, instead of having a large number of donors.

## Is the Paris Declaration effective then?

We have no data available indicating that the impact of development aid has improved. And it is unlikely that such data will be available in the coming year. One of the effects of the Paris Declaration is the discussion here today. The Declaration has created a very high level of awareness that the aid management system needs to be reformed. Aid effectiveness and its improvement have now become a regular part of sector networks like the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development and the Fast-Track Initiative, where elements of aid effectiveness are dealt with and advanced further. We have changes in donor organization, like the World Bank's operation policy and aid effectiveness units.

**One of the effects of the Paris Declaration is the discussion here today. The Declaration has created a very high level of awareness that the aid management system needs to be reformed.**

For example there is an increase of joint assistance strategies in a number of African countries. These did not exist in previous years. Also, the number of programme-based approaches is increasing. There are donor roundtables. This issue is now on the radar screen of most development partners.

When we talk about the Paris Declaration it is about the indicators and targets, but the scope is much broader. We have more than 52 commitments describing what it means to reform the aid management system. This is not meant as a blueprint for countries and sectors, as we have to consider the specific situations in environments and sectors in the various countries. We also need to remember that these targets are global targets and not specific country ones.

Some of the indicators have to be improved and newly defined. One occasion for this could be the Accra High Level Forum next year, although that could also be controversial, since if you renegotiate the indicators you start to revisit the Paris Declaration. Yet others see it as a great opportunity to learn from experience.

Another issue to be considered is that programme-based approaches are not sector-wide approaches. These are quite different. Some people argue that desertification, rural development, HIV and governance are not sectors, but themes and topics, so therefore the Paris Declaration would drive the whole aid arena towards sectors and not towards themes and topics. This is a misunderstanding. The Paris Declaration did not call for sector-wide approaches, but talks about programme-based approaches.

On the subject of desertification, there needs to be a national focus so that resources can be allocated around it. Listening to the first panel, it is clear that the action needs to take place at a local level. The only way one can allocate resources is to prioritize these actions on a national level, whatever the theme is. If this is not reflected in a national development plan as a priority, we will never have financed programmes in the field. Therefore, the international level must really push these important issues so that they are taken up by national development strategies and national priority settings.

There is also something more interesting emerging and that is the evaluation of the Paris Declaration. The evaluation will be ready by fall next year and it will assess the inter-linkages between aid effectiveness and development results based on a long-term perspective.

While the monitoring survey of 2006 will identify what progress has been made, the evaluation can answer questions about how it happened and why, or why not. It will provide many more explanations and observe certain shortcomings that need to be revised, and hopefully, in Accra, there will be an opportunity to do this.

There are four focal discussion points:

- 1 The division of labour issue
- 2 Vertical financing mechanism

For example, we have vertical funds such as the Global Health Fund, the fast track initiative in education, where billions of dollars from a global level are channelled directly to a decentralized local level party. Yet at the same time, the overall planning and priority setting is horizontal at national level, which leads to a confusing and incorrect allocation of national budget. I think this is important.

- 3 Corruption, accountability and conditionality, especially in the context of budget support. Budget support is valuable, since you channel money into a national budget. Yet at the same time, you have conditions, and as each year the donors could refuse to fund further, we return to the predictability problem.
- 4 Incentive systems for governments and their staff, and the extent to which staff is motivated to help reform this aid management system. With the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development we are very close to developing a code of conduct for donor-supported interventions in agriculture and rural development. This means we are defining a set of minimum standards on how we do business in the countries, on how we interact with governments, and – equally important – with the civil society, communities and the private sector.

I think the part relating to the stakeholders is under-represented in the whole Paris Declaration discussion. There was a focus on the ministry of health and education and social sectors. In our case, with agriculture and rural development, the stakeholders are more diverse. The interesting aspect in the next High Level Forum in Accra is that there will be a strong focus on civil society. To what extent are civil society and the private sector involved in the whole aid management discussion? This process is led by a number of recipient countries, and one donor that is in the lead is the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

I am wondering whether this could be an opportunity for a group like you to become involved in the debate and influence the aid effectiveness discussion in Accra next year.



## National Action Programs for Climate Adaptation: a *déjà vu* or a real chance to build on past experiences?

**By Emmanuel Seck** – Programme Manager of Energy, Environment, Development, Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA TM)

I am here to answer whether the National Action Programmes for Climate Adaptation are a *déjà vu* or a real chance to build on previous experiences.

To give an answer to that question, we need to ask what the objectives of the Conventions are, particularly of those on climate and desertification. Obviously, I will focus on Africa, which is, worldwide, one of the regions most vulnerable to and affected by climate change and desertification.

The background to refer to is the Rio Summit of 1992, an important international encounter that allowed global environmental issues to be taken into account for macroeconomic planning. The outcome included the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

I will also include the Kyoto Protocol with its Clean Development Mechanism, which offers certain opportunities for the member countries in terms of funding. Decision 7, taken at UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties in November 2001, is also very important: it underpins the need to assist countries in applying urgent measures to adapt to climate change.

Other important references are UNFCCC's Nairobi Programme, which helps countries assess the impact of and vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, and the ten-year (2008-2018) strategic plan to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD. These two programmes need to strive for a synergy in order to identify opportunities for the effective use of available funding.

Regarding the two Conventions, I want to stress that the objective of UNFCCC consists in the »Stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system«, and that economic development will have to be sustainable. UNCCD's objective is to combat desertification as a contribution to sustainable development in affected countries. Thus the issues addressed at Rio have been taken up. At Rio, we agreed with all the conventions on the Agenda 21, which is to be implemented in a sector-related manner and respond to the objective of sustainable development. The most mentioned region in the Conventions is Africa, because of its vulnerability.

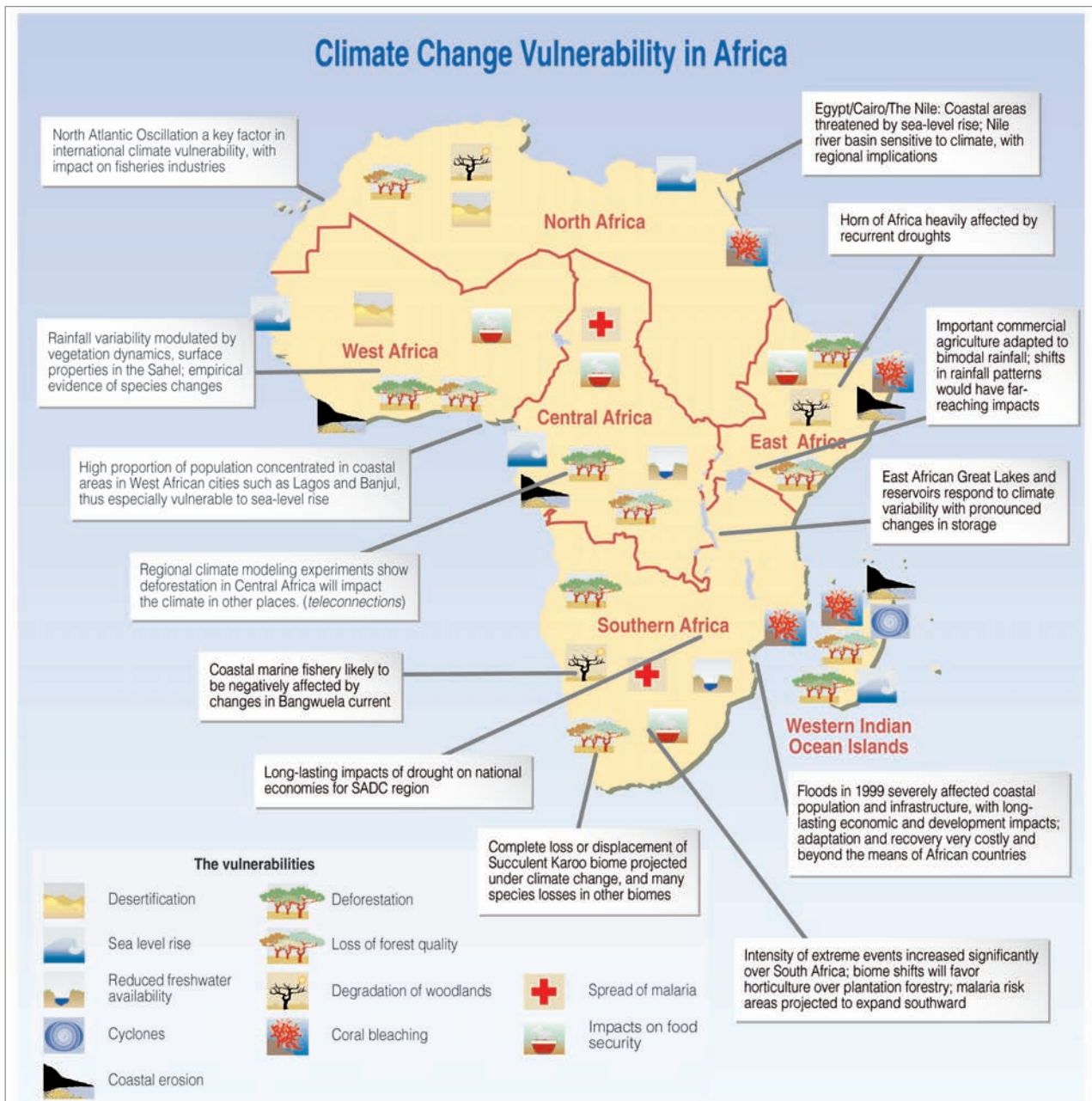
**The commitment of the Parties:** Even if the approaches are different, both Conventions have a common vision and objective: sustainable development. Under both UNFCCC and UNCCD, the affected parties have to develop and elaborate appropriate and integrated plans, National Action Programmes for Adaptation (NAPA) under the UNFCCC and National Action Programmes to combat desertification (NAP) for UNCCD.

**And now Africa:** Why the focus on Africa? It is stated that Africa is the region most affected by desertification worldwide. I leave it up to you to crunch the numbers. About 45 percent of the African population live in dry areas predisposed for desertification. And according to the IPCC findings, Africa is one of the world's regions most vulnerable to climate change.

**It is stated that Africa is, worldwide, the region most affected by desertification. I leave it up to you to crunch the numbers. About 45 percent of the African population live in dry areas predisposed for desertification.**

Desertification, the global rise in sea-level, decline in biodiversity, reduced availability of water resources and increased frequency of extreme meteorological phenomena such as floods and droughts all mean that many countries are facing difficulties. There are human health problems as a result of these natural disasters, and we have food security risks.

The following illustration shows how the question presents itself at African level.



**Links between the two Conventions:** When reading the NAP and the NAPA, one always faces the same priority issues in Africa: lack of water resources; desertification and climate change issues; food security; the ecosystems of the arid areas; forestry and the coastal areas.

When we look at the NAP approach, experience shows us that we have had a good involvement of civil society in coordinating structures, i.e. mechanisms at national level, with national focal points for civil society in view of the participatory approach at NAP level. Regarding the NAPA, we have to admit that they are short-term programmes that respond to urgent problems and needs. At present the countries are drafting them, whereas with the NAP, we are already in the implementation phase. Therefore, we have much more information about their implementation than with NAPA, where we are still identifying the problems.

**What are the constraints shared by the implementation of both Conventions?**

National implementation reports, particularly in Africa, mention a couple of constraints to both Conventions. There are insufficient human and technical resources in certain fields such as the surveillance and assessment of environmental problems. Therefore, we will have to talk about capacities. Observation systems that would help to understand and to follow up the present and future variability of climate are not available.

The lack of financial resources hinders the operational functioning of action programmes, and we face real difficulties in articulating the different strategies for climate adaptation, desertification control and PRSP at country level. This is an issue already mentioned by the previous speakers.

On top of all this, we have a number of specific constraints in the field of climate adaptation:

- » A lack of statistical data on climate, so that certain models cannot be used as a result of the insufficient observation systems in the countries.
- » Low awareness of the process of climate change in certain countries. In our organisation, we have tried to raise awareness within the local populations about the effects of climate change, and we have to admit it was not easy.
- » Absence of efficient and proactive coordination mechanisms at regional level for climate change issues.
- » Insufficient implication of African civil society in the process of climate change, even if the reports state that civil society is involved.



Emmanuel Seck (ENDA)

### **Which similarities can be underlined, especially as we are talking about synergies?**

The system of governance established in the countries in connection with the NAP process is already fairly efficient. In particular, the campaigns for better awareness and more participation constitute a major achievement which is likely to help drafting the NAPA. And I do not think that we'll have to reinvent the wheel, especially because very often, the same actors are involved.

The desertification information systems already exists at national level, and at the sub-regional and/or regional centres for meteorology, remote sensing and ecological follow-up can provide information and complementary data within the framework of the NAPA. I think these are already achievements.

We also have expertise accumulated in the NAP process. This expertise developed and capitalised within the framework of the NAP process can be used for drafting the NAPA.

The poor available funding, especially in the context of UNCCD, means that there is a need for integration, at NAP level, of local activities of adaptation to climate change in order to benefit from additional funding that already exists in the context of the NAPA and the Convention on Climate Change.

### **What are the local answers now?**

Funding investments to combat desertification and the adaptation to climate change is to be allocated directly to the local populations affected, so that they have an immediate impact on their urgent problems and needs. There are a couple of activities to combat desertification that could also be helpful for strategies of adaptation:

- » Reforestation, protection and regeneration of forests and protected forests
- » Combating erosion and bushfires
- » Production, transformation and valorisation of local cereals  
These activities are already being carried out by both civil society, i.e. non-governmental organisations, and certain government agencies.
- » Planting of living hedges  
In this context, one plant is often mentioned and known by everybody: the *Jatropha curcas*, which contributes to biomass and provides revenue, because people can process it and produce soap, generating additional income.
- » Water management through hydro-agricultural developments  
Here, we have to mention the question of retention basins in Senegal, which are part of a specific country programme in view of poverty reduction and water management.
- » Proliferation of efficient fertilisation techniques
- » Promotion of alternative energies  
I already mentioned that there is solar energy for light. Wind energy for water pumps is currently being developed and can contribute to the mitigation of climate change and combating desertification. Under no circumstances must one dissociate the questions of climate change and desertification. When we talk about adaptation strategies, we have activities like reforestation and the promotion of renewable energies which actually contribute to reducing greenhouse gases. This is why I think that, when talking about adaptation, we are already dealing with mitigation requirements.

There are other activities providing synergies for climate and desertification:

- » Both need vocational training, education and environmental sensitisation.
- » There is the development and management of pasture and the development of market gardening and fruit production, where we have to admit that African societies are often fairly demanding in terms of water. Creating systems of irrigation management could be a good answer to questions of poverty and desertification.
- » There is a good case study in Mali regarding agro-meteorology; a special agro-meteorological assistance for rural population which helps on how to employ seeds and to cultivate. I think that this is a very interesting experience that should be developed in a lot of other countries, too, in order to cope with questions of vulnerability and also to increase awareness of the link between scientific research and the local communities by relating the findings of scientific research to traditional local skills and know-how.
- » There is also capacity-building for women. In our countries, we currently have many groups of women working to improve the living conditions and the revenues.
- » And then we have the construction of retention basins.

All this shows the already existing synergies, which means that we do not have to reinvent the wheel at local level. Since we have urgent issues in terms of the NAPA, I think it would be a good idea to benefit from the experiences of the NAP in order to resume the Convention to Combat Desertification and to find a basis for synergies.

On this basis, I have a couple of recommendations:

- » For drafting the NAPA, take into account the system of governance established by the countries within the NAP process, in particular the campaigns for awareness raising and more participation as well as institution building at local level.
- » Ensure the articulation of the planning tools of the conventions and the economic sectors with national development plans and poverty reduction.
- » Implement integrated consultative processes in order to ensure the consistency of policies and strategies striving to harmonise the socio-economic imperatives and the preservation of natural resources.
- » Ensure global assessment in order to improve the impact of investments and activities and provide regular updating of data on climate and desertification by strengthening the national environmental information capacities, since in the context of the elaboration of the NAPA, this is often an issue that comes up in connection with the national reports. There is no sufficient data to prepare scenarios or models.
- » Enhance scientific and technical capacity-building in the African countries regarding soil observation systems.
- » Development of local programmes in order to identify the potentials of synergetic initiatives in a given area and at community level. I think that it is important to rely on the present policy of the countries that foster decentralisation and to look how the Conventions on Climate Change and to Combat Desertification can work at local level with the elaboration of local development plans.
- » Communicate and reap the benefits of best practices in order to disseminate skills, know-how and existing methods. There is a project of civil society called DRYNET, comprising five regions in Latin America, Asia, Europe, Africa and Eastern Europe, and I believe that this project can be very helpful because it enables us to collect best practices which would allow a certain benchmarking for the assessment of the projects of NGO at local level and in the context of combating desertification.
- » Ensure the transfer of technologies and information in fields like drought-resistant cultures, installation of drop-by-drop irrigation systems, brackish water treatment, etc.
- » Integrate the issues of desertification and climate change in all local development plans.
- » Strengthening and/or implementation of early-warning systems for drought and climate risks. In my opinion this is important, especially at local level.
- » In the context of droughts and desertification, we need to develop cooperation striving for synergy with the environmental conventions at the level of the regional organisations (ECOWAS, Union Economique et Monetaire Ouest-Africaine UEMOA, NEPAD etc.). I think that how the issue of climate change is addressed in the NAPA is self-explicating since climate is a global issue that cannot be coped with by the individual countries on their own. It therefore makes sense to work at the level of sub-regional programmes designed in context with the combat of desertification, or at that of regional programmes, in order to treat this issue globally.



Ute Schaeffer (Deutsche Welle), Emmanuel Seck (ENDA TM), Christian Henckes (World Bank/GTZ), Luc Dubreuil (FAO)

- » At international level, financing mechanisms for the adaptation need to be implemented. There have been a lot of talks about contributions based on solidarity regarding air tickets, for instance. Teleconferences, for example, could already help reduce greenhouse gases. So, if we had, for instance, the air ticket tax, we could already do a lot against climate change and desertification. When I flew over to here, I read in a newspaper that Queen Elizabeth II, when flying to the United States, had agreed to compensate for her trip by funding ecological projects. This can help increase the awareness of the international elites.

To conclude, it is difficult to dissociate combating desertification and adaptation to climate change, i.e. combating the negative impact of climate change with all those urgent actions that help improve the management of water resources, forests, coasts and food security in the less advanced countries located, mostly, in Africa. These activities already identified in the National Action Plans to combat desertification need to be reinforced and/or resumed in the context of the NAPA.

Thus, in order to answer the initial question, I would say that the NAPA constitute a real chance to build on previous experiences, i.e. the achievements of the NAP under the UNCCD. I did not talk about biodiversity, because I have limited my speech to global governance in the context of combating desertification. There are things which have been done in connection with biodiversity, and I think that the NAPA should also be based on those experiences.

No matter whether we talk about climate change or combating desertification, both our areas are part of the same fight to reduce poverty.

## Panel II: Summary of discussion

The focal points of climate change and desertification are often found in different ministries. There is a need to better coordinate the NAPs and the NAPAs and draw on each other's experiences and lessons learned. A practical form of synergy is needed so that people working on different topics can all address the issue of sustainable development.

Vertical programmes have to be coordinated with horizontal financing at a national level or sub-regional level and include the participation of the NGOs. The way to achieve this is by channelling interventions and assistances into national priority settings and national development. Budgets for issues like desertification need to be assigned to countries affected and then included in a result framework which is properly evaluated and monitored. The national planning should be integrated with vertical funding so there is no competition for staff as it happened for example in the health sector.

Because in the next few years there will be an increase in funds and the key issue will increasingly become how money can be allocated, it is crucial to come up with appropriate investment plans which argue for investment in desertification.

The international dialogue on desertification needs to be moved onto a national level, since there cannot be a Convention that addresses global issues and is not reflected in national priority settings. Regarding the difficulties in harmonizing the Convention's implementation at the national level it could be easier to request one unique national exercise that groups the three conventions activities. If the national stakeholders in charge of the different conventions could join their forces, then they might have more convening power to attract the attention of national key stakeholders such as the ministry of finance as well as of their donor partners.

The overall priority setting mechanism needs to coordinate developmental topics with those for example of the PRSP, so the discussions do not overlap. There is also a need for development partners organised around a specific topic to make sure that budget and funds are allocated to it. Yet often different donors are dealing with different sectors such as energy or food supply or education. A suggestion could be to set up a national multi donor fund regarding environmental issues, where donors could work together on the problems on a national level. A centralised national coordination could be helpful where local levels are included in the planning processes.

## Panel III

### How must the UNCCD position itself internationally?



Because of its comparative advantage over other international actors in the area of normative authority the UNCCD needs urgently to reposition itself. It is the only legally binding multilateral instrument which links environmental and developmental issues by focusing specifically on the dry lands of the world. To ensure the effectiveness of the Convention, there needs to be a clear system of compliance, such as a guide to implementation – to which governments can adhere to.



## Governing desertification: where has the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to go?

By Sem T. Shikongo -

Chairman of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG)

I intend to take you through to the background that led to the establishment of the IIWG, then to the IIWG process to date and then discuss the pre-conditions of the repositioning of the UNCCD. I will finally conclude with a discussion of the strategic plan and the importance of addressing synergies amongst the conventions.

**We need to pave a way for the full and effective implementation of the UNCCD, which is unhindered by our political personal and constituent belief.**

Let me take some time now to talk about the pre-conditions for a repositioning of the UNCCD. The IIWG and its mandate provide a unique opportunity for repositioning the UNCCD internationally. If we take time to reflect, we will realise that it has been a very difficult road since Rio and where we are now. There has been a North-South divide and many assumptions taken for granted. There is therefore a need for a soul searching dialogue on the Convention. By assumptions I mean some of us came later in the process and some were there from early on, and people take positions from their background as the truth and nothing else but the truth. But perhaps we need to sit down and re-think why are we taking the positions we are having currently? Do these positions still make sense in today's international aid architecture? Do they still serve our interests? We have to lay down our differences and focus on the issue of combating land degradation and desertification, focus on the consequences of these phenomena on the affected communities. We need to move away from politics and ask ourselves: if we don't address these phenomena how will they impact the affected countries? We need to pave a way for the full and effective implementation of the UNCCD, which is unhindered by our political personal and constituent beliefs, and there is an opportunity now, both for donors and the international institutions to be more involved in the UNCCD implementation.

**Desertification affects more than a billion people, yet one of the weaker functions of the UNCCD is resource mobilization, since it does not display a clear comparative advantage.**

Let me make some general points on the strategy that I believe needs to be considered if this repositioning of the UNCCD has to happen effectively. There is a need for political will and commitment. I think that the affected countries have shown commitment. Our colleagues from the North however have not really shown the same commitment to the UNCCD. To achieve this commitment, political decision makers from the North should be more involved, and not only bureaucrats like us. When we have our convention processes we have numerous ministers from the developed world in attendance and only a few from the developing world. What message are we giving out to the ministers of the developing world and the affected people?

When it comes to the issue of resource mobilization tempers tend to raise, I have followed these processes for quite some time, in climate change, biodiversity and other flora and in also in development cooperation.

The UNCCD has been called an undernourished Convention by the Joint Inspection Unit report. If you compare it to the UNCBD and the FCCC, it is indeed undernourished. Desertification affects more than a billion people, yet one of the weaker functions of the UNCCD is resource mobilization, since it does not display a clear comparative advantage. If we want to display a comparative advantage to reposition ourselves we need to address this issue. There is a need for a long-term planning strategy for resource mobilization, if we want to reach for the 'low hanging fruits'. This is a concept we have in Namibia: if you have a tree it is easier to pluck the fruits that are hanging low and if you eat those fruits then it will give you the strength to reach the ones higher up the tree.

There is a need for concrete aims and targets and a need for a definition of clear objectives. We have to be careful about the indicators we are going to choose since our progress will be measured by their attainment. We therefore have to consider the indicators for the ten year strategy carefully and see whether they are really attainable and whether we can achieve them.

Regarding the structure of the UNCCD bodies, we may have to consider whether their present mandates are really addressing the real issues or do we need to revise them? Are they structures appropriate or do we also need to revise them? There is a need for a clear separation of task allocation and responsibilities between the various actors and we have to keep the needs of affected countries in mind.

There is a need for a follow-up system for implementation and to trace our progress regarding the repositioning of the UNCCD. We have to look at the human resources of the Convention. It is understaffed yet we expect it to pull the wagon.

The role of the private sector: There is a need to recognise and engage the private sector and civil society in the fight against land degradation and desertification. We will benefit if we invite them to the table.

Science and technology will be important in the process of repositioning. We need to move away from science for the sake of science. We cannot just study natural phenomena without linking them to the need of peoples, how can they be applied to help affected people?

**Stronger links should be fostered between the scientific bodies of the three Rio Conventions. We need to bring them together in order to maximise the information and the experience gained.**

Scientists have to work together with affected communities to generate best practices. We have to recognise that traditional knowledge from the affected communities can help us, so the two systems, Western knowledge and traditional knowledge need to work with each other so they can cross-fertilize each other and learn from each other.

Stronger links should be fostered between the scientific bodies of the three Rio Conventions. We need to bring them together in order to maximise the information and the experience gained.

Now I will look at the strategy as it stands now. The vision of the strategy is ›to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent land degradation, desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in affected Parties to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability‹.

Our mission is: ›a global framework to support the development and implementation of national and regional policies, programmes and measures to prevent, control and reverse land degradation/desertification and mitigate the effects of drought through scientific and technological excellence, raising awareness among the populations, standard setting, advocacy and resource mobilisation, thereby contributing to poverty reduction‹.

It is quite a mouthful, but that is what the parties in the IIWG felt they had to submit to reposition ourselves in the international arena. In terms of strategic objectives we have four of them:

- 1 To improve the living conditions of affected populations
- 2 To improve the condition of affected ecosystems.
- 3 To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD.
- 4 To mobilise adequate, timely and predictable financial, technical and technological resources from the domestic and international, public and private sources, including substantial resource from developed country Parties, to implement this strategy.

The fourth objective has not been easy to negotiate, we had some fights on it and that is why it has quite a lot of issues contained in it.

We are trying to position the UNCCD strategically. The strategic objectives are therefore backed up by operational objectives and expected outcomes. The operational objectives are:

- ›› financing and technology transfer;
- ›› science technology and knowledge;
- ›› policy framework;
- ›› capacity building, advocacy, awareness raising and education.

Then we have another section that refers to the implementation framework. This section defines the roles and responsibilities of the various UNCCD institutions, partners and stakeholders in meeting the above objectives.



These bodies that we have to consider are:

- » The Committee on Science and Technology (CST)
- » The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)
- » The Global Mechanism (GM)
- » The Secretariat and
- » Coordination between Secretariat and Global Mechanism.

One point I want to make clear is that of synergies. As a focal point from a country of only 1.8 million people I cannot afford to waste my time or the time of my colleagues by duplicating of funds and efforts, we have too many priorities and needs to address already. We therefore have to approach these in a very synergistic manner. Where can the confluence be?

**How can we ensure that in repositioning the UNCCD, the Convention also gets the world leaders' attention?**

Desertification is a local, grass-root level issue. Biodiversity conservation is in most cases a national concern, while climate change is a more abstract and global issue. Today the focus is on climate change. The news is full of it, it is very visual issue. It summarises all these things that humans have been doing to the planet including land degradation and desertification. That issue of climate change has caught the world leaders' attention. How can we ensure that in repositioning the UNCCD, the Convention also gets the world leaders' attention? In climate change it is clear that we need to act swiftly to avoid catastrophic consequences, to both man, animal and environment. Perhaps the same should apply to desertification and land degradation. How can combating desertification and land degradation mitigate climate change and contribute to the adaptation of affected countries? Therefore I argue that affected countries need to look at adaptation as a matter of urgency. There are those who argue that the bigger Conventions in terms of money will swallow the smaller ones, the big fish will eat the small fish. Perhaps we need to rethink our strategy and allow the small fish to eat the big fish. How can we, through this Convention, mobilize funds that deal with adaptation? It makes more sense if we obtain those funds under desertification and land degradation rather than under climate change. And if we are not



Christoph Kohlmeyer (BMZ), António Pires (UNCCD), Sem T. Shikongo (IIWG)

careful we are going to see adaptation programmes linked to agriculture by the UNFCCC and I am not sure that this will really help us achieve our goals.

The questions therefore are: how can combating land degradation and desertification mitigate climate change and contribute to the adaptation of affected countries all over the world? Why should the UNCCD reposition itself? Has it a role to play?

I argue that it has. It holds a comparative advantage over other international actors in the area of normative authority. It is the only legally binding multi-lateral instrument operating at the interface of environmental and developmental issues focusing specifically on the drylands of the world. It is a unique and holistic framework and the one true sustainable development Convention with a clear focus and valuable challenge function.

Its primary strength lies in its coordination of activities to combat desertification and in raising awareness of the problems – it is the world's key player in attracting attention to desertification and land degradation issues.

Finally, if we do not have the UNCCD and do not reposition it effectively, the international recognition of the significant, deleterious relationship between poverty and drought and/or desertification (particularly in Africa) would be considerably weakened as would be the international support for grass-roots actions to combat desertification and achieve sustainable development in affected areas.

## Alternatives for compliance and enforcement under the United Nation Conventions to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

**By Thomas Higdon** – Senior Fellow, Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

My name is Thomas Higdon and I am a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development (IGSD). IGSD has several projects, one of which is serving as host to the Secretariat of the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE). INECE is a global network of practitioners and academics from governments, NGOs and the private sector working to strengthen implementation of international and domestic environmental law. We look at environmental law as being one continuum running from international agreements such as the Convention to Combat Desertification all the way down to national legislation and local enforcement. We do not see a division between international and domestic law, we see them as inexorably linked. INECE was founded two decades ago and works with partners such as the World Bank and environmental protection authorities around the world, primarily promoting awareness, strengthening capacity as well as developing other enforcement and compliance networks. Most recently INECE launched a new network in the North African area. The goal of these regional networks is, not only international cooperation, but to get people talking to each other in the national and regional context. INECE is also launching more national networks so that individuals who are charged with implementing international agreements, such as biodiversity, are talking to those implementing other agreements, such as climate change, and are talking to those enforcing domestic land laws. Since all these tie together and the people need to talk to each other, we promote dialogue at the national, regional, and international level.

I want to reflect briefly to define a few terms. Compliance occurs when an individual or organization meets the requirements of a rule, regardless of motivation. For example, the Montreal protocol requires states to stop using particular ozone depleting substance. A state can be said to be in compliance if they stop using that substance.

Enforcement refers to actions taken by third parties, particularly governments, to bring individuals or organizations into compliance. You can have enforcement at both the national and international level. A simple example of domestic enforcement would be a speeding ticket. An example of international enforcement may be suspension of membership in a treaty regime.

The third concept I will define is effectiveness. This needs to be distinguished since we can have compliance and we can have enforcement, but we can also have a totally ineffective regime. The key is how you set it up to begin with to make sure you reach the goals you



want to reach. Effectiveness measures how successful a treaty is in solving the problem it was designed to address.

**Compliance and enforcement are the bedrock for sustainable development, the essential component of rule of law, good governance and sustainable development.**

Compliance and enforcement are the bedrock for sustainable development, the essential component of rule of law, good governance and sustainable development.

IGSD and INECE started looking at the UNCCD about a year ago. Desertification, as an issue, provides a lot of challenges since it's a local problem with global consequences. The surrounding problems tend to be non-linear, since we cannot see the gradual building up of the problems making it difficult to see at what point we can deal with them. Desertification also has varying time scales depending on which part of the world you are looking at. Finally, there is a great deal of uncertainty and misunderstanding surrounding this treaty. It's unclear especially from the treaty text, what it is trying to do.

The traditional approach we have for enforcing compliance is based on the deterrence theory, for example, a speeding ticket. For this to be effective, we need an individual or a state to believe the following. First, that violation will be detected. Second, that there will be swift and predictable responses to violations. Finally, that those responses will include appropriate sanctions. The key is the perception among violators. If they believe they will be caught and punished, they tend to comply more.

Many of the more famous Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) rely on this strategy for effectiveness. The Kyoto Protocol is following this path. But is this a feasible approach for the Desertification Convention? Since there are no clear targets in the Convention, the traditional way may not work.

A new line of thinking has emerged in the past decades at the domestic level, which is increasingly being seen at international level. This approach uses normative theory. Most of our behaviour is governed by social norms rather than the written law. The reasons most of us get along with each other is not because there is a law not to bump into each other in the subway or take things when no-one is looking, but because we think its right not to do so. For a norm to be effective there must be a meaningful sense of obligation shared by the group and this sense of obligation influences their decision making behaviour and operates without normative sanctions. Under normative theory we focus less on the specifics of the law and the stick if you violate and focus more on capacity and commitment. Obviously capacity requires some funding but the key is to know what is expected from the target group in their daily behaviour and the same must be true for international agreements.

There must be a sense of commitment, a sense of obligation and the perception that the behaviour in question is fair. This new approach looks at states in a different way. The old approach viewed states as unitary actor, a bit like a person. You can throw me in jail if I violate the law, you can tax me and fine me, yet you cannot do that with states. Even the sanctions that we have at the international level are usually not used because states don't want to sanction each other. We need to look at states as a collection of many different interests. The governments of states are usually composed of many different ministries all with a conflicting agenda, all with their own interest groups supporting them. The Desertification Convention needs to look at states in the same way.

A recent study in California has compiled the International Regime Database (IRD). It includes hundreds of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Researchers using the IRD crunched the numbers and found some remarkable results. For example the most successful MEAs traditionally recognised is the Montreal protocol in terms of reaching the goals it set out to reach. Most think it is because it had some very clear obligations and there was the potential for sanction. The researchers, using the IRD, found that the determining factor for the protocol's success was the programmatic activities and not the amount of money spent used to implement these MEAs. The findings suggest that you do not have to have protocols with lengthy specific commitments in order to reach your objectives.

What does that mean for the Desertification Convention? Some of the basic programmatic activities that were found to be helpful are very simple and not costly. One is a guide to implementation. A guide created by the UNCCD Secretariat or by a conference of the parties that lays out in a very simple text what states have to do in order to comply with the Convention. It could specify which activities states can take; recognising that whenever you make a list some things will not be honoured. The shorter the list, the more effective the guide will be. There are a number of conventions that have used these guides with considerable success, such as the Basel Convention on transportation of hazardous materials, which is an excellent example.

One of the frustrating things when I started looking at this UNCCD a year ago is just how many different types of activities the Convention claims to be implementing. If you look through the reports of the UNCCD webpage, countries claim just about everything that could possibly impact Desertification is an activity implemented by the Convention. In order to make progress there is going to have to be a decision to focus on specific types of activities. Reading the proceedings from the last Conference in September 2006 in Berlin, I was struck that so many presentations made the same point. To be successful, the Convention needs to go back to its roots: soil degradation. By focusing on that specific area it becomes possible to create a guide that someone in ministries in their own coun-



Thomas Hidgon (IGSD), Ute Schaeffer (DW), Sem T. Shikongo (IIWG)

tries can open up and say: »Here is what I'm supposed to do – these are some activities that this Convention obligates my country to undertake.« And while there might be some activities that interrelate with other conventions such as reforestation projects – which are obviously important to combat soil degradation – and there is also prominent CDM projects under the climate change. So there is an overlap, but by creating a list of types of activities and providing guidance to the countries on those activities it will provide effectiveness.

Another thing is reporting. We hear with all the MEAs that everyone wants more reporting. There is also a lot of talk about ways to harmonizing reports. One thing that could be done is require that all the information in the existing desertification reports is presented in the same manner, in the same order with the same headings, so if one were to compare two countries' reports, one could lay them side by side and understand easily the connections.

Model legislation is always helpful, although we have lots of people working on it with existing resources. Getting back to projects, model projects may sound simple but in compliance, the simpler is better. Ideally, we need to be able to give someone whose task is implementing this Convention an example that states: »here is a type of activity that will meet your obligations and here is how someone did it involving the local community, making sure it was what the community wanted, how they sorted the funding and the different sources for funding.«

We need to return to the concept of disaggregating states as a way of getting these simple ways of improving compliance to work. There needs to be a considerable outreach to all the international and domestic constituencies in order to improve their participation. At the moment, there is an immense amount of data on the impacts of desertification. One can go to the webpage and see how many kilometres are being reclaimed by the desert every year, how many people are affected etc. But just like climate change, those global numbers are meaningless to funding bodies, to those who are implementing and to the communities affected. What is needed is guidance and assistance for countries so they can say how desertification affects them. How can their community put together the data cheaply and quickly and say: »this is how many people's lives are affected in my community«. How they can break down that information not just at the state level but at a local level, and communicate real harm and real impact when seeking funding from international organizations and activating these domestic constituencies.

**We need to return to the concept of disaggregating states as a way of getting these simple ways of improving compliance to work.**

## Panel III: Summary of discussion

Regarding compliance with the UNCCD, one needs to define who are the actors who need to comply, whether it's the countries who signed the treaty or other bodies. Compliance should also be further defined, since governments that don't allocate resources to desertification might be considered non compliant.

There is a need to look beyond at the conventional notion of states and energize domestic constituencies so people in the countries affected by this issue can be active. The most effective thing that the UNCCD Secretariat can do is not advocacy, but creating tools to help others – such as the states, NGOs and individuals – advocate the Convention. The communication strategy should be tailored for the different audiences so that the message can effectively get through.

The issue of setting a clear target criteria, benchmarks and indicators that would definitely be accepted by the entire international community as the reference basis for one to assess whether there has been progress or not in the Convention was also raised. A point of view is that while for climate change there are specific targets and emissions that are measurable, in the context of the UNCCD hard indicators might not be useful. States should be provided with more guidance on what they can do. The Convention should have a prioritized, concise list which could have a stronger normative effect.

So far the UNCCD has not provided guidance in terms of what is expected of countries and on how to operate on the national level. To plan mainstreaming and implementation, it would be a helpful if countries themselves outlined their own clear targets in their national action plans. Then the UNCCD could report and assess the achievements of these nationally defined indicators and benchmarks.

There is a lack of common understanding on what the Convention means for different countries. There is a need to define desertification in a wider way, specifying that it is degradation of natural resources, vegetation, soil, water and climate. To move forward, the parties of the Convention need a common understanding and to implement the treaty through their national or local laws. The UNCCD has to address the resource allocation on the national level and there is also a need to limit the activities of the Convention so that it is a concrete set of actions to comply with.



## Final statement

**By Christoph Kohlmeyer –**

Head of Division 314 in the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Sustainable soil and land management is for many reasons very important. I will just mention three of them: it is part of our global environment; it is a medium for the human right to food and is also a highly political issue, since soil is land and most conflicts in this globe are about land. That alone is a good reason as to why we need to make soil and sustainable land management our concern. The second thing is irrespective of the history of negotiating this Convention. If you studied the negotiation process you would learn a lot about multilateral environmental agreements, how they come by and how they are negotiated, and what is negotiated under cover. You learn a lot about human history. We have this Convention, and there are many good reasons why we need it. We need to look back, and we also need to look forward. We need a Convention that is able to increase the commitment to its objectives. If we look back at the past ten years we will discover that this Convention has not delivered even a small portion of what it was expected to deliver. The decision of the last COP in Nairobi to set up the IIWG was a very wise one. It commissioned a group of people and gave them a mandate to develop a ten-year strategy with very specific objectives.

I still see a lot of difficulties around this Convention. There appears to be a lot of conservatism, we often hear brilliant ideas from several institutions about how this Convention could be reformed, how its performance could be improved. Immediately there are a few people who say »But you must not re-negotiate this convention!«. If we want this Con-

vention to perform we need to accept that not every little change proposed is equal to a re-negotiation.

Among the issues discussed this afternoon on how to increase the commitment of this Convention, I think the key can be found in the last presentation, in the discussion on how to bring some sort of compliance to specific rules and standards into this Convention, but also how to induce such pressure on our Governments so that the States which have ratified this Convention have no choice than to comply.

This is exactly where we need to go to. The current discussion needs to look beyond the traditional path of negotiation and discussions. Two years ago I became responsible for the German part of the UNCCD and at the same time I was involved for some aspects in the negotiations with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on agriculture. And there are some elements in the WTO process that bring compliance for example. Today there is no other international global mechanism like the WTO which has compliance measures and which you can use when a state is not complying with the agreement and needs to change its policy. This could be a model for UNCCD. I don't think we can decide anything similar to the WTO model at the next COP of UNCCD, but we need these models.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for example has created voluntary guidelines for the implementation of the right to food, and many governments have endorsed them. The guidelines are a long check list – including trade and policy issues – which governments have to comply with in order to safeguard the human right to food. If we look beyond the traditional conventions we find many good examples that work, where people defend their rights, protect the global public goods and that is the way we should go.

The last point is a very good example of a dialectical way of progress. Because of the constraints under which it was created, the CCD Convention was very innovative at the time of its creation. Participation was a standard, and many elements of the basic principles on how this Convention should be implemented are already enshrined in the basic decisions of this Convention. Now we have the Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness, but I would argue that the CCD was a precursor of thinking towards ownership and alignment. Today with the Paris Declaration we have policy instruments that go far beyond, such as mutual accountability and results based management. Nowadays this Convention would have to look into those principles which have not been developed yet. Because the Convention works at field level, it has an opportunity to go further and teach the Paris Declaration community how to implement those principles. We should cross-fertilize our ideas and use them. I think it is not a good approach to take the moral high ground and say we are a convention, we have the privilege to be a UN institution; we are an old dame to be honoured. On the contrary, we have to serve the others.

**Sustainable soil and land management is for many reasons very important. I will just mention three of them: it is part of our global environment; it is a medium for the human right to food and is also a highly political issue, since soil is land and most conflicts in this globe are about land.**



## Summary of discussion

On the matter of the allocation of resources a proposal is that countries should allocate a percentage of their national budget to fight desertification. By showing commitment to the issue, countries could then further attract funds from bilateral and multilateral donors.

A better communication strategy is required, so that policies can be described and understood at a grass-root level. Although additional funds would be needed to implement it, the decision to have a policy dialogue reflects above all a political will on behalf of the country. So far there is a lack of it in Sub-Saharan Africa.

A positive example comes from Ethiopia who has increased its investment into rural development and desertification control from 3 percent to 16 percent. This can be read as a clear sign of political will and cooperation between the lead agency from Norway in Ethiopia, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other bilateral donors. It also reflects a very progressive element promoted by the Paris Declaration, namely the alignment of the priorities of the countries.

## Glossary

**APRM** African Peer Review Mechanism

**BMZ** Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung; German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

**Both ENDS** Environment and Development Service

**CARI** Centre d'Actions et de Réalisations Internationales; International Action and Realisation Centre

**CDM** Clean Development Mechanism

**CIDA** Canadian International Development Agency

**COP** Conference of the Parties

**CRIC** Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

**CST** Committee on Science and Technology

**ECOWAS** Economic Community of West African States

**ENDA TM** Environnement et développement du tiers monde – Environmental developmental action in the third world

**EU** European Union

**FAO** The Food and Agriculture Organization

**GEF** Global Environment Facility; a funding instrument for international environment conventions; GEF was established by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1990

**GM** Global Mechanism of the UNCCD; one of the statutory bodies of the UNCCD; the Global Mechanism promotes the mobilisation and channelling of substantial financial resources; the GM is hosted in Rome by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and functions under the authority and guidance of the Conference of Parties.

**GTZ** Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH; German technical cooperation

**IGSD** Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development

**IIWG** Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group; During the COP in October 2005 in Nairobi, the Parties to the UNCCD established this working group to develop a ten-year strategic plan and framework for implementation of the Convention; the IIWG is to complete its work by July 2007 and submit its conclusions to the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties in September 2008 in Madrid

**INCD** Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Desertification

**INECE** International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement

**IPCC** Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

**IRD** International Regime Database

**MDG** Millennium Development Goal

**MEA** Multilateral Environmental Agreement

**NAP** National Action Programme to combat desertification

**NAPA** National Action Programme for Climate Adaptation

**NDF** National Desertification Funds

**NEPAD** New Partnership for Africa's Development

**NGO** Non-Governmental Organization

**ODA** Official Development Assistance

**PFM** Public Financial Management

**PIU** Project Implementation Unit

**PRSP** Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

**UEMOA** Union Economique et Monetaire Ouest-Africaine; West African Economic and Monetary Union

**UN** United Nations

**UNCBD** United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity

**UNCCD** United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

**UNCED** United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

**UNEP** United Nations Environmental Programme

**UNFCCC** United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**WTO** World Trade Organisation



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