



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

22 July 2011

Excellency,

As we move towards the summer break, I would like to share with you information on the organizational arrangements of the three High-level Meetings that will take place during the high-level week of the 66th session in September.

- By its resolution 65/238, the General Assembly decided that a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases shall be held on **19 and 20 September 2011**.
- By its resolution 65/160, the General Assembly decided that a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the theme “Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” shall be held on **20 September 2011**.
- By its resolution 65/240, the General Assembly decided that a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action shall be held on **22 September 2011**.

Further information on the organizational arrangements of aforementioned High-level Meetings will be provided by the Secretariat in its information note to delegations. Provisional programmes for the meetings will also be conveyed at a later date.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deiss', written in a cursive style.

Joseph Deiss

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

**Organizational arrangements for the High-level Meeting on the Prevention and
Control of Non-Communicable Diseases
(Monday 19 – Tuesday 20 September 2011, New York)**

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 64/265 of 13 May 2010, decided to convene a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2011, with the participation of Heads of State and Government, on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. In its resolution of 65/238 of 24 December 2010, the General Assembly further decided that this High-level Meeting shall be held on 19 and 20 September 2011 in New York.

2. By paragraph 5 of resolution 65/238, the General Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States, to finalize the organizational arrangements of the meeting.

Plenary meetings

3. Pursuant to paragraph 4(a) of resolution 65/238, formal plenary meetings will be held on 19 September 2011 (see Annex) and will feature opening statements by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Director-General of the World Health Organization and a representative of civil society who will be chosen from non-governmental organizations with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and in consultation with Member States. The President of the General Assembly is currently considering recommendations for the civil society speaker, in consultation with Member States and the Civil Society Task Force established by the President.

4. To enable maximum participation within the limited time available, statements in plenary meetings should not exceed five minutes when speaking in the national capacity and eight minutes when speaking on behalf of a group. It is anticipated that within the time constraints, there will be time for a maximum of 65 interventions. A list of speakers, maintained in accordance with the level of participation and on a first come, first served basis, will be open for inscription with a contact point at the Secretariat (to be announced in the Journal) from 1 - 30 August 2011. Delegations are asked to kindly indicate the level of representation when inscribing on the speakers list.

5. A closing plenary meeting will be held on 20 September 2011 from 15:00 – 16:00, comprising the presentation of summaries of the round tables and the adoption of a concise action-oriented outcome document.

Round tables

6. Pursuant to paragraph 4(c) of resolution 65/238, the thematic round tables will address the following themes:

Round table 1: The rising incidence, developmental and other challenges and

the social and economic impact of non-communicable diseases and their risk factors.

Round table 2: Strengthening national capacities, as well as appropriate policies, to address prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

Round table 3: Fostering international cooperation, as well as coordination, to address non-communicable diseases.

Round tables 1 and 2 will take place concurrently with the plenary meetings on 19 September 2011, as indicated in paragraph 4(b) of resolution 65/238. Round table 3 will take place on the morning of 20 September.

7. Participation in each round table will include Member States, observers, and representatives of entities of the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector.

8. Each round table will be chaired by two Co-Chairs, selected by the President of the General Assembly and taking full account of the level of representation as well as equitable geographical distribution. Member States are requested to indicate to the Office of the President of the General Assembly by 15 August 2011 if their Head of State is interested to participate as a Co-Chair.

9. Pursuant to paragraph 4(d) of resolution 65/238, a list of speakers will not be maintained. However, Member States and General Assembly Observers are encouraged to inform a contact point at the Secretariat (to be announced in the Journal) from 1 - 30 August 2011 which round table they wish to intervene in and at what level of representation. Up to fifty Member States and observers should be able to intervene in each round table, and the Office of the President of the General Assembly will do its utmost to accommodate all preferences, taking into account the level of representation as well as equitable geographical distribution.

10. To promote interactive, free-flowing discussions, participants in the round tables will be invited to make brief remarks that do not exceed five minutes, raise questions and respond to other speakers. Written statements are strongly discouraged.

11. Five civil society organizations and three representatives of UN funds and programmes and the specialised agencies will be invited to take the floor in each round table, time permitting.

12. Pursuant to paragraph 15 of resolution 65/238, the General Assembly will have to approve a list of representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and academia for participation in the High-level Meeting, including the round tables. A decision will be submitted to the Assembly shortly.

Further information

13. Further general information on the organizational arrangements for the High-level Meeting will be provided by the Secretariat in its information note to delegations.

ANNEX: High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

<u>Monday, 19 September 2011</u>	
9:00 - 10:00 Opening plenary	
10:00 - 13:00 Plenary meeting	10:00 - 13:00 Round table 1: The rising incidence, developmental and other challenges and the social and economic impact of non-communicable diseases and their risk factors.
15:00 - 18:00 Plenary meeting	15: 00 -18:00 Round table 2: Strengthening national capacities, as well as appropriate policies, to address prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.
<u>Tuesday, 20 September 2011</u>	
	10:00 - 13:00 Round table 3: Fostering international cooperation, as well as coordination, to address non-communicable diseases.
15:00 – 16:00 Closing plenary	

**Organizational arrangements for the High-level Meeting on
“Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of
sustainable development and poverty eradication”
(Tuesday, 20 September 2011, New York)**

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 65/160, decided to convene a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the theme “Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” on 20 September 2011.
2. The General Assembly also decided that “the preparations for the meeting will be undertaken under the authority of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session” (para. 11(d)).
3. Pursuant to paragraph 11(a) of the said resolution, which decided that “the meeting will be organized within existing resources”, the high-level meeting will take the following format:

10 – 10:45 am	Opening plenary meeting (General Assembly Hall) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. President of the General Assembly 2. Secretary-General 3. Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 4. President of the 9th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD 5. President of the 10th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD 6. Group of 77 and China 7. European Union 8. Group of African States
11 am – 1 pm	Morning interactive panel on the same theme as the meeting (Conference Room 4, North Lawn Building) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-chaired by Heads of State or Government, one from the North and one from the South
3 – 5:30 pm	Afternoon interactive panel on the same theme as the meeting (Conference Room 4, North Lawn Building) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-chaired by Heads of State or Government, one from the North and one from the South
5:45 – 6 pm	Closing plenary meeting (General Assembly Hall) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the General Assembly will present a summary of the discussions based on the report of the co-chairs

** Speakers in the opening plenary meeting will be limited to the eight mentioned above, as the interactive panel will take place from 11 am to 1 pm.*

4. To enable maximum participation within the limited time available, statements in the plenary meetings and the interactive panels should not exceed five minutes when speaking in the national capacity and eight minutes when speaking on behalf of a group. It is anticipated that in the morning panel, there will be time for approximately 20 speakers, followed by approximately 30 speakers in the afternoon panel.
5. A list of speakers, maintained in accordance with the level of representation and on a first-come, first-served basis, will be open for inscription with a contact point at the Secretariat (to be announced in the Journal) from 1 - 30 August 2011. Delegations are asked to kindly indicate the level of representation and the preferred interactive panel (morning or afternoon) when inscribing on the speakers' list.
6. The panels will be co-chaired by two Heads of State or Government, one from the North and one from the South, "to be appointed by the President of the General Assembly, with due regard for geographical balance, in consultation with regional groups" (para. 11(b)).
7. Each regional group is requested to indicate to the Office of the President of the General Assembly by 2 September 2011, which Head of State or Government will be available to co-chair.
8. Representatives of two non-governmental organizations, one from the North and one from the South, will be invited to take the floor during the interactive panels, time permitting.
9. Further general information on the organizational arrangements for the High-level Meeting will be provided by the Secretariat in its information note to delegations.

**Organizational arrangements for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
(Thursday, 22 September 2011, New York)**

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 65/240 of 24 December 2010, decided to hold a one-day high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The high-level meeting will be held on Thursday, 22 September 2011, and its theme will be “Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development”. The General Assembly, by its resolution 65/279 of 13 June 2011, further specified the scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting.

Plenary meetings

2. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of resolution 65/279, the General Assembly decided that the speakers at the opening plenary will be the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Head of State of South Africa, one speaker from each regional group and a representative of a non-governmental organization active in the field of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

3. The current Chair of each regional group has been asked to recommend to the President of the General Assembly one speaker on behalf of their group to participate in the opening plenary.

4. Regarding the selection of the NGO representative for the opening plenary, the General Assembly invited the President of the General Assembly, by paragraph 5 of resolution 65/279, to draw up a list of representatives of civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations active in the field of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance and, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation, to submit the list to Member States for consideration on a no-objection basis, for participation in the high-level meeting. The deadline for NGO pre-registration was 15 July and the NGOs that have registered are currently being reviewed. The list will be circulated shortly to Member States for consideration on a non-objection basis. Thereafter, the President will select an NGO representative to participate in the opening plenary.

5. In accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 65/279, the closing plenary meeting will comprise the presentation of summaries of the discussions by the Co-Chairs of the round tables and the adoption of a short and concise political declaration aimed at mobilizing political will. Consultations are currently ongoing on the content of this political declaration.

Round tables

6. Following the opening plenary, two consecutive round tables will take place (see Annex). As decided in paragraph 3(a) of resolution 65/279, the round tables will address the overall theme of “Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development”.

7. As indicated in paragraph 3(c) of resolution 65/279, participation in each round table will include Member States, observers, representatives of entities of the United Nations system and experts as well as selected representatives of civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations that are active in the field of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

8. The following experts have been invited to participate in the round tables: The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; the Chairperson of the Working Group on People of African Descent; the Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; as well as one of the Independent Eminent Experts on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

9. The round tables will be co-chaired by two Heads of State or Government to be invited by the President of the General Assembly after consultations with the regional groups. In selecting the Co-Chairs, the President of the General Assembly will take full account of the level of representation as well as equitable geographical distribution. Member States are requested to indicate to the Office of the President of the General Assembly by 15 August if their Head of State or Government is interested to participate as a Co-Chair.

10. To promote interactive, free-flowing discussions, participants in the round tables will be invited to make brief remarks that do not to exceed five minutes, raise questions and respond to other speakers. Written statements are strongly discouraged.

11. A list of speakers for the round tables, maintained in accordance with the level of representation and on a first come, first served basis, will be open for inscription with a contact point in the Secretariat (to be announced in the Journal) from 1 - 30 August 2011. Delegations are asked to kindly indicate the level of representation when inscribing on the speakers list.

12. As noted in paragraph 4 above, the deadline for NGO pre-registration for participation in the high-level meeting was 15 July and the NGOs that have registered are currently being reviewed. This list will be circulated shortly to Member States on a non-objection basis. Thereafter, the President will select NGO representatives to participate in the round tables.

Further information

13. Further general information on the organizational arrangements of the High-level Meeting will be provided by the Secretariat in its information note to delegations.

Annex: High-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

<u>Thursday, 22 September 2011</u>	
9:00 – 11:00	Opening plenary
11:00 – 13:00	Round table on “Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development”
15:00 – 18:00	Round table on “Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development”
18:00 – 19:00	Closing plenary



General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

High-level meeting on addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report submitted by the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa in preparation for the High-level meeting on desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (A/RES/65/160) to be held at UNHQs on 20th September 2011.

* A/66/50

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I. Background

1. In its resolution 65/160, the General Assembly decided to convene a one-day high-level meeting on the theme “Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” prior to the general debate of its sixty-sixth session. In paragraph 11 (e) of resolution 65/160, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a background paper for the high-level meeting. This paper has been prepared in response to that request.

2. The paper views desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation (DLDD) in their global context. This stems from the cross-cutting dimensions of the issues and the strong linkages between DLDD and challenges such as climate change, biodiversity, poverty eradication and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), food security, peace and security, forced migration, natural disaster reduction, and water management, among others. It argues the case for addressing DLDD as crucial to finding sustainable solutions to numerous global crises and hence the urgent need to ensure higher priority for desertification, land degradation and drought on the international agenda.

II. DLDD in Perspective

Desertification, land degradation and drought are global issues: humankind’s future relies on successful management of its increasing impact on land and soil

A. Land degradation and drought have a global dimension and affect all ecosystems

3. Land degradation is a long-term loss of ecosystem function and services which are vital for human existence, caused by disturbances from which the system cannot recover unaided. The issue is traditionally viewed as most pressing in the world’s arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas – commonly known as the ‘drylands’ – where land degradation is called desertification. An analysis of 23 years of remote sensing data reveals a declining trend in land productivity across some 24% of the global land surface, at a rate of almost 1% per year. More than 50% of the land used for agriculture is moderately to severely degraded. Arable land loss has been estimated at 30 to 35 times the historical rate. Land degradation outside drylands accounts for 78% of its total and is undoubtedly a global issue, affecting developed countries as well as developing ones.

4. Desertification and land degradation occur in numerous ways, such as soil erosion, deterioration of soil biology and loss of natural vegetation. Forces driving unsustainable land use include agricultural policies, land governance, and market regulation. Results include declines in crop production, fuel wood harvests and water resources.

5. Ecological and economic systems are also disrupted by drought, the naturally occurring phenomenon that exists when precipitation is significantly below normal recorded levels. Drought, like land degradation, occurs in most parts of the world, including humid regions, because drought is a dry spell relative to the average conditions locally. Drought is temporary, in contrast to the permanent aridity in drylands, but drylands are also still prone to drought because the rainfall they receive critically depends on a few rainfall events.

B. Drylands will significantly expand in the decades to come

6. Ecosystems affected by increased aridity are likely to expand under global warming scenarios. Since the mid-twentieth century, global aridity and drought areas have increased substantially, a trend that is particularly marked after the late 1970s, when rapid warming of the atmosphere has contributed significantly to global drying. Still greater aridity and persistent severe droughts are expected in the next 20-50 years over most of Africa, southern Europe and the Middle East, Australia, Southeast Asia and most of North and South America. The implications for very large numbers of people are clear. Rapid response and adaptation strategies, incorporating effective drought management and disaster risk reduction plans should be a high priority.

7. Drought conditions can profoundly affect ecosystems, agriculture, water resources, power supplies and basic human welfare. These effects can be exacerbated by desertification and land degradation. For example, poor management of cropland may lead to greater erosion and dust storms, amplifying the effects of drought on food production.

C. The issue of keeping productive land has become a global issue

8. Productive land is becoming scarce. Population growth, climate change, land degradation and growing urban areas increase the pressure on productive land resources and water. At the same time, competition for productive land increases due to growing demand for food, fodder and agricultural raw material for industrial and energy use. The extreme increase of land sales and long-term land leases in developing countries can be taken as one indicator that land has become a global issue.

9. Another compelling reason to view DLDD in its global context stems from the links between land degradation and two other major issues of global environmental change: climate change and biodiversity loss. Land is intimately related to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and its sustainable management provides a tool for both. Maintaining and enhancing the condition of ecosystems based on land contributes to biodiversity conservation, and sustainably managing land – including rehabilitation and reclamation – provides a viable alternative to deforestation and afforestation.

10. DLDD when compounded by poverty and inequality can feed political insecurity and conflict. The fierce competitions over scarce resources for life (water and productive land) in the context of chronic poverty transform affected areas into conflict-prone regions. It is probably not coincidental that drylands are one of the most conflict-prone regions of the world. In 2007, 80% of major armed conflicts worldwide occurred in drylands.

11. Drought and degradation drive people off their land, creating economic migrants and environmental refugees. Temporary migration has long been an important element in rural livelihoods during times of stress, but increasing numbers migrate internationally and for longer periods. These migrants have the potential to adversely affect political and economic stability locally, regionally and internationally.

D. Sustainable land management and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

12. The reverse side of these DLDD synergies means that work done to achieve sustainable land management (SLM) also contributes to addressing other global challenges. The devastating impacts of desertification and drought came to the world's

attention as arguably the first global environmental issue in the early 1970s when the effects in Sahelian Africa prompted calls for international action. On the policy front, this stimulated a chain of initiatives that eventually culminated in the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), one of the three Rio Conventions agreed in 1992. The UNCCD has now been ratified by 194 Parties.

13. Much has changed in the nearly 20 years since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The conference itself was a landmark event in society's shift in appreciation of the natural environment as a whole: from viewing nature primarily as resource, to understanding nature as life-sustaining global ecosystem that also harbours resources. That view is now firmly entrenched. With this new understanding has come the widespread acceptance that human-induced environmental changes, and their consequences for human and ecosystems well-being, are now fundamental development issues.

E. For human needs to be met land resource and capacity must be assessed and monitored at all levels

14. As the only international and legally binding instrument focussing on SLM, the UNCCD requires all parties to engage through political, practical and financial investment in maintenance of productive land by improving affected ecosystems and living conditions by enhancing affected ecosystems and populations' conditions.

15. Desertification/land degradation is now recognized as both an environmental and a developmental problem, and of global proportions. From a scientific viewpoint, the exclusive focus on land degradation solely in drylands has de facto proven to be no longer tenable. Segregating dryland degradation from non-dryland degradation has also proven to be counterproductive at the national level, on the one hand because most affected countries have both dryland and non-dryland areas, on the other hand because of its cross-border dimensions.

16. A new understanding of the scope of the UNCCD has emerged over the past 10 years which combines the priority given to drylands with recognition that the tools and policies promoted by the Convention are relevant to SLM globally. Although the Convention distinguishes between affected and non-affected Parties, the active engagement of all Parties is prudent because a country not affected immediately by desertification will certainly still feel its impact via related issues, including climate change, food insecurity and environmentally-induced migration.

17. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 – Rio+20 – will focus on green economies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the future institutional framework for sustainable development. The time is right to argue the case for efficient management of natural resources as a central element of a green economy, and the battle for poverty eradication and global sustainability.

18. A 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) was adopted at the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8) in 2007. It has four strategic objectives, three of which now have operational frameworks. The Strategy is an essential document for the implementation of the UNCCD. It provides a framework that captures the long-term vision of the Parties, reflecting consensus on the success factors (finance, policy, capacity development, advocacy and a sound scientific

basis) for achieving the Convention's targets. It would be useful to reflect on the progress achieved and obstacles that impede further implementation.

19. After COP 8, the Convention entered the realms of measurability in terms of impact and performance indicators with a move towards a results-based management approach. At COP 9 in 2009, Parties decided to use a standardized set of performance indicators for reports, and agreed on eleven indicators to assess desertification impact. The two mandatory – changes in land cover status and the proportion of the population living above the poverty line – and nine optional impact indicators will first be used for reporting in 2012.

III. The poverty-DLDD nexus

Sustainable land management has a positive impact on economic growth and the eradication of poverty worldwide

20. The UNCCD is the global focal point and normative reference for DLDD issues. Its full operationalization at all levels and by all actors and stakeholders is, therefore, a wise and highly desirable strategy. Land degradation affects 1.5 billion people globally whose livelihoods depend directly on exploiting degraded areas and is closely associated with poverty as 42% of the very poor live in degraded areas compared with 15% of non-poor.

A. Land degradation is a cause and a consequence of poverty worldwide

21. The challenges of DLDD are of a global nature because land degradation and drought occur in virtually all ecosystems. Hence, these issues are faced by all countries, although their significance is particularly acute for the world's poor. Many people living in rural areas depend directly upon the natural resource base for their livelihoods, so any deterioration in those resources, through desertification, land degradation and/or drought, has direct impacts on human welfare.

22. The links between land degradation and poverty are mutually reinforcing. This 'downward spiral' hypothesis has it that some poor households are compelled to deplete resources to survive, and this degradation impoverishes them because degraded land progressively reduces agricultural productivity and income. People in poverty may well recognise their actions as harmful to their own long-term interests, yet their abject poverty leaves them with no alternative.

B. Droughts have a disproportionate impact on the poor

23. Several studies have found that during a drought the poorest rural households experience crop-income losses that are proportionally higher than the wealthiest households. Drought losses are typically offset by selling remaining assets, but prices are often depressed after a natural disaster because many people sell possessions at the same time, undermining the efficacy of the coping strategy. This situation applies particularly to livestock or other possessions in remote rural areas with limited access to markets.

24. Reductions in income or consumption caused by drought frequently have negative knock-on effects on other aspects of human welfare and development. In countries where the socio-economic status of women is low, drought disasters can intensify existing patterns of discrimination that make women more vulnerable. Drought may result in a decline in body mass among rural women, with no impact on men's health. Children in drought-affected villages can

experience long-lasting effects on health, such as stunted growth and impaired mental development.

25. Most of the effects of drought on poor rural households occur via its adverse impacts on the quantity and quality of food production. Soil degradation has similar indirect effects on human nutrition and health and acts both separately from and in tandem with drought. It is necessary when considering policy options to strengthen food security policies that promote food production by indigenous people, small farmers and rural communities including by using indigenous seeds and traditional knowledge.

C. The Forgotten Billion: poverty prevalence is higher in drylands

26. Many of the world's poorest and most disadvantaged people face these and other challenges on a daily basis. Most poor people, particularly the rural poor, are located in areas that are frequently described using terms such as 'marginal' and 'fragile'. A common characteristic of such 'difficult' places is aridity and the association between drylands and poverty has been identified at numerous geographical scales, from the global and regional to the national and subnational. Worldwide, about half of all dryland inhabitants are poor: approximately one billion people whose low level of human welfare reflects a fundamental neglect in the development process, including lack of access to basic services such as access to clean drinking water and sanitation.

27. The large majority of these dryland inhabitants depend directly upon a highly variable natural resource base for their livelihoods. Drylands embrace a range of climatic and environmental conditions all typified by limited water resources. Rainfall totals are low on average and often vary greatly from year to year and over short distances. The result is a group of physical environments characterised by dynamism and low levels of ecosystem services.

28. Poverty in rural drylands and in degraded lands in general stems from an interconnected web of drivers. Other reasons commonly cited to explain concentrations of rural poverty include physical isolation, political marginalisation and an associated lack of infrastructure, which includes, but is not limited to, access to markets, education and health facilities.

29. There is certainly nothing inevitable about the drylands' generally low status with regard to human well-being. Despite the challenges of living in these environments, people have successfully inhabited drylands for thousands of years, and examples of great productivity and prosperity can also be cited from these regions. Drylands provide much of the world's food in the form of grain and livestock. Major global areas of cereal production are located in semi-arid areas, including the North American Great Plains, the Pampas in Argentina and the wheat belts of Russian Federation, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Dryland rangelands support about 50% of the world's livestock. Drylands are also the setting for major world cities such as Beijing, Cairo, Delhi, Los Angeles and Mexico City.

30. These simple facts contradict the myth that all drylands are empty, barren places with little economic value. This is one of several popular misconceptions about drylands that have impeded progress towards sustainable development in these areas, part and parcel of their general neglect by political and business leaders. Motivating countries to

address poverty issues in many environments can be achieved by employing targets as effective instruments, the MDGs experience has taught us that.

31. Many regions of poverty are characterized by high levels of risk, which the poor are often badly placed to cope with. This compounds the probability of hardship and contributes to the difficulties of escaping from poverty. Natural hazards such as extremes of climate, particularly drought, are typical drivers of these high risk levels. A loss of food and income, due to harvest failure and/or livestock mortality, are common outcomes at the household level.

D. DLDD and risk management

32. Natural disaster risk is also fundamentally associated with poverty at larger scales. Countries with small and vulnerable economies, such as Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Lease-Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), suffer higher relative levels of economic loss with respect to the size of Gross Domestic Product, and have a particularly low resilience to losses from natural disasters such as drought and flood. The case of Haiti illustrates the vulnerability and poor resilience of LDCs vis-à-vis various categories of shocks, particularly those stemming from climate change. After the devastating earthquake of February last year, the successful reconstruction of that country must of necessity address its serious land degradation problem, for it is productive lands that holds the key to Haiti's future as regards sustainable development.

33. Rural communities have themselves developed numerous strategies for managing the inherent risks stemming from variability in natural environments, but the resilience of these communities to perturbations can be enhanced often with very simple development assistance. Drought presents a critical challenge in the semi-arid northeast of Brazil where provision of a safe and reliable supply of water is a vital way of increasing the use efficiency of sporadic resources. Since 2003, the Programme of a Million Cisterns, or P1MC, has worked towards supplying 'drought secure' drinking water for a million rural households – about 5 million people – in the area using a decentralised, low-tech method of managing rainwater. With a community-based participatory approach, families are assisted in building their own cisterns to collect rainwater. By January 2011, over 320,000 cisterns had been constructed. The initiative has generated employment and income, helped to lighten the domestic workload for many women and enabled more children to attend school. Diseases related to contaminated water have also decreased.

E. DLDD and gender: women bear the burdens of land degradation and provide solutions

34. Labour divisions in rural areas are often gendered. Women undertake many of the household tasks including the collection of wood and water, and the provision of food. In degraded environments, these tasks become more difficult, adding to the burden on women and girls. Investing in opportunities for women and girls has strong multiplier effects across all MDGs.

35. An example centred on access to modern energy services can be cited from rural Mali where biomass provides virtually all energy supplies, creating corridors of deforestation along access roads and exacerbating problems of soil erosion and desertification. Since the 1990s, some villages have been supplied with a diesel engine

mounted on a platform to provide off-grid energy for many uses, including the processing of agricultural produce, pumping water, charging batteries and powering lights. Women's groups operate and maintain the equipment on these 'multifunctional platforms' and sell energy services to local customers.

36. The programme has eased the burden of fuel wood collection, bringing considerable time savings for women. The resulting multiple benefits include increased cash income, higher food consumption, better health opportunities for women and better educational opportunities for girls, as well as reduced pressure on local fuel wood sources. The approach could be modified before scaling up, utilising the abundant solar power that typifies drylands, to increase access to energy for the poor and alleviate pressures on biomass.

37. Full and equal gender participation is a requirement under the UNCCD. The multifunctional platforms in rural Mali illustrate how rapid and profound benefits can be brought about with just small investments targeting rural women.

F. DLDD and economic growth

38. The fundamental essence of any policies designed to tackle rural poverty must be to concentrate on improving household activities that are already available, which in most places means some form of agriculture, while also expanding the range of potential activities of family members. Increasing options to generate income based on the effective participation of all sectors of society, can make these regions more attractive for public and private investment, leading in time to better services and infrastructure in a virtuous circle of development.

39. The ability to access and take advantage of income-generating activities depends critically on access to assets, such as land, education and infrastructure. If natural assets are losing value thanks to degradation and drought this will undermine any progress made on access to other forms of asset. By controlling and reversing desertification/land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought, the UNCCD therefore makes a direct positive contribution to reducing the poverty that affects a billion people in drylands.

IV. DLDD and sustainable development

Maintaining ecosystem services requires good science-policy linkages and an emphasis on synergies

40. Land degradation corrodes the three pillars of sustainable development worldwide. Beyond food scarcity, DLDD can create unemployment, economic deterioration, social tension, involuntary migration and conflicts. Spiking prices for staple foods such as rice and maize in 2008 coincided with worldwide food riots and related civil disturbances.

A. DLDD is a driver of food insecurity

41. Worldwide, some 925 million people are going hungry, 80% of them small farmers and the landless poor in rural areas. Providing food for an additional 3 billion people by 2050 requires a 70% increase in global food production according to the FAO. The challenge will be particularly critical in the most vulnerable parts of the developing world, but the current trend of rising food prices is starting to hit people in industrialized countries and cities as well.

42. World food prices are expected to continue to be higher in the next decade. Land degradation is contributing to higher and more volatile food prices, by reducing agricultural production and causing production to be more vulnerable to weather extremes and changing climate conditions. According to IFPRI, land degradation over the next 25 years may reduce global food production from what it otherwise would be by as much as 12%, resulting in world food prices as much as 30% higher for some commodities.

43. Improving the resilience of agricultural production systems in the face of drought and other extreme climate events, as well as slow-onset impacts of climate change, is therefore a challenge of immense importance. Protecting or rehabilitating degraded lands that contribute directly, or indirectly via ecosystem services, to agricultural productivity is another important strategy. Meeting global food targets will require improved, sustainable management of relevant resources, including land, nutrients and water.

B. DLDD has economic, social and environmental costs

44. Land has a value as natural capital and there are costs associated with unsustainable land use although, in part, the costs of degradation depend on the priorities of individual land users.

45. DLDD brings significant social and environmental costs. At the global scale, losses in net primary production can be used as an indicator of land degradation. Land degradation measured as net primary production loss was also responsible for a loss of fixed carbon between 1981 and 2003 of some 900 million tonnes, costed at US\$48 billion. Land degradation and poverty often coincide: this was shown in the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) study when geographical patterns of net primary production loss were compared to those for infant mortality and the percentage of children under five who are underweight. Only in drylands, land degradation is estimated to cost developing countries about 4 to 8% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) every year.

C. DLDD is a major impediment to progress in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

46. The economics of most LDCs rely heavily on climate-sensitive agriculture which employs an average of 70% of the population. Land, their main if not only capital, is continuously depleted, further entrenching them into poverty.

47. The adverse impacts of climate change are compounding the situation. LDCs in South Asia have experienced huge losses as their agricultural productivity has shrunk by 30 to 40%. Yield from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50% by 2020 in some African LDCs.

48. During the last decade and despite an average of 6% growth in GDP, LDCs have witnessed an increase in food imports and have become more food insecure. In most LDCs 70% of the food-insecure live in rural areas, mostly where land productivity is very low.

49. In countries with land-based economies, addressing DLDD issues through sound investment in agriculture and rural development is a priority for overcoming poverty and stimulating growth. According to the World Bank, GDP growth in agriculture is up to four times more effective in reducing poverty than GDP generated in other sectors.

D. Understanding the economic dimension and social implications of DLDD

50. A stocktaking analysis of the economics of DLDD funded by the German government reveals that existing valuation studies focus mainly on the direct costs of land degradation to agricultural productivity. Most calculations are at the country level and confine themselves to soil erosion effects. Their cost estimates range from less than 1% up to about 10% of agricultural GDP. Off-site costs are significantly higher. In just one example, the annual cost of siltation in reservoirs behind the world's large dams is about US\$18.5 billion when considering loss of hydropower, loss of irrigation-driven productivity and the costs of dam replacement. The latest assessment in Malawi put the annual on-site loss of agricultural productivity due to soil degradation at US\$54 million (1.6% of GDP) in 2007. The costs of minimizing this impact are put at US\$10 million a year.

51. Drought is one of the most economically disruptive of all extreme weather events. Annually, the economic cost of drought in the USA is put at US\$6-8 billion, but it reached US\$40 billion in the drought of 1988. The 1999-2000 droughts in Kenya, one of the worst in the country's history, led to a 1.4% fall in GDP and a 2.2% rise in inflation. During Australia's 1991-95 drought, production by rural industries fell by 10%, costing the Australian economy US\$5 billion. Drought relief from Commonwealth governments cost a further US\$590 million.

52. The initiative of the study on the "Economics of Desertification Land degradation and Drought" is meant to produce an economic valuation of land degradation and a cost-benefit analysis of sustainable land management. Targeted communication on the results will enable decision-makers to adequately trigger action against land degradation in order to strengthen rural development and global food security. The basis for this is an independent scientific assessment in the context of a sound and evidence-based economic approach.

E. Addressing DLDD is one of the best ways for meeting the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

53. The issue of land degradation outside forests is hugely important for forest degradation. If land degradation is not addressed seriously, up to 70% of the mitigation we would get from protecting our forests would be lost.

54. The challenges of confronting DLDD's numerous costs to society and the environment are compounded by the ecological and economic changes associated with climate change and biodiversity loss. Desertification and land degradation diminish biodiversity both above the ground and within the soil, and this diversity underpins the ecosystem services that benefit society. Land degradation also contributes to global climate change by releasing to the atmosphere carbon stored in vegetation and soils. Feedbacks can exacerbate links between DLDD, climate change and biodiversity loss, presenting significant challenges to communities whose livelihoods depend directly on biological resources. Unless suitable changes are made to their use of those resources, these people can be propelled into unsustainable land uses, with land degradation the result. Support to developing countries to address the adverse impacts of climate change and desertification based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is also essential.

F. Sustainable Land Management can have major global benefits for carbon storage and help in protecting biodiversity

55. One of the most pervasive of the numerous complex synergies between the three Rio Conventions occurs through land use change. Deforestation converts forest into carbon dioxide, reduces the vegetation's carbon storage capacity and reduces the water-holding capacity of the soil, thus inducing land degradation. Hence, a programme for sustainable management of the land, including forests and agriculture, will limit global warming and conserve some biodiversity. Of course, such SLM also improves the livelihoods of those communities dependent on the land.

56. SLM is also essential to the success of projects designed to offset greenhouse gas emissions funded by REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and REDD+. This is because preserving forests will have limited results unless programmes for preventing and reversing land degradation are available as a viable alternative to encroachment on forests.

G. Better policies for Sustainable Land Management need a firmer scientific basis

57. The threats to sustainable development posed by DLDD have been recognized for a long time. In 1987, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 'Our Common Future', pointed out that land use in agriculture and forestry should be based on a scientific assessment of land capacity and monitoring of the annual depletion of top soil. Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the outcomes of the sixteen and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development have devoted a great deal of attention to these issues. The fact that the UNCCD's aims include improving the physical and biological conditions of land and the livelihoods of people affected in itself poses major methodological challenges for integrating the monitoring and assessment of human and environmental parameters.

58. Progress in responding to these threats has been undermined in part by the difficulties of measuring the distribution, extent and severity of the numerous types of degradation. Maps and data bases do not convey an accurate picture of the global dimensions and the local dynamics of the problem, nor do they provide insight into the impacts of investments in SLM.

59. Parties to the UNCCD have thus adopted two mandatory impact indicators: land cover status and the proportion of the population living below the poverty line.

60. FAO's LADA project has created a baseline for future global monitoring using a range of indicators collected by processing satellite data and existing databases.

61. Getting the details of these impact indicators right is crucially important because only when the details are agreed can baselines for monitoring and assessment be set. The establishment of baseline conditions will then enable impact targets to be agreed.

62. Progress on these challenges has been hindered by deficiencies in communication between the scientific community and UNCCD bodies. Strengthening the scientific base of the UNCCD on DLDD issues is an important precursor to the setting of impact targets. Institutional protocols and formats, both within the UNCCD and within the global scientific community, need improvement. Hence, a series of Scientific Conferences was established to enhance the flow of scientific information into the UNCCD's deliberations

and decisions. None the less, some mechanism for more continuous engagement between the scientific community and the Convention is still required for activities such as monitoring and assessment. Establishing a global authority on the scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to DLDD is one of the expected outcomes of UNCCD's 10-year Strategy.

V. Policy dimensions of DLDD

Investing scarce resources through an integrated approach can maximize impacts and benefits

63. Preventing land degradation and achieving land improvement are feasible and have far reaching impacts. In fact, during the period of time where 24% of the global land area has shown a trend of increasing degradation, improvement has been noted in some 16% of the land area mainly in dry and range lands. Crucial elements of any effective approach to SLM will of necessity hinge on support, human, financial and technical, from the international community to the National Action Plans of Parties, as also to the Regional Coordination Units, which can play a catalytic role in implementation of the Regional Annexes.

A. The ultimate aims of SLM: enhance the economic and social well-being of affected communities, sustain ecosystem services and strengthen adaptive capacity to manage climate change

64. The ubiquity of DLDD and the linkages with other global development challenges means that strategies to deal with its issues should be cross-cutting and synergistic and can make a substantial contribution to the eradication of poverty and to the achievement of sustainable development. Progress towards these goals can be made by communities, governments, donors, international bodies and private investors. Investments made by all of these groups should view human society and the operation of nature in an integrated manner. The ultimate aims of this integrated approach to addressing DLDD should be three-fold: enhancing the economic and social well-being of affected communities, enabling them to sustain their ecosystem services, as well as strengthening their adaptive capacity to manage environmental (including climate) change.

B. Funding for SLM should include private sector investments

65. To facilitate implementation of the UNCCD, existing national, bilateral and multilateral funding sources should be employed along with additional innovative sources of funding from the private sector and elsewhere. People directly involved in SLM, farmers and pastoralists, are key to its success, but this is also true of a whole range of companies whose activities have a direct bearing on soils, particularly those involved in agriculture, energy, water management, forestry, or involved in activities whose waste and by-products affect soil fertility.

C. Five conditions for successful policies for SLM acceleration

66. SLM cannot succeed as a standalone policy but needs to be embedded in other policies. Eradicating poverty is one of the essential requirements for sustainable development, and addressing DLDD should play a critical role in achieving sustainability. Experiences of countries striving to achieve the MDGs highlight conditions for success of scaling up and rolling out SLM.

First: country-led development and effective governance

67. The choice of policies and how well they are implemented determines progress on the MDGs and how SLM can assist in this process. Effective implementation also requires representative political structures, accountable institutions and public servants who have adequate incentives and capacities.

68. Mainstreaming DLDD issues into national and communal development strategies and investment plans, through consultation and participation, is essential. Further prerequisites for SLM are land use planning and appropriate tenure for land and natural resources as they help to secure investments and to prevent conflicts over productive land.

69. An example of how country-led development and effective governance may be facilitated can be cited from Tajikistan. A recent Enhancing Agricultural Governance project has contributed to rural poverty alleviation and agricultural growth by strengthening participatory decision-making among farmers and increasing their voice in national policymaking. Examples from West Africa prove that local conventions on the utilization and protection of natural resources which regulate use and access are important tools for the decentralized management of natural resources, if they are sufficiently institutionalized and economically viable for the population.

70. Enhancing the capacity to monitor DLDD and the impact of investments in SLM has been neglected in the past, but has proven to be essential to encourage appropriate political decision-making.

Second: Inclusive and pro-poor economic growth with an agricultural productivity focus

71. In most rural areas, improving farming system productivity is essential, particularly by increasing inputs (e.g. credit, better seeds and water management). Identifying comparative advantage is central to stimulating agricultural growth in remote disadvantaged regions, such as many drylands. Where market access is good and soils suitable, small-scale irrigation development may yield the highest returns. Extensive livestock production may have comparative advantage in areas with low crop potential, particularly if remote and sparsely populated (e.g. West Africa and the Altiplano-Puna of the Central Andes). Growing markets for livestock products, particularly in burgeoning cities in developing countries, offer great opportunities to maximise the potential benefits in these areas, given appropriate support for poor livestock producers to better integrate with commercial marketing and processing. Safeguards should also be introduced to protect the poor from further marginalisation in the event of competition against outside investors.

72. The private sector is vital to these strategies for stimulating agricultural growth, but needs public investment in transport and communications, property rights, and technology transfers. Three decades of increasingly progressive agricultural land use rights reform made a major contribution to the dramatic reduction of poverty rates in recent decades in China. Greatly improved cereal yields in India over the last 40 years have been achieved by long-term public investment in improving varieties, followed by private sector involvement, resulting in a significant advance in rural food security.

Third: Public investment in education, health and basic services

73. Many rural areas suffer from poor service delivery in health, education, water, sanitation and other basic infrastructure, often as a result of their low population densities and distance from urban centres. Investment in better basic services is linked to SLM in numerous ways. Healthier farmers, for example, are better able to implement soil conservation measures and sustainably managed land will improve food security and nutrition levels. Areas with relatively high literacy rates are likely to enjoy improved prospects for pro-poor growth.

74. Service provision can improve the resilience of rural communities to variability in natural environments. Providing a safe and reliable water supply, for instance, is a vital way of increasing the use efficiency of sporadic resources. This has been achieved simply in drought-prone northeastern Brazil where the Programme of a Million Cisterns, or PIMC, aims to supply ‘drought secure’ drinking water to a million rural households – about 5 million people – using a decentralised, low-tech method. With a community-based participatory approach, families are assisted in building their own cisterns to collect rainwater. Since 2003, over 320,000 cisterns have been constructed. The initiative has generated employment and income, helped to lighten the domestic workload for many women and enabled more children to attend school. Diseases related to contaminated water have also decreased.

75. For mobile pastoralists, an element of mobility can be introduced for some service provision. Schemes combining human and animal services, a ‘One Health’ approach, benefit further from shared transport logistics and equipment. The good health of their animals is pivotal for pastoralists, given that livestock provide the main source of subsistence and the basis of economic wealth and social respect. Veterinary services can also control contagious diseases and infections that are transmittable between animals and humans, improving both human and livestock well-being. Healthier animals equate to better food security and higher incomes for pastoralists. Eliminating major human diseases also has synergistic effects in supporting progress in numerous other MDGs.

Fourth: Safety nets

76. Another condition for success can be met with targeted interventions via social assistance and public employment programmes. Targeting benefits to the poor is simple, cost-effective and can reduce poverty significantly. Government programmes providing income support and cash transfers to households which still lag behind, despite help from other policies, can work in any disadvantaged area, including poor and remote regions with few services. Pioneered in Latin America, the approach has been replicated in Africa and Asia. If cash transfer programmes are integrated with extension work on SLM technologies, the poor can invest directly in their land to increase its productivity.

77. Government-backed guaranteed work schemes represent an additional form of targeted intervention. These public employment programmes can provide the labour to regenerate the rural sector through infrastructural improvements and enhanced agricultural productivity. Among their attractions, work programmes can be implemented fairly quickly or scaled up rapidly.

Fifth: Integration of SLM, climate adaptation and low-carbon development

78. Helping households dependent on natural resources to manage risk and reduce climate-driven shocks is a priority, a condition with particular resonance for the UNCCD. Indeed, SLM has been recognised as a key investment area for strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change under the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR), paving the way for the integration of SLM into core development planning and implementation.

79. Policies include incentives for climate resilient land management practices, developing more climate-resilient varieties of crop and livestock, and reducing vulnerability by increasing incomes, improving access to markets, and the development of new markets and products. Governments can help further by underwriting livestock and agricultural insurance schemes established by the private sector.

80. Comparative advantage in some regions lies in new opportunities related to climate change, involving the fixing of carbon – or ‘sequestration’ – and renewable energy (solar, wind and biomass), elements of a green economy that may have particular significance for rural areas with low population densities. Ecotourism may be another suitable alternative development pathway. Innovative funding models should be investigated. One example is the Costa Rican Forestry Act 7575 which allows payments to landowners who conserve forest. In this way, private landowners help to safeguard the nation’s ecosystem services, including watershed protection, carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and scenic landscape/tourism.

D. A UN system-wide response to drylands

81. The UN General Assembly has already recognized the cross-sectoral nature of DLDD, and in that regard has invited all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the UNCCD secretariat in supporting an effective response to desertification and drought. A United Nations network on land issues in drylands is being established to propose options for a coherent United Nations system-wide contribution to land challenges, including implementation of the UNCCD 10-year Strategy. The Issue Management Group on land, created in September 2009 for a period of two years by the Environment Management Group, has drafted a United Nations system-wide rapid response report on drylands highlighting their importance to key global issues, including climate change, food security and human settlements. The report is not the end of the process so much as a milestone in a unique effort by the UN system to join hands in supporting the implementation of UNCCD’s 10-year strategic plan by ‘delivering as one’.

82. The premise of the report is that drylands in poor countries face disadvantage from the environmental challenges of aridity and variability and the socio-economic counterpart of chronic under-investment, but that drylands do offer investment opportunities and these can be promoted by the United Nations system. It also emphasises that the cost of inaction is too high for the international community to fail.

83. The draft report, provisionally titled ‘Global drylands: a UN system-wide response’, is under final review and will be available at the UNCCD’s COP 10 in Changwon, Republic of Korea, in October 2011. The Issue Management Group on land will develop follow-up recommendations for a joint agenda for action on drylands and possibly land in general, by building on the findings of this report. Broadening the scope

of the UNCCD mandate to cover all land would not undermine the special case for a continued focus on drylands.

VI. Addressing DLDD

Land degradation control and drought mitigation offer a win-win scenario for global sustainability

A. An avenue for global benefits

84. Reversing and preventing land degradation, alongside mitigation of the effects of drought, can bring multiple benefits globally. Projects to deal with these issues contribute to sustaining agricultural productivity and food security, enhancing living conditions and alleviating poverty. They automatically assist in maintaining ecosystem services and bring benefits to biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Addressing DLDD is also essential to protect forests against deforestation. In short, addressing the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation equates to a win-win scenario for global sustainability.

85. Considerable progress has been made towards the objectives of the UNCCD since the Convention's inception. Desertification/land degradation is now recognized as both an environmental and a developmental problem, and one of global proportions. Hence, an understanding has emerged that the tools and policies promoted by the Convention are relevant to SLM worldwide. These changes have come about thanks to our fuller appreciation of the fundamental nature of human-environment systems: that they are intimately linked and totally global.

86. In the context of the UNCCD's Ten-Year Strategy, indicator-based reporting and results-based management have been introduced. The Convention has entered the realms of measurability in terms of impact and performance indicators but still faces some institutional, financial and science-policy challenges associated with combating land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought.

B. Building blocks for addressing DLDD issues

87. Sustainability is conditional on appropriate development and making the most of opportunities associated with addressing DLDD issues means developing and implementing, through a participatory process, a suitably integrated strategy to be implemented at the national level. This strategy should:

- Upgrade the knowledge base, improve knowledge sharing, and close the gap between science and development practice to make best use of technology and foster sustainable management at national and global levels.
- Reassess the total economic value of land as natural capital, to correct systemic undervaluation in national planning and policy, and improve well-being. This should be conducted at international and national levels
- Promote sustainable public investments in natural resources, to reverse their relative neglect, provide better incentives for private investment – via adequate legislation and policies – and recognise small-scale environmental investments.

- Turn the growth of markets into an opportunity to remove barriers to participation, and to use more efficient, accessible and equitable markets as a pathway to sustainable development. Action needs to be taken at international and national levels.
- Support institutional changes at the national level to strengthen rights to natural resources, reform inequitable distribution, better manage risk, and increase resilience in the human-ecological system.

Recommendation

Consider ways and means to broaden the scope of the UNCCD, including the option for a non-legally binding international instrument for the sustainable management of all types of land

C. Enhance the role of the private sector in implementation of the UNCCD

88. Private sector involvement in the implementation of the UNCCD provides opportunities for strengthening the provision of financial and technological resources and capacity building for sustainable development.

Recommendation

International institutions should serve as co-funders and brokers for private sector participation in projects to implement the UNCCD, for example by facilitating public-private partnerships and ensuring that projects contribute specifically to Convention objectives.

D. Rio+ 20: an opportunity to set the stage for Sustainable Land Management

89. The upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro – Rio+20 – will focus on green economies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the future institutional framework for sustainable development. Sustainable management of natural resources has already been recognized as being key for a green economy. The time is right to argue the case for efficient management of natural resources as a central element of a green economy, and the battle for poverty eradication to ensure sustainable development. All efforts should therefore be made to integrate and prioritize DLDD issues on global, regional and national agendas for preparing Rio +20 and to provide best practices on how land management can contribute to green economy.

Recommendations

- Integrate and prioritise DLDD issues within green economies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication on global, regional and national agendas in preparation for Rio +20;
- Provide best practices on how SLM can contribute to a green economy in the context of Sustainable development and poverty eradication;

E. Improve the framework for the fourth objective of the UNCCD's 10-Year Strategy: to mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention

90. The fourth objective of the Strategy is to mobilize resources to support the implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

Recommendations

- Provide effective partnerships between national and international actors;
- Enhance the Convention's means of implementation through investment/financing and access to relevant technologies;
- Systematically integrate investments in SLM into funds for agriculture, food security and adaptation to climate change;
- Develop appropriate financial instruments beyond new and emerging forest related initiatives and CDM for promoting climate change mitigation through SLM.

F. Strengthen the scientific base of the UNCCD and foster the establishment of a global authority on DLDD

91. In the context of Ten-Year Strategy, under operational objective and expected outcome related to science, technology and knowledge, Parties agreed that the UNCCD process shall become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of effects of drought.

Recommendations

- Strengthen the scientific base of the UNCCD and foster the establishment of a global authority scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to DLDD issues and the improvement of networking of scientific organizations at all levels (national, subregional and regional) mobilized on desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD), on the basis of a thorough analysis of the gaps/needs in scientific matters related to DLDD;
- Argue the case for more investment in SLM through the "Economics of Desertification, land Degradation and Drought Initiative" at the science-policy interface.

G. Make use of the UN Decade for Desertification to argue the case for DLDD

92. The General Assembly has proclaimed 2010-2020 as the decade for deserts and the fight against desertification.

Recommendation

Elaborate strategies at national level and within the UN System to advocate for DLDD.

H. Provide for an integrated UN wide response to DLDD issues

93. There is a need for integrated thinking and action, to maximise scarce resources and the benefits they can generate. Co-operation is needed between the Rio Convention Secretariats and relevant UN Organisations, as well as between development organisations and the rising number of funds and bilateral and multilateral funding opportunities available to address DLDD issues.

Recommendation

Encourage the United Nations system to co-ordinate and co-operate under the aegis of the UNCCD on DLDD issues.

VI. The High-level meeting

94. With these calls for action in mind, the following questions are suggested for consideration at the two interactive panels that will constitute the one-day high-level meeting on the theme “Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”, between the opening and closing plenary meetings.

Possible questions for discussion in the Panels

95. Few affected countries have set up clear policies and partnerships, including the allocation of special budget lines or investment strategies, to combat DLDD. In addition, there is institutional confusion regarding the administrative settings and localization of the focal points of the Rio Conventions at the national level. The necessary capacity to measure DLDD and progress resulting from implementation of the UNCCD may also be an issue.

Question for discussion

What are effective approaches for affected countries to fully mainstream Sustainable Land Management within the relevant national policy areas, taking into account human, institutional and financial requirements?

96. Sustainable management of land is fundamental to sustainable development. Numerous best practices exist, but large scale implementation is rather a matter of exceptions. Incentives are needed to manage land sustainably such as technology transfer, ecosystem service payments, security of tenure, and many others. Integration into decentralized planning and decision-making processes and legal frameworks that need to be made conducive for investing in SLM are required (or needed). The relevance of each will vary with circumstances, and the pathways to disseminating appropriate practices are various, including markets, governments, the United Nations, civil society organisations, and groups of land users themselves.

Questions for discussion

What are the best ways to encourage sustainable land use methods and who should be in charge of such incentives? How can “the forgotten billion”, the poorest and food insecure people living in drylands be enabled to engage in more sustainable land management? How to mobilize the business community and the market for investing in sustainable land and ecosystem management at all levels, including through pro-poor public-private partnerships?

97. Supporting and facilitating the implementation of SLM needs to be integrated more effectively into policies for co-operation and development and alignment with affected countries policies?

Question for discussion

What mechanisms are needed in the developed countries and international financial institutions to ensure better consideration of DLDD and land potentials within policies for co-operation and development?

98. The UNCCD process has led to the adoption of the Ten-Year Strategy and COP.9 adopted impact and performance indicators, thus placing the implementation in the realms of measurability. While those indicators will keep refining, the situation is ripe for quantified target setting.

Question for discussion

How can Rio Plus 20 foster the measurability of the implementation of the UNCCD by means of quantitative target setting for action at all levels? How the international community can act at global level to achieve zero net global land degradation as a global target for sustainable development through means of prevention as well as land rehabilitation and reclamation?