



Distr.: GENERAL

E/ECA/FSSD/ACSD-5/3  
1 August 2007

**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Fifth Meeting of the Africa Committee on  
Sustainable Development (ACSD-5)/  
Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) for CSD-16

Addis Ababa  
22-25 October 2007

**Africa Review Report on  
DROUGHT AND DESERTIFICATION: A Summary**

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>Section 1: Overview of the drought and desertification situation in Africa</b>	1
1.1 Status and trends of drought and desertification	2
1.2 Impact of drought and desertification	2
<b>Section 2: Review of progress and achievements made in combating desertification and mitigating impacts of drought</b>	4
2.1 Progress in the development and implementation of measures to prevent and combat desertification as well as to mitigate the effects of drought within the UNCCD framework	4
2.2 Progress made in combating desertification and drought impact mitigation through other strategies and programmes in agriculture and natural resources management sectors	6
2.3 Progress in developing and strengthening systems for monitoring, early warning and adaptation to drought and desertification	9
2.4 Progress in providing support for the implementation of programmes to combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought	11
<b>Section 3: Challenges and constraints to meeting goals and targets</b>	14
<b>Section 4: Lessons learnt and recommended priority approaches and actions</b>	15
4.1 Lessons learnt	15
4.2 Recommended priority approaches and actions	16
<b>Section 5. Conclusions</b>	18

## **Acronyms**

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AREED	Africa Rural Energy Enterprise Development
AWF	Africa Wildlife Foundation
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism (under UNFCCC)
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CILSS	Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
COP	Conference of Parties
CPFP	Country Partnership Framework Papers
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
DIS	Desertification Information System
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENR	Environment and Natural Resources
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FAO	UN Food and Agricultural Organization
FINIDA	Finnish Department for International Development Cooperation
GCOS	Global Climate Observing System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEMP	Ghana Environmental Management Programme
GLADA	Global Land Degradation Assessment
GM	Global Mechanism
GSP	Global Support Programme
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
ICRISAT	International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics
IDA	International Development Association

IDDP	Integrated Drylands Development Programme
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
ISDR	(United Nations) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
ISRIC	International Soil Reference and Information Centre
IUCN	World Conservation Union
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
LADA	Land Degradation Assessment Project
LDP	Local Development Programme
MDAs	Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEDREP	Mediterranean Renewable Energy Programme
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAP	National Action Programme to combat desertification
NCB	National Coordinating Body
NCCD	National Council for Combating Desertification
NCS	National Conservation Strategy
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NDF	National Desertification Fund
NDP	National Development Plan
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NECSD	National Environment Council for Sustainable Development
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NEPSD	Niger National Environmental Plan for Sustainable Development
NFP	National Forest Programme
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NMHS	National Meteorological and Hydrological Service
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation,
NSSD	National Strategy for Sustainable Development
OSS	Sahara and Sahel Observatory
PFIA21	Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RAF	Resource Allocation Framework
RAP	Regional Action Programme on drought and desertification
RCU	RAP Regional Coordination Unit
REC	Regional Economic Community
REED	Rural Energy Enterprise Development
RIM	Regional Implementation Meeting
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

SECAC	Sectoral Adjustment Credit
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SRAP	Subregional Action Programme on drought and desertification
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SWAP	Sector-wide Action Plan
TPN	Thematic Programme Network
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCSD	UN Commission on Sustainable Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP ROA	UNEP Regional Office for Africa
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNSO	United Nations Sahel Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/OFDA	USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## **Introduction**

1. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), at its Sixteenth Session (CSD-16) to be held in 2008, will focus on assessment of the progress made in implementing programmes and actions on sustainable development under the thematic cluster of issues covering agriculture and rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. This review will be conducted taking into account the goals, commitments and targets set out in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (PFIA21) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the Outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable development (WSSD).

2. The regional commissions are mandated by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/218, to provide regional input to the work of UNCSD through organizing Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs). This report on drought and desertification has been prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to provide a basis for discussion at the Africa RIM, which will draw substantive inputs for CSD-16.

3. The report is a result of inputs solicited from member States and regional partners, and of extensive desk review of available documentation and internet resources on drought and desertification, as well as information exchange with and comment from various organizations and individuals. It is in no way meant to be exhaustive but it brings out the main findings obtaining from the above sources on the subject matter.

## **Structure and outline of the report**

4. The report provides an overview of the status and trends on drought and desertification in Africa. It also reviews progress made in the implementation of measures and actions at national, subregional and regional levels, that are aimed at combating desertification and mitigating the impact of drought, taking into account the main goals and targets set out in Agenda 21, PFIA21, and the JPOI. The report also reflects on challenges and constraints related to the implementation of measures in areas outlined above, among others. Priority approaches and actions for further implementation are highlighted.

## **Section 1: Overview of the drought and desertification situation in Africa**

5. Drought and desertification are at the core of serious challenges and threats facing sustainable development in Africa. These problems have far-reaching adverse impacts on human health, food security, economic activity, physical infrastructure, natural resources and the environment, and national and global security.

6. In general, drought is defined as an extended period – a season, a year, or several years – of deficient rainfall relative to the statistical multi-year average for a region. This deficiency results in a water shortage for some activity, group, or environmental sector. The underlying cause of most droughts can be related to changing weather patterns manifested through the excessive build-up of heat on the earth's surface, meteorological changes which result in a reduction of rainfall, and reduced cloud cover, all of which result in greater evaporation rates. Drought is exacerbated by activities such as overgrazing and poor cropping methods that reduce the water retention of the soil, and by improper soil conservation techniques, which lead to soil degradation.

7. Desertification on the other hand is defined as a process of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities. Land degradation manifests itself through soil erosion, water scarcity, reduced agricultural productivity, loss of vegetation cover and biodiversity, drought and poverty.

8. Desertification is caused by multiple direct and indirect factors. Among the typical direct causes of desertification in the region are poor agricultural practices such as continuous cultivation without adding any supplements, overgrazing, poor land management practices, and lack of soil and water conservation structures. These practices prevail in many parts of the region. Deforestation, especially to meet energy needs and expand agricultural land, is another serious direct cause of desertification. Biomass constitutes 30 per cent of the energy used in Africa and over 80 per cent used in many sub-Saharan countries. More than 15 million hectares of tropical forests are depleted or burned every year in order to provide for small-scale agriculture or cattle ranching, or for use as fuel wood for heating and cooking.

9. The above direct causes of desertification are driven by a complex set of underlying factors including the high levels of poverty in the region. Without alternatives, poor people are forced to exploit fragile lands for survival (food production, medicine, fuel, fodder, building materials and household items). Given that most drylands in Africa are also poverty hotspots, the risk of desertification is high in many of the drylands. High population growth increases pressure on limited and fragile land resources. The rural population living in drylands in Africa is estimated to be 325 million. This breeds favourable conditions for deforestation and overexploitation of land that lead to land degradation. Insecure and unclear land and other natural resources tenure and access rights are some of the other main reasons that natural resources end-users are unwilling to invest in long-term sustainable land management (SLM).

### **1.1 Status and trends of drought and desertification**

10. Two-thirds of Africa is classified as deserts or drylands. These are concentrated in the Sahelian region, the Horn of Africa and the Kalahari in the south. Africa is especially susceptible to land degradation and bears the greatest impact of drought and desertification. It is estimated that two-thirds of African land is already degraded to some degree and land degradation affects at least 485 million people or 65 per cent of the entire African population. Estimates from individual countries report increasing areas affected by or prone to desertification. In Ghana, desertification is said to be creeping in at an estimated 20,000 hectares per year, with the attendant destruction of farmlands and livelihoods in the country. 70 per cent of Ethiopia is reported to be prone to desertification, while in Kenya, around 80 per cent of the land surface is threatened by desertification. Nigeria is reported to be losing 1,355 square miles (1 mile = 1.6 km) of rangeland and cropland to desertification each year.

11. Drought is one of the most important climate-related disasters affecting many countries of the region, which has witnessed a high frequency of occurrence and severity of drought. Climate change is set to exacerbate this occurrence of climate-related disasters including drought. Current climate scenarios predict that the driest regions of the world will become even drier, signalling the risk of persistent drought in many parts of the African drylands.

### **1.2 Impact of drought and desertification**

12. The region is especially vulnerable to impacts of drought and desertification due to widespread poverty, the fact that a large share of Africa's economies depend on climate-sensitive

sectors such as rain-fed agriculture, poor infrastructure, heavy disease burdens, high dependence on unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, and conflicts. The consequences are mostly borne by the poorest people, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and land-locked developing countries (LLDCs). The seriousness of the impact of drought and desertification in the region is demonstrated by the following examples.

#### ***Impact on economic growth and poverty reduction***

13. It is estimated that some six million hectares of productive land is being lost every year since 1990 due to land degradation. This in turn has caused income losses worldwide of \$US 42 billion per year. With two-thirds of arable land expected to be lost in Africa by 2025, land degradation currently leads to the loss of an average of more than three per cent annually of agriculture GDP in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Drought and floods account for 80 per cent of loss of life and 70 per cent of economic losses linked to natural hazards in SSA. The drought of 1990/1991 in Zimbabwe resulted in a 45 per cent drop in agricultural production but also a 62 per cent decline in the value of the stock market, a 9 per cent drop in manufacturing output and a GDP drop of 11 per cent.

#### ***Impact on food security***

14. The poor households that are affected by drought and desertification do not have adequate resources to deal with food shortages. As a result, the millions affected face food insecurity and hunger. If land degradation continues at the current pace, it is projected that more than a half of cultivated agricultural area in Africa could be unusable by the year 2050 and the region may be able to feed just 25 per cent of its population by 2025. The consecutive droughts that have occurred in Southern Africa since 2001 have led to serious food shortages. The drought of 2002–2003 resulted in a food deficit of 3.3 million tonnes, with an estimated 14.4 million people in need of assistance in the subregion.

#### ***Impact on water***

15. Both drought and desertification influence water availability, which is projected to be one of the greatest constraints to economic growth in the future. Climate change is expected to intensify the region's increasingly critical water situation. For instance, reduced annual average rainfall and its run-off will worsen desertification in Southern Africa. This subregion being so water-stressed could mean a further decrease in streams flow and the ability of groundwater to 'recharge'. In the Nile Basin, most scenarios estimate a decrease in river flow of more than 75 per cent by the year 2100. By the year 2025, it is estimated that nearly 230 million Africans will be facing water scarcity, and 460 million will live in water-stressed countries.

#### ***Impact on energy***

16. The impact of drought and desertification on the energy sector is felt primarily through losses in the potential for hydropower generation and reduction in tree-growth rates. As result of drought leading to reduction in water levels, a drop in power generation and power rationing has been witnessed in Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe between 1992 and 2007. This cripples productivity in many sectors of the economy. Due to the limited alternatives available to them and the low priority accorded to meeting their needs in times of scarcity, the rural areas and the urban poor bear the greatest cost of decrease in energy resources.



***Impact on migration***

17. The effects of desertification extend beyond the affected drylands. Desertification is displacing large numbers of people, forcing them to leave their homes and lands in search of better livelihoods. It is estimated that 135 million people - the combined populations of France and Germany - are at risk of being displaced by desertification. The problem appears to be most severe in SSA, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Some 60 million are estimated to move eventually from SSA desertified areas towards Northern Africa and Europe by the year 2020.

18. Against this background of the devastating impact of drought and desertification and how this permeates and undermines the very foundations for securing sustainable livelihoods and economic growth, poverty eradication in Africa is inextricably linked to success in combating desertification and mitigating the impact of drought. For millions on the continent, hopes of getting out of poverty hinge on efforts at national, regional and global levels to prioritize support to implementation measures for desertification control and coping with drought.

## **SECTION 2: Review of progress and achievements made in combating desertification and mitigating the impact of drought**

19. This section provides a review of the progress made in the implementation of measures to combat desertification and mitigate the impact of drought. The review is carried out taking into consideration the measures set out in Agenda 21, PFIA21, and JPOI.

### **2.1 Progress in the development and implementation of measures to prevent and combat desertification as well as to mitigate the effects of drought within the framework of UNCCD**

20. JPOI identifies combating desertification and mitigating the impact of drought among the priority actions needed to enable developing countries to achieve their poverty reduction goals and targets. In this regard, it calls for actions to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Conference to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to address the causes of desertification and land degradation in order to maintain and restore land, and to address the poverty resulting from land degradation.

21. UNCCD, which was adopted in 1994 and came into force on December 26, 1996, constitutes the centrepiece in the international community's efforts to combat desertification, mitigate the impact of drought and ensure sustainable development. All African countries are parties to the convention and are carrying out various activities to fulfil their obligations under the convention. The following are some of the main actions being undertaken at the various levels:

#### **National level**

##### ***Development and implementation of National Action Programmes to combat desertification (NAPs)***

22. African countries, with support from development partners, are at different stages in developing and implementing their NAPs. As of April 2007, NAPs had been developed and adopted by 42 African countries. The majority of the remaining countries had launched NAP

processes. The NAPs are the overall strategies for specific land – and drought-related plans and programmes and also serve as important tools in guiding the implementation, donor coordination and monitoring of efforts in combating desertification and poverty reduction. The NAP processes have contributed significantly to strengthening of the capacity of various stakeholders to deal with drought and desertification. The NAP process has also triggered institutional and legislative reforms for combating desertification.

23. Implementation of NAPs has commenced in some countries such as Niger where projects on institutional reforms, forest management, and watershed and land management are being implemented in the context of the country's NAP, which was adopted in December 2000.

24. In many countries, however, meaningful progress has not been made with implementation of NAPs. Implementation is impeded by such factors as capacity and resource constraints, as well as by lack of systematic integration of desertification control plans into planning and budgetary frameworks at national and local levels.

#### ***Establishment and operation of National Desertification Funds (NDFs)***

25. Some countries such as Kenya have set up National Desertification Funds (NDFs) as part of the NAP process. The NDFs serve as local and easily accessible sources of funding for the implementation of NAP priorities. Some countries are encountering difficulties in making these funds genuinely operational. This can be attributed partly to the existence at national level of similar or related funds, the momentum building up for incorporating NAPs into National Development Programmes (NDPs) and Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), and the emphasis placed by a number of development partners and individual countries on direct budget support and basket funding as the favoured approach to resource mobilization and allocation.

#### ***Establishment of National Coordinating Bodies***

26. Countries are also establishing National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs), which are charged with coordination, guidance and leadership in order to ensure cross-sectoral and integrated planning for desertification control activities. Country reports highlight the need to strengthen these NCBs whose effective performance is constrained by the limited human, technical and financial resources, as well as the fact that within the administrative structure, they are not placed at a level high enough for them to fulfil their functions.

#### ***Mainstreaming of NAPs and other SLM priorities into NDPs including PRSs***

27. UNCCD recognizes the linkages between land degradation and poverty, and stresses the need to integrate efforts to combat desertification into other development frameworks. Countries have therefore embarked on integrating NAPs into NDPs, especially the PRSs. Examples of countries that have succeeded in mainstreaming NAPs and other SLM priorities into the NDPS and PRSs include Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya, Tunisia and Uganda.

28. In spite of the potential for increased funding and sustainability outcomes that can arise out of integrating NAPs in particular and SLM in general into NDPs and PRSPs, it has been observed that few countries have in practice effectively integrated NAPs within their national development strategies. The slow pace of integration is attributed to the challenge integration still poses to many countries as a result of institutional limitations, poor coordination and collaboration,

insufficient political will, and lack of in-depth understanding and appreciation of drought and desertification, especially their links with and benefits to poverty reduction.

### **Subregional and regional levels**

#### ***Development and implementation of Subregional Action Programmes (SRAPs) and the Regional Action Programme (RAP) on drought and desertification***

29. The development of Subregional Action Programmes (SRAP) and the Regional Action Programme (RAP) on drought and desertification has been undertaken. These programmes complement the NAPs particularly with respect to transboundary resources such as lakes, rivers, and forests, and to crosscutting issues including information collection and dissemination, capacity building and technology transfer.

30. Four SRAPs have been developed and are being implemented under the auspices of subregional institutions namely: the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The SRAP for the Central Africa subregion is being prepared under the auspices of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC).

31. Under the auspices of the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) hosted by African Development Bank (AfDB), a RAP has been finalized. The RAP is constituted based on six Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) namely: integrated management of international river, lake and hydro-geological basins; promotion of agroforestry and soil conservation; rational use of rangelands and promotion of fodder crops development; ecological monitoring, natural resources mapping, remote sensing and early warning systems; promotion of new and renewable energy sources and technologies; and promotion of sustainable agricultural farming systems. The RCU plays a critical role including the exchange of information on combating desertification between regional and global level.

### **2.2 Progress made in combating desertification and drought impact mitigation through other strategies and programmes in agriculture and natural resources management sectors**

32. In addition to the measures specifically developed for the implementation of the UNCCD, other strategies and programmes that have a significant contribution to mitigating drought impacts and desertification control have been developed and are being implemented as part of activities in agriculture and natural resources sectors.

### **National level**

33. Country-level interventions include policies, strategies, plans and projects aimed at fostering food security and sustainable natural resources regeneration through preventing land degradation and /or restoring degraded lands, integrated water resources management, and promotion of efficient energy use and renewable sources of energy. These are illustrated below.

### ***National strategies, policies and plans***

34. Many African countries have formulated and are implementing national environmental policies, strategies and plans. In many countries, for example Benin, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Gambia, Madagascar and Zambia, National Environmental Action Plans (NEAPs) and national environmental policies, provide the broad policy framework for environment management including activities to combat desertification.

### ***Legislation***

35. Several countries have put in place or updated their legal frameworks in the area of agriculture and natural resource management to address drought and desertification. Such legislations, among others, include framework environmental laws and sectoral laws on land, water, forestry and agriculture. For instance, Kenya has adopted the Environmental Management and Coordination Act 1999 and Uganda has put in place a National Environment Act and a Land Act. In the period 2001 to 2003, Zimbabwe carried out land, agrarian and environmental law reforms to redress equity issues and mitigate poverty and environmental degradation, and aiming to benefit the landless people of the country. The land reform focused on land redistribution, reorganization of communal areas, tackling the problem of over-cultivation, which has resulted in land degradation and high poverty level. This is true particularly in the marginal semi-arid areas where 70 per cent of the peasant farmers eke out a living.

### ***Sector-specific strategies and plans***

36. In the forest sector, about two-thirds of African countries have developed and are at different stages in implementing National Forest Programmes (NFPs). A majority of countries in Africa have also adopted new forest policies and forest laws and efforts are being made in many countries to improve law enforcement as part of the NFP process. Harmonizing implementation of NFPs and NAPs, especially in drylands, can enhance their impact in tackling land degradation.

37. Policies on land and spatial planning have been formulated by some countries such as Benin and Madagascar to address the land-use problems. These have been recognized as a major contributing factor to land and natural resource degradation.

38. Regarding agricultural sector policies and strategies, countries are increasingly placing emphasis on sustainable agriculture, thus promoting better land management practices and redressing problems related to resource degradation. Examples include Togo's Agricultural and Rural Growth Strategy of 2004, South Africa's Agricultural Strategic Plan of 2002, and Ethiopia's Food Security Strategy.

39. In the water sector, strategies developed place emphasis on the conservation and rational management of water resources, as is the case with South Africa's Water Strategy adopted in 2004 and Ethiopia's Water Sector Strategy.

### ***Rural development strategies***

40. Rural development strategies that span a wide range of sectors have been initiated and contribute to addressing drought and desertification through rational exploitation and management of natural resources, sustainable agricultural production and diversification of activities and rural incomes, among others. Examples include Algeria's Sustainable Rural

Development Strategy of 2004, Ethiopia's Agricultural and Rural Development Policy and Madagascar's National Rural Development Policy.

### ***Programmes and projects***

41. Countries have also formulated some programmes, projects and action plans to support the implementation of policies and strategies aimed at controlling drought and desertification. Successes have been registered in many cases. In Algeria for instance, implementation of an afforestation plan under the National Fund for the Regulation of Agricultural Development has registered fruit trees plantations that cover more than 1.2 million hectares of land and the conservation and improvement of soils covering an area of more than 2.8 million hectares.

42. The six countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, Niger, Senegal and Sudan have benefited from the pilot project, Operation Acacia, which is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with financial support from the Italian Government. The project has helped local farmers to restore degraded land by planting native acacias that produce gums and resins - important products for Sahelian people's livelihoods. The project has, among other effects, resulted in restoration of more than 13,000 hectares of degraded land.

### ***Innovative community practices in natural resource use and management***

43. Some examples of application of innovative practices for natural resource management and livelihood improvement include the utilization of indigenous knowledge systems for land and natural resource management such as *in-situ* conservation of crop varieties, indigenous terrace building in Konso District, and application of an agro-forestry system in Gedio zone in Ethiopia. Given the effectiveness of these traditional practices, the Ethiopian Government has accorded priority to replicating them in different parts of the country.

44. Other examples of innovative community initiatives include successful implementation of soil and water conservation measures on a large scale by the Mossi people of the Central Plateau and Eastern Region of Burkina Faso; a sand-encroachment control and agropastoral development project implemented in eight regions of central Mauritania, and the Thuo-Boswa Landcare Cattle Project in the North West Province near Kudumane and Kuruman in the Northern Cape in South Africa.

### **Subregional and regional level programmes**

45. To support and complement country-level efforts, the following initiatives and programmes have been undertaken at subregional and regional levels:

46. *The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)/Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)* has been developed and endorsed by African Heads of State and Government as a framework for the restoration of agricultural growth, food security and rural development in Africa. Pertinent to combating drought and desertification is CAADP's pillar 1: "*Extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems*" under which CAADP aims to, among other objectives, reverse fertility loss and resource degradation, and ensure broad-based and rapid adoption of sustainable land and forestry management practices in the smallholder as well as commercial sectors.

47. *The NEPAD Environment Initiative (EI)*, which includes combating desertification as an integral and priority programme area, has been developed by United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP). Subregional action plans under this initiative have been for all subregions in collaboration with African subregional organizations including CILSS, IGAD, Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), SADC, UMA, and ECOWAS. With support from Norway, UNEP is providing support to Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Libya and Mozambique to develop their national action plans for the EI on a pilot basis.

48. *The Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative*, a programme initiated by the African Union (AU) and developed by the AU Commission (AUC) in collaboration with ECA, FAO, UNEP, UNCCD, and CEN-SAD was launched in December 2006. It covers a wide range of countries, including: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia and Western Sahara. The goals of the programme are: to slow the advance of the Sahara Desert, enhance environmental sustainability, control land degradation, promote integrated natural resources management, conserve biological diversity, contribute to poverty reduction, and create jobs.

49. *The ECA-AU-AfDB Initiative on Land Policy in Africa* addresses the lack of comprehensive national land policies in most African countries. Their absence has been recognized as one of the major factors contributing to land-related problems, including mismanagement of land resources. It is expected that by the end of 2008 a Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa will have been developed and adopted by AU Heads of State and Government.

50. In the SADC subregion, heightened attention is being given to programmes on drought and food security as a result of the frequent droughts with devastating impacts on Agriculture and food security. The subregion is investing heavily in irrigation. This has seen the area under irrigation grow from 1.63 million hectares in 1985 to an estimated 1.96 million hectares in 2005. SADC has also developed and adopted a regional framework – the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in SADC – to ensure food security and reverse chronic food shortage.

51. *The Regional Programme for the Integrated Development of the Fouta Djallon Highlands (RPID-FDH)* initiated by Organization of African Unity, now African Union (OAU) within the framework of a Plan of Action on the medium- and long-term control of desertification, drought and other natural calamities in Africa, has been under implementation. It covers eight member States: Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. The Programme aims at ensuring the preservation of natural resources and environment with the view to improvement of the living conditions of populations in the area and reversing the land degradation that threaten the sources of six important international rivers that originate from the Fouta Djallon Highlands or its extensions.

52. In the IGAD subregion a New Environment and Natural Resources Strategy has been developed and endorsed by the Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources of the subregion.

### **2.3 Progress in developing and strengthening systems for monitoring, early warning and adaptation to drought and desertification**

53. Activities are underway at national, subregional and regional and global levels to set up and implement systems for monitoring drought and land degradation, early warning and disaster management, and for evaluating implementation of NAPs and other interventions on land degradation. Some of these are highlighted below.

### **Desertification and land degradation monitoring and information systems**

54. In terms of monitoring interventions to combat drought, a good practice in establishing Desertification Information System (DIS) for NAP implementation is demonstrated by the case on the monitoring and evaluation system for steering NAP implementation established in Tunisia. The system aims to assess the impact of investments made in fighting desertification and to enable the compilation of management charts for national policymakers at different levels. Progress in setting up similar systems in other countries of the region has generally been slow, even among some countries that have adopted their NAPs. This is attributed to the limitations in human and financial resources.

55. At the initiative of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), the Long-term Ecological Monitoring and Observatory Network has been established. It gathers environmental data for the use of decision-makers. This initiative has facilitated observatories in 11 countries, to operate and gather high-quality information on natural resources and the effectiveness of management systems.

56. In response to the need for up-to-date and comparable land degradation information, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has funded the Land Degradation Assessment (LADA) project, a global initiative implemented by UNEP and executed by FAO with the support of the UNCCD secretariat, the Global Mechanism (GM) and the International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC). The LADA project has developed and tested effective assessment tools for land degradation in drylands through pilot projects and studies undertaken in selected countries, including Egypt, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa.

### **Drought monitoring and early warning systems and programmes**

57. Drought monitoring and early warning systems and programmes are being developed and made operational. These include the following:

58. *Regional Climate Outlook Forums:* Convened annually by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in the Greater Horn of Africa, in South Africa and in West Africa, to elaborate and ensure appropriate dissemination of consensual regional outlooks, bulletins and products about the next rainy season.

59. *Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev Africa):* This programme is being developed by the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) in collaboration with ECA, to among other tasks, guide the effective integration of climate information and services into development planning for Africa, and to ensure the mainstreaming of climate considerations in achievement of the MDGs.

60. Centres charged with timely monitoring of drought intensity, its geographical extent, duration and impact on agricultural production, and issuing early warnings have been established. These include the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) in Nairobi and the SADC Drought-monitoring Centre in Harare. The African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) is also in place and provides similar services.

61. The project, Africa Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD), is hosted by AUC and is under implementation. AMESD, which is funded by European Development Fund, targets the ECOWAS, ECCAS, SADC, IGAD and Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) subregions.

## **Drought risk and disaster management**

62. At national, subregional and regional level, strategies and programmes to enable countries to manage the impact of disasters including drought are being established.

63. More than 30 countries have platforms for disaster risk reduction (DRR) as a way of shifting from disaster response to mainstreaming disaster risk, and some of these countries, such as Gabon, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, and Niger are reported to have succeeded in linking DRR to poverty reduction and related strategies.

64. Some countries have embarked on innovative market schemes such as index-based weather insurance for managing risks associated with drought. Ethiopia and Malawi are piloting these schemes.

65. At the subregional level, IGAD has developed a strategy for disaster reduction. In early 2007, ECOWAS approved a subregional Common Policy and mechanisms for DRR. SADC has revised its subregional strategy, factoring in DRR, and ECCAS has established a subregional centre for DRR in the Republic of the Congo and is developing a subregional strategy.

66. Under the auspices of AUC and NEPAD, the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and a Programme of Action for its implementation (2006-2010) have been developed and adopted. These will contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication by facilitating the integration of disaster risk reduction into development programmes.

67. In addition, the African Drought Risk and Development Network (Drought Forum) has been established with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Drylands Development Centre, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). The forum is promoting the development of coordinated strategies for enhanced and effective drought management at national level.

### **2.4 Progress in providing support for the implementation of programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought**

68. JPOI calls for actions at all levels to mobilize adequate and predictable financial resources, transfer of technologies and capacity building at all levels to, among other actions, address causes of desertification and land degradation, strengthen the capacity of African countries including at the local level, for effective disaster management, encompassing observation and early warning systems, assessments, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The following highlight some of the progress made.

## **Financing**

69. *Through national budgets*, countries of the region are making provisions to directly or indirectly, fund projects and activities that address drought impact and tackle desertification. Funding is channelled mainly through sectoral budgets particularly in the agriculture and environment and natural resource management sectors. Generally, however, these sectors tend to receive low funding. As a consequence, funding gaps persist in addressing the identified SLM priorities.



70. *The Global Environment Facility (GEF)* through its implementing agencies namely, UNEP, UNDP and World Bank, is providing support for programmes and activities to combat desertification and mitigate drought impact especially following the approval in 2002 of land degradation as one of the GEF focal areas and the subsequent development of the GEF Operational Programme 15 (OP. 15) - Sustainable Land Management. Many country reports highlight support provided by the GEF for the NAP processes and support for pilot projects to combat land degradation.

71. In June 2007, GEF approved \$150 million funding for the Strategic Investment Programme (SIP) for Sustainable Land Management for SSA. The programme aims to restore soil fertility, thus helping to boost food security, increase farm incomes, maintain ecosystem services, and engage local communities in better management of their lands. The 28 beneficiary countries include Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

72. As highlighted below, other initiatives that are aimed at mobilizing and channelling funding to programmes to combat desertification, ensure food security and reduce poverty have been put in place and include TerrAfrica, the UNCCD Global Mechanism (GM), and “*Chef de files*”.

(a) *TerrAfrica* has been initiated as a special catalytic partnership effort that aims to scale-up harmonized support for effective and efficient country-driven SLM practices in SSA. The TerrAfrica approach focuses on tackling critical barriers to such scaling-up and mainstreaming of SLM interventions within national development strategies and plans.

(b) *The UNCCD GM*, which is mandated to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources to affected developing country Parties, is undertaking a number of programmes to enhance the flow of financial resources for UNCCD implementation. At country level, the GM focuses on providing support needed to mainstream NAPs and other SLM priorities into national policies, strategies and budgeting processes. At subregional level, the GM programme focuses on policy dialogue, enhancing coordination of UNCCD implementation and strengthening the capacity of partner institutions so that they can support the country-level processes and carry out other tasks.

(c) *Chef de files* instituted under UNCCD have also been reported as innovative mechanisms for the mobilization and provision of financial and technical support for combating desertification. The *Chef de files* are development partners that have agreed to act as representatives of the African governments and provide leadership within the aid community to enhance support for country-specific support in UNCCD implementation. For instance, CIDA, on behalf of Government of Canada is rendering this support to Ghana, Norway for Ethiopia, and Italy for Niger.

73. Despite this overall momentum in mobilizing and providing funding, it is note worthy that countries report gross inadequacy of funds and some still have difficulties in gaining access to domestic and external financing for SLM.

## **Capacity building**

74. Institutional and human resources capacity-building programmes that have been carried out include the following:

***Enhancing synergy and the implementation of the Rio Conventions***

75. Capacity-building programmes have been undertaken with the aim of strengthening implementation of the Rio conventions, namely UNCCD, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). They also promoting SLM within the framework of poverty reduction, especially in drylands.

76. The National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) funded by GEF has enabled countries in the region to review their capacity needs to address priority national and global environmental issues, and to prepare national capacity development strategies and plans of critical actions related to the three Rio conventions. Additional support to implement the NCSA outputs was provided through the Global Support Programme (GSP), which was jointly initiated by GEF, UNDP and UNEP in 2005. The workshops conducted under the GSP for all the subregions in Africa increased networking and experience-sharing among NCSA teams.

77. The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building developed under the auspices of UNEP provides a means for assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition to address their capacity building and technology support needs in the field of environment. The Bali Plan is of particular interest to Africa, as it is fully in line with the objectives of Agenda 21, and the Capacity Building Programme of NEPAD's Environment Initiative. As part of the efforts to kick-start this plan implementation, UNEP has, in close cooperation with UNDP, initiated a pilot project in six countries, namely Burkina Faso, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda and Tunisia. The pilot project will draw lessons learnt to inform the scaling-up of the implementation of the Bali Plan.

***Integrating NAPs and other SLMs into NDPs***

78. There is a growing effort to support countries in the region to integrate drought risk reduction, NAPs, other SLM strategies and plans and environment management activities in general, into development frameworks, especially into the PRSs. The following examples can be mentioned:

- *UNDP Integrated Drylands Development Programme* coordinated by its Drylands Development Centre which, among others tasks, assists countries to integrate NAPs into national economic frameworks and move from strategy development to effective implementation of UNCCD, including through resource mobilization. As of 2005, 29 Africa countries were being assisted under the programme;
- *UNEP/UNDP Initiative on Poverty and Environment* is supporting the implementation of pilot projects in seven African countries with the aim of increasing the capacity of governments to mainstream environment into national development processes. The countries covered are: Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda; and
- *UNEP, UNDP and ISDR* initiative to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development practice, including environmental management.

### **Enhancing access to technology**

79. A number of countries report initiatives in promoting access and use of appropriate technology, particularly in energy efficiency and substitution, improving agricultural techniques and water harvesting and conservation.

80. Ethiopia's agricultural policy for instance, gives special attention to agricultural research and development and to a market-oriented economy. The country has strengthened its lead research institutions and has established joint research activities with international research centres.

81. Through the Mediterranean Renewable Energy Programme (MEDREP), UNEP, with support from the Italian Ministry of Environment and Lands is promoting renewable energy investments in the southern Mediterranean. Since its launch in April 2005, three partner banks have lent almost \$6 million for the installation of 8,000 solar systems in Tunisia. A similar programme for hotels in Morocco has targeted 80 hotels for new solar water heater systems.

82. The UNEP-Rural Energy Enterprise Development (REED) initiative nurtures new, clean energy enterprises in developing countries by providing enterprise development services and early stage seed finance. The Africa REED (AREED) is operating in Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Zambia and Tanzania. AREED applies a market-based approach to help rural and peri-urban households (and enterprises) climb the energy ladder.

83. Countries report increased photovoltaic (PV) market and successful improved cook stoves programmes particularly in urban areas. In Zambia, the use of solar energy has reduced pressure on forests and in certain areas the rate of deforestation has gone down tremendously.

### **SECTION 3: Challenges and constraints**

84. The region is confronted with many challenges and constraints that have hampered progress in the development and implementation of measures to combat desertification and to mitigate impacts of drought. The main ones include the following:

(a) The high level of poverty which continues to be main overarching challenge and constraint to implementation of measures to address drought and desertification in the region;

(b) Poor coordination and collaboration among actors, insufficient political will, lack of in-depth understanding and appreciation of drought and desertification issues, especially their links with and benefits to poverty reduction. These contribute, among other things, to difficulties in achieving effective integration/mainstreaming of drought and desertification control plans into national development and budgetary frameworks;

(c) Weak institutional capacity including poor set-ups, lack of legislative backing and inadequate human resources, thus constraining the effectiveness of organs such as NCBs, which are being set up specifically to coordinate the planning, and implementation of desertification control programmes and activities;

(d) Reform and enforcement of policies and legislation to guarantee clear legal ownership and access rights to land, water and other natural resources, which remains a challenging task;

(e) Lack of financial resources which is a systemic and one of the most pressing constraints to most countries and regional programmes in the implementation of desertification control plans. Resource users, especially the local people, do not have access to affordable credit facilities to acquire funding, which they could profitably invest both in tackling land degradation and in sustaining their livelihoods;

(f) The inadequate information available on drought, desertification and drylands and the difficulties encountered in accessing and sharing this information continue to hamper activities and progress;

(g) The development, management and implementation of processes that are responsive to local community priorities, and are genuinely participatory, and cross-sectoral is still a challenge;

(h) The limited development of economic and social infrastructure and services in drylands as result of low levels of investments, hampers access to drylands and does not provide adequate incentives to attract and sustain other investments needed for SLM in these areas;

(i) Technology options that empower communities remain largely inaccessible and unaffordable particularly to a majority of the rural and urban poor;

(j) The high rates of prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases in some countries of the region pose a challenge to addressing drought and desertification in the affected countries; and

(k) The political instability and conflicts faced by some countries in the region breed conditions such as displacement and concentration of populations, destruction of natural resources and infrastructure, land degradation and hampered implementation of programmes to reduce poverty and address drought and desertification.

## **SECTION 4: Lessons learnt and recommended priority approaches and actions**

### **4.1 Lessons learnt**

85. Drawing from reports as well as analysis during this review, the following are some of the lessons learnt:

(a) Combating desertification and assisting countries to manage the impact of drought constitute a primary and essential route out of poverty for millions of people in Africa;

(b) Desertification control and drought mitigation are complex issues that need an integrated approach to achieve meaningful and durable results;

(c) NDPs including PRSPs can be important platforms for securing attention and resources for implementation of interventions to address impacts of drought and combat desertification if NAPs and other SLMs plans are effectively mainstreamed into these plans;

(d) Information for education, policy advocacy and planning as well as monitoring of trends and impact of interventions on drought and desertification are central to the success of efforts in combating drought and desertification;

(e) Given the crosscutting nature of drought and desertification issues, it is pertinent that strong and well-functioning institutional frameworks are put in place to coordinate the formulation and implementation of related policies and programmes. It must also be ensured that these are adequately mainstreamed into national development plans and PRSs and into relevant sectoral policies and strategies;

(f) Through a mix of soil and water conservation techniques, combined with better tree and pasture management, simple and low-cost, farmer-led innovations and technologies can help achieve the sustainable farming systems needed to combat land degradation;

(g) Drought and desertification interventions should be designed through effective involvement of local communities and to ensure their sustainability and that affected communities derive maximum benefits;

(h) Many success stories, best practices and lessons learnt exist in approaches undertaken at various levels to combat desertification, and need to be compiled, shared and replicated;

(i) Farmers in the drylands need market and reasonable prices for the commodities, which they produce in order to fight poverty as well as invest in SLM; and

(j) Drought has always been treated in the region as an emergency and is thus not adequately addressed in medium- to long-term development plans.

#### **4.2 Recommended priority approaches and actions**

86. The following are some of the priority approaches and actions needed to enhance implementation of programmes to effectively address drought and desertification as well as to achieve sustainable growth and poverty reduction in the region.

(a) *Up-scale the implementation of NAPs and other SLM plans with a special focus on concrete on the ground community programs and activities with the objective of achieving measurable results on SLM and poverty reduction.* This requires actions to establish accessible and innovative mechanisms for channelling increased levels of support, particularly financing, to farmers and other frontline natural resource managers; and to mobilize and empower local authorities, civil society, private sector and local communities through increased capacity building that is linked to tangible results on poverty reduction, and integrative natural resources management.

(b) *Mainstream/integrate systematically, priorities identified in the NAPs and other SLM processes into national development programmes including national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies as one of the means to mobilize implementation resources, and to foster medium- and long-term political commitment for drought mitigation and desertification control programmes.* This entails actions to build political leadership and support for SLM, strengthen institutional arrangements for effective mainstreaming; sharpening and disseminating tools for integration; and to generate information and compelling evidence including economic analyses and arguments on SLM and poverty reduction linkages.

(c) *Establish and promote incentives for and address barriers to agricultural development and sustainable land and other natural resources management by among others measures:* Providing dryland areas with increased access to appropriate and affordable agricultural technologies such as drought-resistant crop varieties, affordable credit facilities and links to markets; developing economic and social infrastructure such as roads, and energy and water supply infrastructure in order to facilitate local people in the affected areas, in managing their own development; and carrying out reform and/or effective enforcement of land and other natural resources regulatory frameworks to promote secure tenure and/ or access rights to land, water and other natural resources.

(d) *Strengthen the information base on drought and desertification and enhance knowledge application including through identification, documentation, dissemination, and sharing of best practices through programmes at regional, subregional and national level.* These programmes should entail activities to: strengthen collection of information including through targeted research; establish comprehensive information systems; develop and apply benchmarks, indicators and methodologies for monitoring land degradation; strengthen active involvement of the local community in land degradation and drought research and monitoring; and promote networking and centres of excellence.

(f) *Link and coordinate measures for combating drought and desertification with those measures aimed at addressing climate change and biodiversity conservation so as to enhance synergy, diversify resources available for implementation of NAPs and related programmes and thus up scale SLM programmes.* The focus devoted by UNFCCC on adaptation and vulnerability reduction provides opportunities for synergistic investments in addressing land degradation and carbon sequestration within the framework of the UNFCCC Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) especially in drylands.

(g) *Strengthen management and adaptation to drought and desertification impacts especially in the face of the expected climate change and the high vulnerability of the region to climate change impacts.* This requires action to strengthen the following: capacity for systematic climate observations by specialized centres; timely climate information outreach and application; early warning systems and drought risk management institutions; and knowledge networking platforms and tools such as subregional and regional forums; and the use of information communications technologies, based on a mixture of traditional and modern technology.

(h) *Strengthen institutional arrangements and human resources capacity to provide effective leadership for coordination, planning, monitoring and championing of drought and desertification programs at national and sub-national levels.* The capacity needs of lead institutions such as NCBs, and those of decentralized systems, NGOs, private sector and local communities merit special focus.

(i) *Promote knowledge management on, and access to appropriate affordable technology for improved agricultural production and SLM through actions to:* establish more flexible financing mechanisms for technology development; improve access to affordable credit facilities for technology acquisition especially in rural areas; expand energy services to the poor; and promote demand-driven research.

(j) *Strengthen capacity for financial resources mobilization and channel increased funding for implementation of NAPs, SRAPs, RAP and other SLM initiatives.* In order to achieve

this, actions required include: integrating and according a high priority ranking to SLM programmes within development assistance policies and programming; strengthening SLM resources mobilization and financing mechanisms at global, regional and subregional levels; enhancing coordination among these mechanisms; and developing and implementing a clear agenda and fundraising strategies for funding SLM from local sources, including from the private sector and from emerging schemes such as payment for ecosystem services.

(k) *Foster peace and stability in the region through among others, the development and implementation of comprehensive and coherent conflict prevention and management strategies at national, subregional and regional levels.* In addition, strategies and actions are required to deal with environmental and drought refugees and to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs).

## **SECTION 5: Conclusions**

87. Drought and desertification continue to threaten the livelihoods of millions of people in Africa, increasingly making them unable to edge out of poverty. This trend is set to worsen with the onset of climate change, to which many countries in the region are highly vulnerable. As such, desertification and drought are at the heart of development challenges in Africa and merit urgent attention in terms of policies and actions at national, regional and global levels.

88. Combating desertification on the continent has tremendous benefits in enhancing the continent's progress towards meeting MDGs, particularly in terms of poverty reduction, attaining food security, combating diseases and ensuring environmental sustainability. Otherwise, current trends in land degradation and the high level of vulnerability of the region to drought and desertification will be major impediments to attainment of the MDGs and to security and social stability at all levels, regionally and globally.

89. African countries have responded and made some demonstrated progress towards tackling drought and desertification. UNCCD has been central and provides vital opportunities for tackling drought and desertification in the region and globally. With support from international partners, many countries are taking some concrete action at various levels to tackle desertification as well as to mitigate the impact of drought.

90. The region continues to face a number of challenges and constraints that merit urgent and focused attention in order to accelerate progress. The main priority approaches and actions proposed recognize the need to address the root causes of desertification and to respond to the main challenges, tackle constraints, and upscale implementation of ongoing programmes and plans for SLM, building on the success stories.

91. In order to succeed and achieve significant progress in combating desertification and mitigating impacts of drought, there is need for enhanced political will and commitment at all levels to address these problems as integral priority elements within MDG- and poverty reduction-based programmes and strategies.