



Bonn Symposium 2009

Sustainable Development
in Times of Crises
Opposition or Opportunity?



Workshop C

Towards the Necessary Building Blocks for the Required Global Coalition to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD)

Organised by: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
Chair: Yukie Hori (UNCCD)
Report: **Schiller Metran**, Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)

The objective of the workshop was to raise awareness on land degradation as a global issue and challenge for the international community. The workshop therefore aimed at providing information on the essential building blocks for a global coalition to combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD).

Dr **Anneke Trux**, CCD Project Coordinator (GTZ), pointed out that drylands made up 40% of the earth's surface, of which 12 million km² were affected by land degradation as a result of over-use and the exploitation of nature. As a consequence over one billion people – in more than 100 countries worldwide – lose fertile lands; their means of existence is existentially endangered. According to Trux, an enhanced performance of UNCCD and its institutions is essential to combat DLDD. In addition she saw a need to fill buzzwords like civil society organisations (CSO) dialogue and public private partnership (PPP) with content. To date, it did not seem to be clear at what level stakeholders should be involved. Trux identified the lack of application of scientific results as another problem. This tackles the difficulty of translation into policy and the reliability of scientific outcomes.

Although being considered a local problem, the consequences of land degradation are becoming cumulative and need to be understood as a global challenge. Trux therefore highlighted the need for an enhanced action on all areas: better partnership with the UNCCD secretariat; need of regional exchange of experience and partnerships; mainstreaming of the issue into the policy dialogue.

Elysabeth David from the Knowledge Management and Science and Technology Unit (UNCCD) gave an overview of the UNCCD 10-year strategy. As a precondition, the measuring of DLDD (biophysical science analysis) as well as of its impact (social and biophysical scientific analysis) are required to fully understand the dimensions of DLDD. Furthermore, the implementation of the Convention and its impact need to be monitored (performance analysis by parties and institutions). COP9 adopted two impact indicators: 1. Land cover status, 2. Proportion of the population in affected areas living above the poverty line. The strategic objectives of the 10-year strategy are:

1. To improve living conditions of affected populations;
2. To improve the condition of affected ecosystems;
3. To generate global benefits through effective implementation of UNCCD;
4. To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

As the way forward, David called for more interlinked approaches in reporting processes on poverty and land cover impact indicators. Furthermore, a long-term, dynamic and cross-feeding process of exchange between scientists was needed to improve and develop methodologies to combat desertification.

Sergio Zelaya Bonilla, Coordinator and Head of the Policy and Advocacy Unit (UNCCD), highlighted the importance of public private partnerships (ppp) as an opportunity to enhance sustainable land management practices, thereby addressing drought-risk management issues pertaining to drylands. Win-win scenarios with proven case studies support the case for investment in drylands. “The objective should be a sustainable land management” concluded Zelaya. Also **Hossein Fadaei**, Senior Interagency Relation Officer (UNEP), emphasized the need to attract investment in drylands: Not only from the monetary investment side, but also as an asset feeding into reproduction and sustainable development of drylands. Drylands needed to be looked at not only as an issue affecting Sahara and the Sahel region but as an urgent international matter, said Fadaei.

Mássimo Candelori from the Coordination and Monitoring of the Implementation Unit (UNCCD) noted that UNCCD was the only convention of the Rio Conventions with Regional Implementation Annexes to carry out the UNCCD 10-year strategy plan. The purpose of these Annexes is to provide guidelines and arrangements for effective implementation of the Convention in affected countries. The objective of the Regional Coordination Mechanism is:

1. To facilitate participation in policy development and implementation;
2. To ensure cost-effectiveness of action through synergies;
3. To address matters that can better dealt with at multinational level.

Candelori emphasized the need of more information exchange through strengthening partnerships. He expected that especially regional cooperation would lead to more efficiency and benefits.

Following upon a question from the audience, Mr **Zelaya Bonilla** stated that there was still need to identify the real drivers of land degradation: “It is not only irrigation related, it is also water scarcity related and gender related.” Ms **Hori** added that it was not UNCCD’s objective to humidify drylands. Dryland productivity was being hampered due to unpredictable weather conditions. Asked for the relevance of deforestation, Dr **Trux** noted that desertification went far beyond chopping trees. “It is also degradation of the productive potential of soils and salinisation of pastures. The Sahara and Sahel Green Belt initiatives look at the reforestation issues, which are also doing harm.” Mr **Baste** added that planting trees also caused a drop in water level. A comprehensive approach was required to really understand the interactive mechanisms.

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