

SECTION 1: Introduction



1.1 Background

1. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) at its Sixteenth Session (CSD-16) to be held in 2008, will focus on the assessment of the progress made in implementing programs 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 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 the CSD through organizing Regional Implementation Meetings (RIM). This report on drought and desertification has therefore 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 input for the CSD-16.

3. The report is a result of input solicited from Member States and regional partners, and 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.

1.2 Structure and outline of the report

4. The report is structured as follows:

5. Section two of the report provides an overview of the status and trends on drought and desertification in Africa. The significance of these problems in the region is demonstrated by outlining the impact that drought and desertification have on economic growth and poverty reduction, agriculture and food security, water, biodiversity, energy and migration.

6. In section three a review is carried out of progress made in the implementation of measures and actions at national, subregional and regional levels, that are aimed at combating desertification and mitigating impacts of drought taking into account the main goals and targets set out in Agenda 21, PFIA21, and the JPOI. These goals and targets are summarised in Annex 1. Progress in meeting these targets is specifically reviewed under the following main headings:

- (i) 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 the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD)
- (ii) Progress in combating desertification and mitigating drought impact through other strategies and programs in agriculture and natural resources management sectors;
- (iii) Progress in developing and strengthening systems for monitoring, early warning and adaptation to drought and desertification; and
- (iv) Progress in providing support for the implementation of programmes to combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought.

7. Section four highlights the challenges and constraints encountered in the implementation of various measures to combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought in Africa.

8. In section five, lessons learned are reflected upon, and priority approaches and actions for further implementation in the area of drought and desertification are highlighted.

9. The main conclusions derived from the review are contained in section six.