

# SECTION 5:

## Lessons learned and recommended priority approaches and actions



### 5.1 Lessons learned

160. The following are some of the lessons learned, drawn from reports as well analysis during this review.

161. Combating desertification and assisting them to manage the impacts of drought constitute the primary and essential route out of poverty for millions of people in Africa.

162. Desertification control and drought mitigation are complex issues that need an integrated approach to achieve meaningful and durable results.

163. 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. Information and communications technologies, the media, networks and extension services are vital components of improved information systems for drought and desertification control.

164. 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 and to ensure that they are adequately mainstreamed into national development plans and PRSs, as well as relevant sectoral policies and strategies.

165. 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 sustainable farming systems needed to combat land degradation. Building on and reinforcing these innovations and technologies with outside expertise and resource support can foster achievement of greater results.

166. Drought and desertification interventions should be designed to ensure their sustainability and that affected communities derive maximum benefits. Thus the Effective involvement of local communities in drought mitigation and desertification control activities is critical. Their knowledge, skills and adaptive capacities are invaluable to ensuring that real benefits are derived from interventions by making them appropriate, acceptable and sustainable.

167. Many success stories, best practices and lessons learnt exist in approaches undertaken at various levels to combat desertification. These offer the benefit of comparative experience. They however need to be compiled, shared and replicated in other communities, as necessary. The dissemination of best practices and experiences should inform policy-making and go beyond national boundaries. It should as well serve as a vehicle for regional and global cooperation in drought and desertification control.

168. The NDPs including PRSPs can be important platforms for securing attention and resources for implementation of interventions to tackle impacts of drought and combat desertification. Therefore effective integration of NAPs and other SLMs into development planning and budgeting frameworks is considered an essential process for achieving increased and long-term investment in drought and desertification control programmes.

169. It is important to establish and make the connection between pressures experienced by communities affected by drought and desertification and intervention strategies undertaken, and to use community role models to champion and promote activities.

170. 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.

171. Drought has always been treated in the region as an emergency and thus not adequately addressed in the medium to long-term development plans. The absence of preparedness plans and adequate early warning systems have exacerbated the impacts of past droughts. There is a need to shift from the typical *ex-post* to *ex-ante* responses to drought.

## 5.2 Recommended priority approaches and actions

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

*(i) 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.*

173. The pressing need to achieve this among the countries of the region calls for:

- More accessible and innovative mechanisms of channelling increased levels of support, particularly financing to farmers and other frontline natural resources managers;
- Mobilization of local resources and ensuring maximum community participation in desertification control and drought risk reduction programs and activities;
- Harnessing of local knowledge and skills and empowering local authorities, civil society, private sector and local communities through increased capacity building that is linked to achieving tangible results on poverty reduction, integrative natural resources management, drought risk management; and
- Identification, documentation and exchange of best practices and promoting the replication of successful projects.

- Ensure adequate commitment for the implementation of the 10-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD and the related decisions adopted at UNCCD COP8, which encompass important guidance as regards to UNCCD implementation for the period 2008-2018.

*(ii) Mainstream/integrate systematically, priorities identified in the NAPs and other SLM processes into national development programs including national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies in order to mobilize implementation resources, and to foster medium and long-term political commitment for drought mitigation and desertification control programs.*

174. Given the difficulties that countries are encountering and the mixed results realized by countries from efforts in integrating drought and desertification issues into development frameworks including budgetary frameworks, it is pertinent to focus on the following:

- Actions to build political leadership and support for SLM with the view to motivate and reinforce political commitment and raise the profile of SLM at all levels;
- Strengthening institutional arrangements for effective mainstreaming;
- Sharpening and disseminating tools for integration;
- Generating information and compelling evidence including economic analyses and arguments on SLM and poverty reduction linkages, to encourage policy makers to take favourable decisions with respect to interventions required to combat desertification;
- Developing and implementing effective communication strategies responsive and tailored to challenges, circumstances and knowledge needs of different audiences, especially the policy and decision makers and frontline resource managers;
- Identifying and promoting incentive frameworks/performance measures to encourage integration; and
- Demonstrating concrete on the ground human welfare and sustainable land management outcomes of integrating drought and desertification issues in poverty reduction interventions.

*(iii) Establish and promote incentives for and address barriers to agricultural development and sustainable land and other natural resources management.*

175. This calls for the following priority actions:

- 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 to manage their own development;
- Addressing the bottlenecks posed by insecure tenure and/ or access rights to land, water and other natural resources by carrying out reform and/or effective enforcement of land and other natural resources regulatory frameworks with a view to guaranteeing clear and secure tenure and access rights to these resources, based on well-defined and enforceable rights and responsibilities of all players; and
- Promoting sustainable land use by building capacity in land use planning.

*(iv) Strengthen the information base on drought and desertification and enhance knowledge application including through identification, documentation, dissemination, and sharing of best practices.*

176. Programs should be developed and supported at regional, subregional and national level to strengthen collection of information including through targeted research; and management, dissemination and application of information paying due regard to:

- Establishing comprehensive Desertification Information Systems and evaluating the effectiveness of responses to drought and desertification;
- Strengthening land degradation monitoring and assessment including through providing support to the development and application of benchmarks, indicators and methodologies for monitoring land degradation, and scaling up application of LADA project tools and methodologies in the region;
- Strengthening active involvement of the local community in land degradation and drought research and monitoring including capturing traditional knowledge;
- Capturing and sharing good practices including indigenous practices used to address drought and desertification;
- Promoting centres of excellence in order to pool resources; and
- Conducting public awareness and education programmes, including formal education programmes on sustainable use and management of forest and other land resources with the involvement of CSOs, for local communities and resource users directly affected by drought and desertification.

*(v) Link and coordinate measures for combating drought and desertification with those measures aimed at addressing climate change and biodiversity conservation so as to diversify resources available for implementation of NAPs and related programmes and thus up scale SLM.*

177. Analysis should therefore be carried out and links established in the implementation of the UNCCD, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at all levels. As such there is need to strengthen capacity for developing integrated programmes aimed at promoting synergies between the UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC; and therefore the synergistic implementation of National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs) under the auspices of the UNFCCC and National, Subregional and Regional Actions Programs (NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs) under UNCCD and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the CBD. 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. However in order to be optimal, these investments should have in close view, the needs of the local people so as to achieve SLM and poverty reduction.

*(vi) 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.*

178. The required actions include:

- Strengthening capacity for systematic climate observations and timely climate information outreach and application particularly for policy making and at grass-root levels including through reinforcing capacity for more robust monitoring of drought by subregional and regional drought monitoring and early warning services centres such as ICPAC, DMC-Harare, ACMAD and OSS;

- Developing and integrating drought and other disaster management strategies into development frameworks at national, subregional and continental levels;
- Strengthening and ensuring comprehensive early warning systems and drought risk management institutions including networks at national and sub-national levels;
- Moving from policy at national level towards community level drought resilience building;
- Developing *ex-ante drought* response mechanisms. An Innovative approach such as weather index insurance is one such mechanism that can potentially offer protection to the small African farmer at affordable premiums; and
- Strengthening 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.

***(vii) 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.***

179. In so doing particular attention needs to be paid to the following:

- Providing the lead institutions such as NCBs with an adequate policy, legal and funding base to enable them to effectively discharge their mandates;
- Enhancing sharing and synergy of responsibilities among institutions;
- Strengthening the capacity of decentralized systems, NGOs, private sector and local communities, especially women and providing for their inclusion in planning and decision making process on SLM; and
- Developing long-term human resources capacity.

***(viii) Provide support and adequate resources to regional and subregional programs such as SRAPs, RAP, and SLM related programs under AU/NEPAD and RECs.***

180. This is urgently needed to enable them to discharge their mandate with respect to facilitating coordination, strategic planning and catalysing programs on desertification control and drought management, and sustainable development. They also have a major role in addressing cross border and crosscutting issues including channelling of appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how to interested Parties, the exchange of lessons learned and best practices within and between regional implementation.

***(ix) Promote knowledge management on, and access to appropriate affordable technology for improved agricultural production and SLM.***

181. This entails actions to:

- Establish more flexible financing mechanisms for technology development, and improve access to affordable credit facilities for technology acquisition and application especially in rural areas;
- Expand energy services to the poor, especially women in rural and remote drylands for domestic use as well as economic activities;
- Provide and make more use of renewable and cleaner energy sources and energy efficient technologies;

- Recognize and promote the application of local and indigenous know-how and innovations in local farming and integrated natural resources systems for SLM and as applicable reinforced by application of relevant modern science and technology;
- Accelerate the development, dissemination and deployment of affordable agricultural technologies including fertilizers, drought resistant crop varieties and other agricultural inputs.
- Promote demand-driven research and long-term technology training.
- Support and implement partnerships including (public-public and public-private), networks and programs on technology development, transfer and deployment. In this context implementation of the Bali Plan is pertinent.

*(x) Strengthen capacity for financial resources mobilization and channel increased funding for implementation of NAPs, SRAPs, RAP and other SLM initiatives.*

182. Apart from the actions necessary to integrate and articulate these programs as priorities within the country MDG and PRS based plans, which are currently the vehicles through which local funding and large aid flows are channelled, the additional actions needed to mobilize increased funding include:

- Integrating and according a high priority ranking to SLM programs within development assistance policies and programming instruments so as to provide an enabling environment for increased and improved levels of access to funding for these programs;
- Strengthening SLM resources mobilization and financing mechanisms at global, regional, and subregional levels such as the GEF, GM and TerrAfrica. Better coordination among these mechanisms should be ensured. The proportion of GEF funding allocated to SLM needs to increased;
- In addition the procedures and guidelines set by the SLM funding agencies for accessing financing for SLM programs especially at field level should be simplified;
- Developing and implementing a clear agenda and fundraising strategies for funding SLM from local sources including from the private sector and emerging schemes such as payment for ecosystem services; and
- Increasing national budget allocation to SLM.

*(xi) 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.

## SECTION 6: Conclusion



183. 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 most vulnerable. As such desertification and drought are at the heart of development challenges in Africa and merit urgent attention in policies and actions at national, regional and global level.

184. Combating desertification in 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 high level of vulnerability of the region to the impacts of both drought and desertification will be major impediments to the attainment of the MDGs as well as ensuring security and social stability at all levels in the region and at global level.

185. African countries have responded and made some demonstrated progress towards tackling drought and desertification. The 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 impacts of drought. Notably NAPs, SRAPs, RAPs and other programs in environment and agricultural sectors, have been developed at various levels. Implementation of these plans has commenced and urgently needs to be scaled up with a special emphasis on achieving implementation and impact at local level. In this context mechanisms are needed for providing technical and long-term financial support for combating drought and desertification especially to decentralised local government and communities. Work has commenced, but major effort is needed to strengthen the establishment of systems for drought and desertification monitoring, early warning and drought risk management. In this connection concrete data about rates and extent of desertification needs to be collected and disseminated to inform policy development and implementation.

186. African countries continue to face a number of challenges and constraints that constitute major impediments to and hamper progress in addressing drought and desertification and attaining sustainable development. Notable are the high levels of poverty, weak institutional capacities, challenges in resource mobilisation, weak information base, and inadequate access to affordable appropriate technology. These impediments merit urgent attention if progress is to be accelerated. The review has identified some best practices and success stories and lessons learned that can inform the development and implementation of effective interventions to manage drought impacts and combat land degradation.

187. The main priority approaches and actions proposed to accelerate progress, recognize the need to address the root causes of desertification, respond to the main challenges, tackle constraints, and upscale implementation of existing programs and plans for SLM building on the success stories.

188. 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 element within MDG and poverty reduction based programs and strategies.