

Information Note on the support of the UNCCD Secretariat for NEPAD Programmes and Projects in 2005

The potential of the United Nations Convention to Combat desertification (UNCCD) to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular that of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015, has been recognized by the international community (WSSD 2002). In this regard, particular attention has been given to the integration of UNCCD action programmes to combat desertification into sustainable development frameworks, policies and programmes of African countries, including NEPAD. So far, 33 countries have finalized their Action Programmes, and the remaining countries are planning to do so in the course of this year. In addition, 4 subregional action programmes are under implementation, and the fifth will be adopted before the end of 2006. The regional action programme is also in the process of formulation.

The UNCCD secretariat was requested by African countries to promote relevant policies and to provide the necessary framework for activities towards combating desertification in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In this regard, the secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), facilitated consultative meetings, which provided representatives of African countries and sub regional organizations with an opportunity to review the process for formulation of proposals to combat desertification in the context of NEPAD. The overall objective of these consultations was to review and finalize the project proposals identified to combat desertification. The secretariat also assisted the African countries in finalizing the action plan for the NEPAD Environment Initiative, which emphasizes that the effort to combat desertification is a critical component in the eradication of poverty in the vast majority of African countries.

As a follow up to the partners conference on the implementation of the Action Plan of the environment initiative of the NEPAD (Algiers, Algeria 15 -16 December, 2003), the Secretariat has facilitated the development of an initiative to support the implementation of priority activities to combat desertification in Africa. Through this initiative the government of Italy has pledged one (1) million USD.

The Secretariat has also strengthened its partnership with the African Development Bank, which has demonstrated great interest in supporting action programmes to combat desertification following the adoption of the Action Plan of the Environment initiative of NEPAD. In collaboration with the relevant sub regional organizations (CILSS/ECOWAS; SADC; UMA; CEMAC-UDEAC; IGAD) as well as UNEP, WMO, the GEF, ICRISAT; the Islamic Development Bank, bilateral partners such as Italy and the United Arab Emirates, the Secretariat is currently facilitating the development and implementation of number of priority activities as identified in the respective subregions and included in the Action Plan.

During 2005 the UNCCD Secretariat continued to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in particular in actively participating in the second Partnership Conference for the implementation of the Action Plan of the Environment initiative held in Dakar, Senegal in March 2005.

In addition, NEPAD has become a key partner in TerrAfrica (<http://www.terrafrica.org>), a multi-partner initiative aiming to increase the scale, efficiency and effectiveness of investments towards sustainable land management (SLM) in sub-Saharan Africa. Other partners are the UNCCD Secretariat, the World Bank, the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, GEF, IFAD, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, AfDB as well as multilateral organizations. TerrAfrica was officially launched, in parallel, at NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) retreat in Pretoria and during the high level segment of COP 7 in October 2005.