



Final Communiqué

Second Africa Drylands Week

N'Djamena, Chad 29 August 2014 - The Second Africa Drylands Week was held from 25 to 29 August 2014 in N'Djamena, Republic of Chad. It was organized by the African Union Commission and the Government of Chad, in collaboration with FAO, CILSS, UNCCD; SOS Sahel, the Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall and the African Forest Forum. The second Africa Drylands Week was held three years after the first one held in Dakar, Senegal in 2011. It gathered two hundred people, including decision makers such as President Buyoya, former President of the Republic of Burundi and High Representative of the African Union in Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), the ministers in charge of environment in Chad, Ethiopia and Sudan, as well as the Permanent Secretaries of Ministries in charge of Environment in Chad and Mauritania, and parliamentarians, including two from Cameroon.

Participants reviewed successes as well as challenges facing drylands development, including sustainable land management.

In particular, they reviewed the tremendous advances in land regeneration that have already been made by millions of farm families in the Sahel, and in Eastern and Southern Africa, by applying the principles of Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) of trees on their croplands, and by communities in regenerating their forest and grazing lands through Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR). It was noted that these practices have created multiple benefits in food security, resilience and adaptation to climate change, and the restoration of the land and soils. It was also noted that these Ever-Green Agriculture practices are now widely recognized as Foundational Practices that can be applied universally in the drylands because they do not involve any cash investment by the farmers, and are complementary to all other improved agriculture and natural resource management practices.

The meeting also took note of the recent commitment of the Heads of State to ensure that 30% more households in Africa are resilient to climate change related risks (Malabo Decision, June 2014).

Participants noted the launch of the AU-NEPAD-INGO African Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance aligned with the new vision of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Results Framework, which envisages 25 million farmers in Africa practicing Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) during the next ten years (25 by 25 vision).

Therefore, they RECOMMEND AND PROPOSE that the drylands development community, through the African Union, and all collaborating and supporting organizations, commit seriously to achieving the goal of enabling EVERY farm family and EVERY village across the drylands of Africa to be practicing FMNR and ANR by the year 2025.

Regarding challenges, though still numerous, participants stressed on two main ones namely coordination among actors and between interventions, as well as financing.

The meeting recommends allocation of sufficient funds for capacity building of national and regional research institutions that can support management of drylands,

Participants emphasized the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to expert working group on desertification and sustainable land management to be convened by the AUC to ensure the inclusion of inputs of youth, women and also marginalized groups.

In several countries, the action programmes developed in the framework of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) or in the framework of CAADP are seen as programmes of Ministries of Environment or of Agriculture and not as **National** Action Programmes (NAPs). NAPs of UNCCD and Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) are often seen as programmes of the Ministries of Environment, while CAADP Investment plans at national level are seen as Investment plans of the Ministries of Agriculture.

Participants, therefore, recommend and propose that real efforts be developed to bring all stakeholders to consider these plans and programmes as joint and national programmes that should guide and/or serve as basis for designing their actions/interventions in rural areas, particularly in the drylands.

Regarding financing, participants agreed that the fight against desertification is a key component of sustainable development in Africa, particularly in Sub Saharan Africa. Desertification and land degradation are a global threat for all countries in the world, but the most vulnerable countries are African Countries and it is primarily the responsibility of African Governments to address it and to voice it in the international agenda/fora. It is the responsibility of the African leadership to mobilize resources, including from national budget to tackle it. In particular, within

the framework of CAADP and in other international mechanisms that are critical for resources mobilization and allocation for development, they should give priority to Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) issues. As Pillar 1 of the CAADP, Sustainable Land and Water Management (SLWM) should be allocated a certain fixed amount of the financial resources mobilized for the implementation of CAADP.

The Commission of the African Union should regularly organize bilateral meetings with its partners to discuss Africa's Development agenda and how to finance it through the various partnership like Africa – USA, Africa – China, Africa – Turkey, Africa – France, Africa – India, Africa – Brazil, Africa – EU, etc. Participants recommend and propose to the AUC to systematically include Drylands Development issues, particularly SLWM in the regional priorities it presents to its partners during these meetings.

Considering the importance of Gum Arabic in the Sahel, the meeting recommends the development of appropriate frameworks to promote the production and marketing of the product as well as exchange of experience between stakeholders and for AUC support to revitalize the Network of Gum Arabic and Resins Associations (NGARA).

The meeting recommends that the Africa Drylands Week be institutionalized by the African Union Assembly as a regular and sustained means of promoting development in drylands.

Africa's development partners, including bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as Civil Society Organizations, are also called upon to enhance their support in the organization of the Africa Drylands Week.

Participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Chad, FAO; and all those partners who contributed to the success of this event.

For more information and media contact

Mr. MolaletTsedeke, Directorate of Information and Communication, AU Commission;
Tel: +23566402998; E-mail: molalett@africa-union.org

Mr. Youssoupha MBENGUE, AU-SAFGRAD; Tel: +23562986434/+226 78 23 41 78
E-mail: MbengueY@africa-union.org

For further information contact

Directorate of information and communication /African union commission/ E-mail: dinfo@africa-union.org/Web site: www.au.int/ Addis Ababa / Ethiopia

Follow us

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Africanunioncommision>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Africanunion>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUcommision>