



## UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2013

The High-Level Segment continued on Tuesday morning, and concluded with a final interactive dialogue. Negotiations on draft decisions continued in three contact groups on programme and budget, non-budgetary matters, and CRIC-related matters. During the closing session in the afternoon, Hanifi Avci, Turkey, offered to host COP 12 in 2015.

### HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

#### ROUND TABLE II: OVERCOMING HURDLES OF SCALING UP AND DISSEMINATING GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNCCD IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

Co-Chair Gertze introduced the session and moderator Garrity summarized key messages from the previous day, notably how farmer-led land regeneration in the Sahel is spurring partnerships at the regional and global level to protect critical dryland ecosystems.

Igor Kachanovsky, Deputy Minister, National Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus, discussed national policy initiatives on SLM, highlighting integrated approaches to agricultural and industrial development, and support for SLM and sharing of best practices.

Mudiyansele Uthpala Dayananda Basnayake, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy, Sri Lanka, said additional research and development is critical for SLM, and called on the UNCCD Secretariat to help mobilize innovative financing.

Ambassador Carlos Manuel Rojas Lago, Ministry of Agricultural Affairs, Cuba, highlighted national efforts to integrate SLM-relevant policies and legislation, and noted the potential of the Latin American Initiative on Science and Technology to promote regional cooperation in applied sciences for SLM.

Responding to presentations, Franklin Moore, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), underscored the paradigm shift in international support for drylands from humanitarian assistance to strengthening capacity for resilience. Describing national policy-making as “the place where bottom-up and top-down meet,” he stressed the value of “codifying” good practices, such as farmer-managed regeneration in the Sahel, but warned that for extremely poor farmers’ initial financial support may be needed to encourage investments in SLM and innovation.

During discussions, MALI suggested a three-pronged approach, including dissemination of successful practices, addressing contradictions between customary and modern law, and nurturing development of products suitable to all.

SWAZILAND said food security is the common denominator across the Rio Conventions, and urged an integrated approach in moving forward. UZBEKISTAN, highlighting the loss of productive land through the Aral Sea disaster, called for support of regional approaches, and warned that, with the exorbitant cost of reclamation, prevention is crucial.

SWITZERLAND urged rapid analysis and dissemination of best SLM practices using existing knowledge platforms such as WOCAT, and called for building the SKBP by incorporating existing content repositories to provide access for UNCCD stakeholders to various types of knowledge on DLDD. EGYPT emphasized the need for supporting farmers as stakeholders in the chain of ecosystem services provision, not merely as food producers.

#### ROUND TABLE III: ECONOMICS OF DESERTIFICATION, LAND DEGRADATION AND RESTORATION:

Onno Adalbert Hückmann, Ambassador of Germany to Namibia, and Lahcene Kaid-Slimane, Ambassador of Algeria to Namibia, co-chaired this session. Hückmann introduced the session and the international Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) initiative.

Keynote speaker and Moderator Richard Thomas, ELD scientific coordinator, UN University, presented the initiative’s findings. He said recommendations included: establishing Payment for Ecosystems Services (PES) schemes; encouraging voluntary payments for conservation; creating micro-finance schemes; establishment of research, policy and stakeholder platforms; and improving data availability through education, communication and collaborations.

In her keynote speech, Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson, GEF, lamented that most experts and international organizations are still working in silos. She noted that land is the meeting point for environmental issues, and said the GEF wants to work together with the UNCCD to catalyze action and break down silos.

Maria Teresa Kralikas, Minister for General Direction of Environmental Matters, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Argentina, drew attention to the heavy social and ecosystem services costs of DLDD. She said development of value-added products for smallholders has been policy-driven in the case of Argentina, via the dissemination of best practices. She concluded that purely profit-oriented firms operating in drylands will not achieve true SLM without government intervention.

Jean-Pierre Thebault, Ambassador for the Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, urged breaking silos, including among conventions, mind-sets, and governmental departments, and applauded the proposed establishment of a SPI. He urged responsible housekeeping, avoiding debates



of principle that prevent effective mobilization under the Convention, and addressing questions such as indicators development.

Respondent Michael Mack, WBCSD and CEO, Syngenta, noted that subsistence farmers are “small businesses-in-waiting.” Welcoming the ELD report, he said its focus on fact-based analysis would contribute to more cost-benefit assessments of land degradation, which is a prerequisite for sound agronomy and policy-making.

CHINA highlighted opportunities for improving livelihoods and increasing wealth in his country through controlling desertification, and elaborated on some methods used. ZIMBABWE recalled achievements of the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in using participatory community involvement to improve SLM. ZAMBIA noted the UNCCD’s role in facilitating assistance to national focal points on ELD analyses. MOROCCO emphasized taking time and space into account when determining costs of rehabilitation and reclamation. INDIA, citing the extent of land degradation in his country, discussed the complexity of land tenure and its role in land rehabilitation.

Underlining the gravity of land degradation, ETHIOPIA, NIGER and ALGERIA, stressed that developing countries’ limited resources impose a responsibility on the international community to provide support through Conventions such as the UNCCD. The PHILIPPINES and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA emphasized global partnerships to create awareness, with the latter citing urbanization and alternative land uses as major drivers of land degradation.

#### FINAL DISCUSSION BY MINISTERS ON THE WAY

**FORWARD:** COP 11 President Herunga opened the final session of the High-Level Segment. Hanifi Avci, General Director, General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion, Ministry of Forests and Water Affairs, Turkey, presented his country’s national level activities and involvement in the UNCCD, and announced Turkey’s offer to host COP 12 in 2015.

Monique Barbut, incoming UNCCD Executive Secretary, called the UNCCD a key instrument for achieving sustainable development. She expressed support for synergies between conventions and said she would ensure the UNCCD’s indicators work together with those found in other Rio Conventions.

SUDAN, TIMOR-LESTE, INDONESIA and OMAN indicated the need for technology transfer and capacity building to, *inter alia*, raise political and public awareness on the impacts of DLDD. VIET NAM explained that, although successful re-greening programmes have begun in Viet Nam, his country is still searching for methods to improve local livelihoods.

EGYPT said his country is 96% desert, and urged translation of COP decisions into concrete actions and progress, and holding parties accountable for action or inaction. IRAQ and BANGLADESH described challenges in lowering salinity of soils. IRAQ further explained that, over the next 20 years, it may have to abandon some agricultural land due to a dearth of water.

MALAWI requested the UNCCD’s support for: developing monitoring and evaluation methodologies; identifying key drivers of, and quantifying the economic impact of DLDD; and identifying best practices. The PHILIPPINES said conservation, protection and rehabilitation programmes are needed to ensure livelihoods and SLM. KENYA explained his country’s policy framework to address DLDD. BRAZIL drew attention to the low cost of many best practices.

FAO highlighted its contributions to the UNCCD and declared FAO would consider hosting the GM if this were welcomed by parties and the Secretariat.

ENDA, for CSOs, said States are essential stakeholders in scaling up efforts, and a responsible private sector will also be critical. Zenab for Women in Development, Sudan, for

CSOs, said Parties should focus on drivers of land degradation, including discussing the mining industry, deforestation and large scale agriculture. She urged that the UNCCD only engage with businesses committed to sustainable livelihoods and healthy ecosystems.

SLM Business Forum Chair David Nuyoma outlined the Forum’s Declaration, which included commitments to: participate in the implementation of the Convention and Strategy; monitor, measure and communicate impacts of business activities on land; and incorporate SLM into business operations.

Concluding the session, COP President Herunga summarized discussions from the roundtables and highlighted that the Convention should, *inter alia*: continue enhancing the implementation of the Convention in line with the Strategy; emphasize recognition of land and soil as foundation of the food-security and poverty-reduction nexus and thus provide impetus for countries to mobilize resources and scale up SLM; and shift from a reactive to a more proactive stance to involve prevention and planning at national level.

Executive Secretary Gnacadjia assured delegates that the outcome of the High-Level Segment would be presented to the COP for its consideration. Noting the Convention’s relevance for people living in drylands, he said this COP will be remembered for welcoming a farmer to give a keynote address at a high-level event.

#### CONTACT GROUPS

In the COW contact group on non-budget matters, which addressed the communication strategy and follow-up to Rio+20 outcomes, parties debated DLDD and LDNW terminology, and the UNCCD’s mandate regarding the Rio+20 outcomes. Discussions were deferred to bilateral consultations.

The CRIC contact group made progress in draft decisions on: strengthening relationships with other conventions and organizations; additional procedures or mechanisms to assist the COP in reviewing implementation; and assessment of the implementation of the Convention against the Strategy. Delegates discussed, *inter alia*: increasing access to existing data bases; appropriateness of references to the GEF and to the Global Drylands report; and best options to move forward with reporting procedures. In the evening, the group worked on a modified draft decision on the iterative process relating to the assessment of implementation, including performance and impact indicators, methodology and the reporting procedures.

#### IN THE CORRIDORS

As the second SLM Business Forum came to an end on the sidelines of COP 11, many conversations in the corridors focused on topics related to the increasing involvement of the private sector in the UNCCD. While some highlighted the value of developing private-public partnerships and were pleased that a number of private sector actors were attending their first UNCCD COP, including the WBCSD, others expressed concern that, just as the Convention has launched itself on a track to promote evidence-based policy and practice, the same standard may not be applied to all new partnerships. NGOs questioned whether the private sector would be expected to submit reports to the UNCCD in the same way that they have, and they recognized that their role as watchdogs for the Convention had been re-invigorated. Meanwhile, scrutiny of the possibilities and implications of the Soil Leadership Academy, which was launched on Tuesday by the UNCCD in partnership with the private sector, including WBCSD and “seed-funding” by Syngenta, was briefly put aside as delegates and local staff alike scurried to view a rain shower in drought-stricken Namibia.