

Conclusions of the First Session of the Working Group: Measures to Accelerate the Implementation of CCD

The participants of the Working Group on measures to be taken at the national level to foster the implementation of the CCD in Asia reached the following conclusions:

1. Designing, formulation and preparation of the National Action Programmes (NAP) should be undertaken in an iterative, decentralized and integrated manner with the national strategic frameworks and priorities adopted by the countries. Emphasis should also be put on sustaining a medium to long term process. To this effect the programming capacity of the national focal points and their staff should be built up.
2. Consistent with the countries efforts in preparing the NAPs, the designation of National Focal Points should insure an appropriate level of seniority to facilitate inter-ministerial coordination. This process will assist coordination in the implementation of the NAP as the focal points will have oversight functions at the national level.
3. The NAPs should fully reflect a comprehensive consultative process involving local communities and other major stakeholders of the civil society. Partnership building between affected developing countries and developed countries are an important element to meet the objectives of the NAPs and must therefore be integrated in its ongoing formulation.
4. The United Nations bodies and institutions should, at the request of affected countries, play a catalytic role with donor institutions or countries in mobilizing funds for the NAP process. The international donor community is also urged to support the promotion of the NAP and provide adequate funding to assist the delivery of programmes at the grassroots level.
5. Where ever feasible, bilateral agencies or international organizations like FAO, IFAD, UNEP and UNDP/UNSO, are requested to support activities in capacity building such as training, workshops, technical advisory services or strengthening of local programming capacities, which will enhance the sustainability of local areas development programmes.
6. United bodies and institutions particularly UNEP, UNDP, FAO and WMO must continues to provide their decided support to the efforts of the affected developing countries in combatting desertification at all levels.
7. Within the context of the NAP preparation process, efforts for awareness raising and sensitization measures for key stakeholders and major partners should be continuously pursued. This effort would encourage maximum participation from the communities in affected areas and elicit a broad based national contribution in combating

desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

8. Relationships with current sub-regional, regional or global programmes dealing with desertification issues should be encouraged to strengthen the coherence of the NAP formulation process.

Conclusions of the Second Session of the Working Group: Framework for Regional Cooperation in Asia on the Implementation of CCD

The participants of Working Group 2 expressed their commitment to regional cooperation and took note of the draft background paper on the elements for a Regional Action Programme to implement the CCD in Asia. They reached the following conclusion concerning the first steps of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme.

1. Taking into account the geographic vastness and socio-economic diversity of the region, initiatives must be taken by various institutions that have an established track record in the implementation of activities for combating desertification in Asia. In this context participating countries which have not yet done so are invited to provide additional information for completing the Directory of Existing Institutions Dealing with Desertification in Asia. These institutions should also provide linkages for enhancing collaboration at the national and sub-regional levels.

2. The participants accepted the Thematic Programme Areas proposed in the Background Paper as the initial areas for promoting regional collaboration. Networks shall be built gradually with the involvement of the competent institutions in the region. The Thematic Areas are the following:

Thematic Programme Area 1: Desertification Monitoring and Assessment

Thematic Programme Area 2: Agro-Forestry and Soil Conservation in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas

Thematic Programme Area 3: Rangeland Management in Arid Areas including the fixation of Shifting Sand Dunes

Thematic Programme Area 4: Water Resources Management for Agriculture in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas

Thematic Programme Area 5: Strengthening Capacities for Drought Impact mitigating and Desertification Combating

Thematic Programme Area 6: Assistance for the Implementation of Integrated Local

Area Development programmes (LADPs) Initiatives

3. The thematic networks will develop their regional support programmes taking into account the perceived need and priorities of countries in the region and the cross cutting elements identified in the New Delhi Regional Conference:

- a) Science, technology and technical cooperation;
- b) Public participation and consensus building;
- c) Education curricula promotion and awareness raising;
- d) Capacity and institution building;
- e) Regional cooperation on land degradation across different climatic sub-regions;
- f) Research on the enabling macro-policy framework

4. An Experts Group should be set up to review the approach for the development of the Thematic Programme Networks which are the constituting elements of the Asian Regional Action Programme. The Terms of Reference of the Expert Group will include, inter alia: review of the complementarity, scope and coverage of the thematic areas; operational aspects of the establishment and management of the networks; procedure for membership in the thematic networks; identification of the respective task managers of the networks; resource mobilisation for the regional cooperation process.

5. Informal consultations between the countries of the region should prepare a consensus on hosting options for the networks. These consultations would facilitate the task of the Expert Group in identifying task managers which could be a national institution or an intergovernmental institution located in the country.

6. International Organisations, particularly the international and regional financing institutions such as IFAD, the World Bank, the ADB or the EBRD are invited to lend their financial and technical support to the preparation and implementation of the Regional Action programme.

7. Options for institutional mechanisms to support the regional cooperation process such as the setting up of a steering committee, the establishment of a back-up facility or consultative fora to review progress of the Regional Action Programme will be considered on the basis of the needs and requests from countries and institutions participating in the thematic networks.

8. The Thematic Networks shall establish operational linkages with the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of Parties of the CCD, that is, the permanent Secretariat, the Global Mechanism, the Committee on Science and Technology in order to insure consistency in the implementation process of the Convention.