

Drawing on civil society knowledge and practice to substantiate increased investment in sustainable land management

What?

The GM is scaling up its engagement with civil society groups and organizations at global level and in the context of long term country support to mobilize knowledge, human, instrumental and financial resources for UNCCD implementation. Recognising the challenges and opportunities associated with commitments to harmonize development aid and increasingly coordinate and upstream delivery mechanisms such as programme-based and budgetary support, the GM is facilitating the participation of civil society organizations in processes and partnerships which aim to increase financing for Sustainable Land Management (SLM).

The GM works with ministries and agencies, development organizations, NGOs, research institutions, think-tanks and networks, promoting communities' and civil society organizations' role as development agents for SLM and developing partnerships with a view to:

- integrating UNCCD issues and SLM into country development strategies and planning processes
- exploring effective approaches and techniques for SLM in degraded and dryland landscapes
- deepening understanding of the enabling conditions and incentives for communities to participate and invest in SLM

Why?

Communities in rural dryland areas depend on the integrity of the land and its services for their livelihoods. Their well-being and security is directly affected by the decreasing productivity of cropland, range, forest and woodland that make up their immediate environment. Accordingly, farmers, herders, producers, and their associations are well-placed to appreciate the social, political and economic dynamics that drive land degradation and the enabling conditions and incentives that lead to investment by communities in SLM.

Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups make significant contributions to UNCCD implementation and the sustainable development of dryland areas, by working with local populations on solutions to address environmental degradation, enhance communities' livelihoods and develop integrated approaches and programmes adapted to economic, social and political conditions. Rooted in a participatory approach, the UNCCD specifically calls on public and private stakeholders to draw on communities' knowledge and practice to contribute towards integrated and cross-sectoral planning and decision-making.

Governments increasingly recognize the need to address natural resource issues through an integrated and participatory approach. Country-led processes for poverty reduction, as well as trends towards domestic ownership, accountability and decentralized governance, present opportunities for civil society organisations to engage in UNCCD relevant policy processes, mobilize and effectively participate in promoting and implementing the UNCCD.

How?

At national level, in its long-term intervention countries, the GM will build partnerships and support targeted capacity-building activities that enhance country programmes to mainstream and finance UNCCD implementation. The GM seeks to broaden the UNCCD constituency to include a range of civil society organisations working on rural development and dryland issues and explore the role they play within institutions and policy processes relevant to the UNCCD. In collaboration with partners, the GM will promote initiatives through which organizations and networks advocate for increased investment in SLM by government and development agencies, and provide solutions through integrated projects and programmes.

At global level, the focus is on raising awareness of land resources as valuable assets and services, understanding the links between ecosystem integrity and human well-being, and promoting integrated approaches and tools that provide incentives for communities to invest in preventing or reversing land degradation in dryland or degraded areas. Partners include a range of civil society organizations - in particular conservation groups and development NGOs working on rural poverty reduction, livelihood, and pro-poor trade issues.

The knowledge generated will be used to inform UNCCD related policy processes at all levels, including the UNCCD 10 Year Strategy and the Commission for Sustainable Development's Programme of Work, as well as implementation of other multilateral environmental agreements.

At community level, the GM supports initiatives which work with local populations and community-based organizations to build evidence on approaches and techniques for local investment in sustainable land management.

A partnership has been established with the GEF Small Grants Programme within the Land Degradation Focal Area, to support projects which promote community investment in sustainable natural resource management through trade in natural products and payment for environmental service schemes. The GM is also working with Conservation International on a methodology to develop Compensation for Ecosystem Services schemes under the UNCCD framework.

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