

Empowering women to implement the UNCCD

What?

The Gender Programme was conceived following a request from women delegates and NGOs from several Francophone African countries, voicing the need to support women's economic and social activities in the fight against desertification. The Programme also responds to the GM's mandate which calls for investment in new approaches to resource mobilization for sustainable land management (SLM) financing, in line with affected countries' specific needs and with the new financial architecture, as expressed in the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness.

Why?

In many arid regions, women traditionally allocate most of their time and energy to land. Because of their numerous responsibilities within the household, women are closely associated with natural resources such as forest products and water. Their pivotal role in managing natural resources must therefore be promoted and supported.

This Programme aims to generate better understanding of women's role in natural resource management in general, and in SLM in particular. It focuses on land tenure issues, with the aim of developing an action programme targeting improved access to land and other productive resources - such as water and energy, financing, markets and trade - for women living in arid rural areas.

How?

Through partnership-building, awareness-raising and dialogue, and under the Programme's five thematic priorities:

- water management & access
- land access & tenure
- market access & access to financing
- renewable & alternative energy
- capacity building for rural women.

The Programme aims to:

- set up a platform for the exchange of experiences, in order to foster knowledge management on how women contribute to natural resource management and SLM
- mobilize women opinion leaders from the South and the North to raise awareness about women's key roles in dryland management
- explore the potential for increasing investment in sustainable development activities managed by women, and thus financial flows for UNCCD implementation.

Partners

The programme has been launched in close collaboration with SolArid – the GM's South-to-south Cooperation Programme and the West and Central Africa Programme. As it moves forward, the Gender Programme will collaborate increasingly with GM Civil Society and Market Access & Trade Programmes, to integrate gender concerns into activities in the GM's long-term intervention countries. In so doing, the GM will work with ministries, NGOs, research institutions and international organizations.

Work in progress

The Gender Programme was launched in February 2007, through an electronic forum, involving some of its long-standing partners in Francophone Africa. These partners include regional and international NGOs, research institutions, and ministries as well as international organisations. This e-forum is the first step of the Programme which will be followed by an international workshop, planned for 2007, on promoting women's role in decision-making processes.

Expected outcomes

The Programme is expected to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for SLM of arid lands in the participating countries and that the workshop will contribute to the formulation of an action plan for the GM and its partners' future interventions in support of women.

While special focus is on Francophone African countries in the first instance, the GM intends to widen its actions to include other regions.

For more information:

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