



UGANDA

CONTEXT

Uganda, a land-locked East African country, ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in June 1997. Only 7% of the country is semi-arid or arid and soils are generally fertile. Water and other natural resources are abundant. Rainfall is bi-modal and averages 1 000-2 000 mm a year in more than 90% of the country.

Nevertheless, land degradation is widespread, especially in the semi-arid and arid zones commonly referred to as the Cattle Corridor. Used mainly for livestock production, the Corridor is the focus for UNCCD implementation. There are five major land degradation/desertification hotspots in Uganda: the southwestern highlands, the Lake Victoria crescent region, the northwestern region, the eastern highlands, and the southwestern portion of the Cattle Corridor.

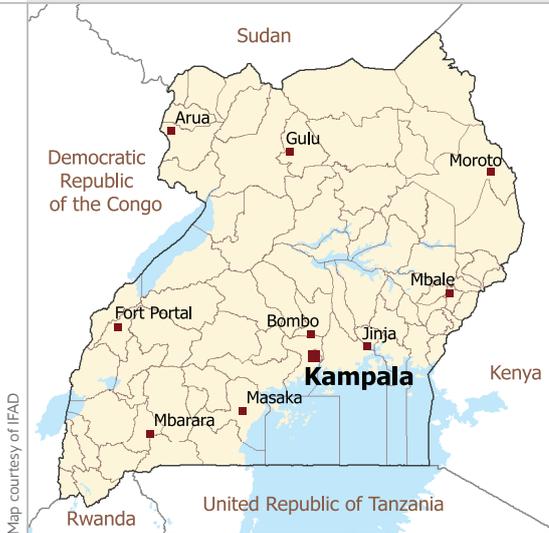
The main consequences of land degradation and desertification in Uganda include soil nutrient depletion, leading to a loss of soil fertility and productivity; habitat degradation that is threatening the survival of some rare biodiversity, including the mountain gorilla; and loss of forest cover, which accounted for more than 25% of national forest stock between 1990 and 2005. These losses have significant economic and social repercussions on Ugandans.

CHALLENGES

There are several causes of land degradation and desertification in Uganda. Rapid population growth, slow urbanization and the slow transformation of a largely agrarian economy into an industrial one are some of the main ones. The growing rural population has few alternative forms of livelihood and focuses on crop cultivation and livestock rearing. Arable land availability of less than 1 ha per capita and the lack of farm intensification have resulted in massive and unregulated conversion of forest lands to agriculture. This, combined with the harvesting of wood to meet household energy needs, is causing large-scale deforestation. Bush burning, overgrazing and high incidences of poverty are other causes of land degradation and desertification.

The government is committed to addressing land degradation and desertification concerns. In 1999, under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (the UNCCD Focal Point institution), the government formulated a National Action Programme (NAP) to combat desertification. Implementation of the NAP was uncoordinated, however, and remained the responsibility of the Focal Point with support from only a few development partners, notably the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Mechanism (GM). The GM supported NAP mainstreaming into the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), while UNDP supported its mainstreaming at the local government level.

However, the government and development partners recognize that land degradation is a major development issue, especially because of the constraints it places on economic growth and environmental sustainability. Several of Uganda's current policies, development strategies and investment plans systematically integrate sustainable land management (SLM) into their objectives and central pillars. Nonetheless, public expenditure for SLM and other corrective measures for land degradation is extremely low, as a recent study by the World Bank revealed. Development partners provide most funds for SLM (about 83% of the total during 2001-2005), but disbursement of SLM expenditure is low (at only 42% of that planned for the same period). The low SLM expenditure was relatively well targeted to land degradation hotspots, however, and was used to finance public goods such as capacity building, creating an enabling environment, and research.



Map courtesy of IFAD

Surface area (thousand km ²):	241.0
Total population (million):	29.8
Population density (people per km ²):	122.8
Population living below national poverty line (%):	31.0
Forest area (thousand km ²):	40.6
Agricultural land (% of land surface):	62.3
Per capita gross national product (GDP) (USD):	300.0
GDP growth (annual %):	7.7
External debt (current USD million):	3,497.0
Foreign direct investment (current USD million):	161.0
Official development assistance (ODA) and official aid (current USD million):	817.0
UNCCD ratification (year):	1997

 The Global Mechanism (GM) was established under Article 21 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and began its operations in October 1997. The GM is defined as an organizational entity mandated "to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms... [and]... to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources to affected developing country Parties."

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COMMON OBJECTIVES

The Government of Uganda and the GM have collaborated on UNCCD implementation since 2003. The GM's financial and technical contributions to the government for NAP implementation have resulted in the following outcomes: i) NAP mainstreaming into the PEAP; ii) development of a rangeland policy to govern the sustainable use of the country's rangeland resources; and (iii) development of a pastoral code to regulate rangeland use. In addition to the NAP, the land degradation problem is addressed by several key government programmes, including: the Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA); the National Environment Action Plan (NEAP); the Environment and Natural Resources Sector Investment Plan (ENR/SIP); and the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). However, these are largely implemented in a piecemeal and uncoordinated manner.

On the basis of these and other government achievements for NAP implementation, the TerrAfrica Initiative selected Uganda as one of four countries to pilot its approach for upscaling investments in SLM in a coordinated manner, in order to provide a comprehensive response to the land degradation problem. With support from TerrAfrica partners, notably the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat, the World Bank, the GM, UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the government is preparing a ten-year Country Strategic Investment Framework (CSIF) under the leadership of an inter-ministerial technical committee. The CSIF identifies areas needing attention in order to promote SLM in Uganda, sets priorities, proposes appropriate interventions, and identifies roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. Current GM support to Uganda is organized within the framework of the TerrAfrica CSIF.

WHERE DO WE STAND ON IMPLEMENTATION?

The government and the GM have agreed on areas for GM support over the next three years. This agreement was reached following three GM programme identification missions to Uganda between February and August 2008, to consult with government officials, development partners and civil society organizations working on SLM and other issues connected with poverty eradication in the country.

The country programme currently under formulation focuses on resource mobilization and has the overall objective of triggering investments in SLM. Through the programme, the GM will support the government in developing an Integrated Financing Strategy (IFS) for the CSIF and in other goals related to the UNCCD. The IFS will guide the mobilization of financial resources through a multi-source approach. It will therefore target both budget (official development assistance [ODA] and domestic revenue) and non-budgetary resources, including emerging opportunities such as carbon/climate-related funds, emerging donors, private capital, and trade and market opportunities, especially for dryland products. As part of country programme development, a GM consultant is assisting the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry in mainstreaming SLM into relevant trade initiatives, with the goal of generating market incentives and mechanisms for SLM.

The country programme will also seek to strengthen and broaden partnerships, including through stimulating the interest of key stakeholders in the business community in contributing to investment in SLM and in building national-level capacity to facilitate resource mobilization during CSIF implementation. Finally, the programme will generate and manage knowledge on SLM financing, including through establishing a database of resource allocation trends, investment capital and best practices in resource mobilization for SLM (and the CSIF).

NEXT STEPS

Formulation of the country programme will be completed by December 2008, following which it will be discussed with stakeholders in Uganda during the first quarter of 2009 for endorsement. A cooperation agreement will be signed with the government during the same period. It is expected that programme implementation will commence as soon as the cooperation agreement has been signed.

Map courtesy of IFAD



FOR MORE INFORMATION



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