

Partnership arrangements between donors and affected countries

The Convention to Combat Desertification aims to facilitate a long-term partnership for the sustainable development of vulnerable drylands ecosystem, and, to this effect, to improve the channelling and investment of official development aid

The Convention considers that its consensus approach enhances policy coherence and a more effective delivery of development aid. Developed country Parties are invited to make full use of this multilateral instrument whose potential can only be realized with their active involvement. Affected country Parties continue to review and enhance the regime of governance of natural resources in order to get maximum benefit from the limited assistance available.

The Convention builds upon the lessons of the past and expresses an international consensus for an integrated framework of action

Over the years, a great deal of insight has been gained into how to improve the process of development aid aimed at the more marginal ecosystems and lower income groups. For

example, it is generally agreed that many past aid efforts suffered because they were “supply driven” by the financing agency, handled top-down by planners, or delivered without adequate coordination at all levels. These insights are recognized in the Convention.

Partnership agreements are an essential requirement for the implementation of the Convention

As a vital part of the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa, these agreements spell out explicitly the role of each partner, including donor agencies and governments, recipient governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in the implementation of the Convention in a given country. This should help to harmonize efforts and maximize the impact of assistance. Partnership agreements should be part of, or associated with, national action programmes. They could be used for many different purposes, such as mobilizing financial resources, reorienting assistance mechanisms to fit the Convention’s approach, making inventories of funding sources, or developing new models for technological cooperation.

Similar calls for coordination mechanisms are contained in all regional implementation annexes.

The consultative process aiming at the conclusion of partnership agreements is a defining moment in the implementation process for the affected country

Under the Convention, the consultations for concluding partnership agreements are initiated and managed by the recipient country in order to move from programme planning to operations. The government invites its partners to join a coordinating body, which would act as a forum for consultations. It ensures the participation of policy makers from various branches of the government, including ministries and departments responsible for finance and planning, as well as community leaders, members of non-governmental organizations, and others responsible for the resulting activities. Participants in these partnership forums work together to evaluate past efforts, identify the country’s needs, and set priorities and responses, thus maximizing options for programme coherence and synergies. The participatory approach involving the inclusion of local communities and



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collectivities would strengthen a national consensus and respond to the policy objectives of international partners who favor a more direct transfer of resources to natural resources end-users.

The mechanism to link up the recipient country with international partners is thus at the core of the implementation dynamics

International partners would include bilateral aid agencies, regional development banks, and other international agencies. These partners would need to agree on a format, round table or otherwise, to suit national circumstances on a revolving basis, and to pay due attention to monitoring their commitments. The affected country Party would also wish to integrate combating desertification into national level poverty reduction strategies, and to present its case more systematically in bilateral negotiations, with donor partners.

The developed country Parties recognize on the whole the need to mainstream and coordinate their response

The donor partners must ensure that implementation of the UNCCD deserves due attention in their respective development policy approaches, and that it is reflected in their cooperation with the developing country partners. Their support must be channeled through a clearly identified mechanism for the Convention's implementation in order to ensure predictability of resources at the national and regional levels. The donor partners, particularly developed country governments, could also develop a consultation process among themselves to structure their dialogue with recipient governments. They may wish to identify bilateral chefs de file to coordinate their activities to combat desertification. This would help them to minimize overlaps and gaps, and to evaluate and respond to requests for assistance.

Non-governmental organizations are granted an unprecedented role in this process

NGOs tend to be well-organized, close to the community level, and able to draw on a pool of skilled and experienced people. The Convention recognizes

these strengths and makes specific provisions for NGOs to become active partners in these partnership arrangements.

The need for a breakthrough in mobilizing predictable financial resources

Partnership arrangements have been launched in only few countries and have not materialized in most others, because of coordination difficulties between the recipient national focal points and the relevant government bodies responsible for the allocation of development aid as well as a lack of past experience in such arrangements. More awareness raising and commitment among donor countries and a country-driven consultative process have been pointed out by Parties as being indispensable for a breakthrough in mobilizing substantial and predictable financial resources.

Relevant parts of the Convention

Articles 10 and 14, plus Regional Implementation Annex for Africa Articles 6, 8, 9, 18, and 19.

