

Adolf Kloke-Lesch, Director-General
German Federal Ministry for
Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Opening remarks

LAND DAY

Side event of „The Bonn Climate Change Talks” (01-12 June 2009)

Saturday, 6 June 2009

Gustav Stresemann Institut, Bonn, Germany

(Check against delivery)

Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary UNCCD,
Mr. Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary UNFCCC,
Excellencies,
dear participants

- Climate change threatens to destroy the efforts for and achievements of sustainable development in a wide range of areas and thus jeopardizes the achievement of the MDGs. If we do nothing to counteract global climate changes today, we risk burdening future generations with exploding costs.

- We need to act now and exploit all options to secure sustainable development. According to IPCC figures, agriculture and forestry account for more than 30% of global GHG emissions. We are convinced that there is a largely untapped mitigation potential in the sustainable management of land. The problem is too big to ignore those sectors and those partners and people deeply depending on these resources.
- Therefore, I am more than happy about the UNCCD Secretariats' initiative to take up the issue of Sustainable Land Management and its links to climate during the Bonn Climate Change Talks and to organize 'Land Day' here together with others.
- Your presence, Luc Gnacadja and Yvo de Boer, as well as that of all participants, prove that Climate Change and its links to Sustainable Land Management arouse increasing interest in the run up to Copenhagen.

I. Desertification und land degradation in the context of Climate Change

- When the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was approved in Paris in 1994, parties agreed that increasing land degradation was about to endanger sustainable development in more than 100 countries and that the prevention and restoration of land degradation was closely linked with improving peoples livelihoods.

- While land degradation was acknowledged as a challenge for sustainable development, its root causes, extent and severity were contested. In short: land degradation was considered to be a collection of local problems rather than a global issue – a global bad.
- Today, we realize that land degradation has become a global issue of common concern and that it is intrinsically related to climate change. It is, therefore, an important item on the Global Public Goods agenda.
- Land degradation contributes to climate change. Whereas the role of deforestation in climate change is uncontested among the climate community, the problem of land degradation is not yet sufficiently acknowledged.
- Land degradation is becoming cumulative. According to a recent *Global Land Degradation Assessment*, one quarter of the worldwide land area has been degrading over the past 25 years. Climate change adds to the other factors that are causing land degradation, and will further contribute to shrinking arable lands.
- Land degradation hampers achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and directly affects the livelihoods of 1.5 billion people. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) tells us that land degradation will reduce global food production markedly over the next 25 years causing food prices to rise and contributing to poverty. In addition, land degradation will make food production more vulnerable to climate variability.

II. Why invest in Sustainable Land Management: Co-Benefits for climate and economic development

- Investments in Sustainable Land Management are indispensable for combating poverty and hunger and they are profitable in many ways:
- **Climate protection:** Soils store three times as much carbon as vegetation. They are thus the biggest terrestrial carbon stock. Sustainable Land Management has significant potential to mitigate climate change, not only by afforestation and reducing deforestation. Soil carbon sequestration, through restoring organic soils and degraded lands, conservation agriculture and grassland management, can largely contribute to reducing emissions. The total global technical mitigation potential of Sustainable Land Management is estimated to account for more than half of greenhouse gas emissions in 2000 with a large share in Africa and developing Asia.
- **Forest protection:** Conversion and degradation of forests currently account for approximately 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable Land Management and increased yields in agriculture are mandatory for preventing deforestation and forest degradation. The recent example of Madagascar (where since the unconstitutional transfer of power on 17 March we have observed an escalation of illegal logging in and around protected areas) shows clearly how inseparable the promotion of sustainable development and governance are.

- **Cost-efficiency and co-benefits:** Investments in Sustainable Land Management and rural development pays off: *The World Development Report 2008* noted that a one dollar investment in agriculture and rural development generates a return of four dollars.

III. Sustainable Land Management and climate protection as parts of sustainable development

- Climate protection poses an array of new challenges. These cannot be tackled by stand-alone activities, but it will be necessary to, among other approaches, **mainstream activities into coherent sustainable development strategies**. Sustainable Land Management must be part of these strategies. Governments and civil society need support when defining their long term adaptation strategy as part of an overall sustainable development strategy. Here I see an important role for the UNCCD: to advise actors involved in formulating and implementing adaptation strategies from the perspective of Sustainable Land Management.
- During the last 10 years the MDGs and the Aid Effectiveness Agenda have deeply influenced development policy. There is a strong international move to strive for country-specific aid strategies and systems. Just last week the joint OECD environment and development ministers met in a high-level meeting to add their voice to this cause. UNFCCC and UNCCD should continue to join in this aim for country ownership, avoiding parallel Action Programs and contributing to joint

action whilst remaining closely aligned with national development strategies.

- Development policy is well positioned to support developing countries in implementing sustainable development. German development policy accommodates both the necessity to protect the environment, and the need to make sustainable use of environmental resources for social and economic wellbeing.
- Climate friendly sustainable development requires substantive financial resources:
 - This year German development cooperation will be making 1.1 billion Euros available for climate protection and adaptation. This is a substantial increase compared to 2008. Part of this new and additional ODA is financed by the revenues from the EU carbon trading scheme – the largest financial contribution to development cooperation from emission trading anywhere in the world. Parts of these resources are being invested to the benefit of Sustainable Land Management related adaptation and mitigation activities.
 - Achieving an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen requires the building of trust – in particular with respect to financing. Germany has committed to achieve the ODA targets of 0,51% in 2010 and 0,7% in 2015. We look forward to the reaffirmation of the global and individual ODA targets by all G8 countries and others in the international meetings to come.

- But this is not enough. The climate challenge is forcing us to look beyond 2015, to 2020 or 2030 or even 2050. That means we must also think beyond the goal of 0.7%. We need new and additional development finance to tackle the climate crisis in the context of promoting sustainable development.
- Developing countries are demanding, quite rightly, that the provision of financial resources made by the industrialised countries and – hopefully – also emerging economies, must be predictable and reliable over a longer period. This urges us to consider a global compact between industrialized and developing countries, to be considered in all aspects of the financing for sustainable development.

Conclusions:

- Climate change is one of the major - may be *the* major - global threats and a challenge for sustainable development. Land Management offers a cost-efficient contribution to climate protection and is mandatory for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and global food security.
- Climate change has the potential to counteract the achievements of development policy in a wide range of areas. Therefore, addressing the causes of climate change and supporting the efforts of particularly hard-hit, poor developing countries to adjust to climate change are essential tasks for development policy.

- Moreover, we are convinced that mobilizing and re-focusing the global economy towards investments, not only in clean technologies, but also in 'natural' infrastructure such as forests and soils are an essential contribution to sustainable development and combating climate change in the 21st century. We therefore support the initiative towards this Global Green New Deal in Copenhagen. Sustainable Land Management must become an integral part of climate protection strategies and the Global Green New Deal.
- *Land Day* offers a unique opportunity to better understand the chances and challenges of protecting land productivity under climate change and to integrate respective conclusions in our work in the run-up to Copenhagen.
- We reaffirm our insistent support to the UNCCD and its Secretariat in Bonn: Sustainable Land Management is high on the political agenda. Our commitment does not only translate into our regular and voluntary contributions to the UNCCD, but foremost into integrating Sustainable Land Management into development policies and programs in sectors such as agriculture, watershed management and decentralization.
- Last but not least: As you know, the city of Bonn is being developed as an important location for International Cooperation with special focus on sustainable development, climate change and renewable energy. I hope that the next time we have the pleasure to meet, we can do this in the new **World Conference Center Bonn** at the United Nation Campus.