



Luis Alberto Moreno
President of the Inter American Development Bank
1300 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. USA 20577

20th of November 2007

Dear Mr. Moreno,

The Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has the pleasure to advise the Inter American Development Bank on the Sub-regional Action Plan to combat desertification and the effects of drought in the Mesoamerican countries and Dominican Republic (SRAP Mesoamerica).

Mesoamerican and Caribbean countries are increasingly affected by land degradation and drought, resulting in diminished land productivity and income of populations in marginal rural areas. The major cause of land degradation is unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation and inadequate land management practices followed by diverse factors as steep slopes as well as intense rainfall and droughts, making land degradation the main cause of the loss of agricultural potentials and sustainable livelihoods in affected vulnerable communities.

The Mesoamerican countries underscore a need and merit for strengthening cooperation with a view to promote sustainable land use and ecosystem management in the sub-region to address desertification and drought phenomena while eradicating poverty. The need for developing a sub-regional action programme (SRAP) to Combat Desertification and Drought in Mesoamerica has been pointed out in a number of occasions during regional meetings and other international conferences related to the convention. In additional consultations carried out recently during the eighth Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD (Madrid, September 2007) Mesoamerican countries considered the SRAP to be supportive of the ongoing process of implementing national policies on sustainable land management through the National Action Programmes (NAPs) to Combat Desertification and Drought, already approved in all countries, as well as the thematic programme networks of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Action Programme (RAP) under the framework of the convention.

To this aim, the UNCCD Focal Points from Mesoamerica and Dominican Republic, supported by the NGOs active in this area and with the facilitation of IICA, the Global Mechanism and the UNCCD Secretariat among others, have joined efforts to achieve



targets on sustainable livelihoods for the communities affected by desertification and drought in the sub-region through sustainable land management, transfer of technology and capacity building, in line with the NAPs, the RAP, the Regional Agro environmental Strategy (ERA) the strategies and policies of poverty reduction and other strategic frameworks supported by the Central American Committee on Development and Environment (CCAD).

The countries of the sub-region have developed a concept on the SRAP and also have prepared a formal request for this support, both of which are included herewith for your consideration.

The participation of the IDB through a non-reimbursable technical assistance or another mechanism you consider appropriate is essential to undertake this initiative to reverse the trends of exacerbated land degradation and drought impacts and improving soil resilience and fertility while eradicating poverty and improving sustainable livelihoods of rural communities in the sub-region. I also attach the contacts of the Focal Points to the UNCCD in the participating countries.

Yours sincerely,

Luc Gnacadja
Executive Secretary