



Republic of South Sudan

“Governmental high-level note of measures to achieve the national LDN targets”

**UNCCD National Focal Point
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1. Introduction

South Sudan is a landlocked country with a total surface area of about 624,929.2 km² (LDN TS Technical Guide 2016), and a variety of topographic features comprising mainly the highlands and low or flatlands (van Noordwijk 1984). It has high levels of poverty, requires external assistance, politically unstable and relies heavily on natural resources for livelihood. Land and all that it contains, is a key natural resource supporting the national economy by generating the bulk of the national income and employment. It provides ecosystem services to a large section of the population. About 80% of the population lives in rural areas, and depend on agriculture, forest products and fisheries for livelihood. Estimates on value addition by agriculture, forestry and fisheries accounted for 36% of non-oil GDP in 2010. However, due to widespread poverty, political instability and other environmental factors, land and other natural resources are being unwisely used thereby resulting in varied spatio-temporal degrees of land degradation, including deforestation, erosion, soil infertility and productivity decline.

Recognizing land degradation as a major hindrance to sustainable growth, and restoration of degraded lands as a critical element to promote equity, reduce poverty, improve net primary productivity and restore soil fertility, the Government of Republic of South Sudan (GoSS) signed on to the membership of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and adopted Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme as a means to fulfilling this mandate. Thus, the country took a centre stage. It defined its LDN baseline, voluntarily set its targets and developed transformative projects and programmes to achieve LDN by 2030 as required.





2. Brief narrative on the motivations for the government to commit to LDN

South Sudan is currently losing its vegetation cover and productivity as well as soil fertility threatening livelihoods of its people as well as the habitat of vulnerable wildlife such as elephants, chimpanzees and other species. Currently up to 2,776 km² of forests and other wooded land were being lost annually in South Sudan. In addition, 50 to 200 km from northern South Sudan has been transformed from a semi-desert to a desert environment (Republic of South Sudan 2015 and the desert is moving southwards. Besides, unwise and expanding agriculture coupled with burning of vegetation has resulted in degradation of soil and ecosystem services (African Development Bank (AfDB) Group 2013). Furthermore, all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are related to the target areas of the South Sudan's Strategic Plan namely sustainable development, democratic governance and peace building and climate and disaster resilience. This plan also covers the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) sector Policy (4), the main focus of which includes;

- Sensitization, consultation and pondering among stakeholders thereby advancing the process of commercialization and transformation of the sector.
- It involves strengthening of selected institutions, supporting the livestock, fisheries and forestry as well as wildlife conservation and protected area sub sectors.
- It covers enrichment of sustainable management of natural resources and protecting the environment, as well as strengthening capacities for disaster preparedness and management (GOSS 2007).
- In addition it enables issues pertaining to Neutrality (LDN) to be addressed through the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Working Group as outlined Land in the policy.





Restoration of degraded lands is an important approach to respond to the threats posed by deforestation and land degradation in South Sudan, and to enhance livelihoods, maintain wildlife habitats and increase agricultural productivity. Restoration of degraded lands is a long-term process that restores ecological functionality of degraded or deforested land to improve livelihoods of the present and future generation. Restoration of degraded lands requires more than just planting trees- or conducting outreach campaigns. It involves multiple stakeholders, and helps to address poverty; and above all it requires political will and commitment as well as soliciting of funds on the part of the government and its development partners including private sector.

3. Brief summary of the national LDN baseline, including the current status of land degradation, based on the LDN indicators

Examining progress in the achievement of the country's voluntary targets for the realization of LDN by 2030 necessitates the establishment of baselines to serve as reference for monitoring the performance of the LDN indicators. These indicators are; i) land cover; ii) land productivity [metric: net primary productivity (NPP)]; and (iii) carbon stocks below and above ground [metric: soil organic carbon (SOC)]. The establishment of the baselines was based on the change analysis in the indicator values over year 2001 and 2015, using UNCCD global default data (Land Productivity Dynamics) obtained from Joint Research Commission, Trends. Earth Land Productivity NDVI MODIS and the European Space Agency default Land Cover datasets for UNCCD reporting for period from 2000-2015. The analyses were done using QGIS 2.18.17.





3.1 Land degradation and land cover change in South Sudan

The analysis of Land Degradation in South Sudan shows that 27, 019 km² (4.32%) out of the country's 624, 919.2 km² was degraded, and 342, 763.7 km² (54.85%) has improved. Generally, most of the country's land cover 606,113.7 km² (96.99%) did not changed and only a small proportion 3,900.6 km² (0.62%) was degraded. However, when analyzed by land cover type, grasslands, other lands and wetlands experienced some losses but the rest showed a slight improvements.

3.2 South Sudan land productivity

Most of the country's land productivity (340,855.8 km², 54.54%) was categorized as productive and only (21,950.6 km², 3.5%) was referred to as degraded. Considered by cover type, all showed a range of net primary productivity (NPP) gains. However, the gains in areas covered by trees, grasslands and wetlands can be classified as degraded because they declined also in area, and this decline is a loss in terms of the animal species that depended on them.

3.3 Soil organic carbon

Concerning, the soil organic carbon stock, most of the country's stock of soil organic carbon (621,624.0 km², 99.4%) was still intact and only (2,194.4 km², 0.35%) was degraded.

When considered by cover type, tree-covered area, croplands and artificial areas showed gains in soil carbon stock, but grasslands, other lands and wetlands showed losses in soil organic carbon stock.





All taken together, the analyses showed that tree-covered areas, croplands and artificial areas made gains in net primary productivity (NNP) and soil organic carbon (SOC), and as such can be regarded as improved. However, grasslands, wetlands and other lands can be defined as degraded despite showing gains in net primary productivity (NNP).

3.4 Land degradation hot spots

Up to five different LDN hot spots of approximately 10.000 – 100.000 ha each occurring in different ecological zones, and subjected to different direct drivers of land degradation, were identified in South Sudan. However, further assessment in selected areas may be required to fully understand the past and contemporary drivers of observed land degradation dynamics. This can be done using additional indicators, and data sources, including ground truthing and consultation visits. Besides the detected LDN hotspots will be used for action to achieve LDN through LDN transformative projects.

4. Brief summary of the LDN targets set and associated measures identified, with proposed timeline

After defining the baseline, South Sudan voluntarily set her targets to achieve LDN by 2030. The targets show what South Sudan hopes to achieve in terms of combating land degradation and desertification. This will be done through formulation of a wide range of possible policy measures, and transformative projects and programmes. The LDN targets set for the Republic of South Sudan comprised LDN targets at national scale with the sub-national and hotspot levels targets. All LDN targets set across the different levels of government are measurable and in accordance with the LDN indicator framework endorsed at national and global levels. The proposed time horizon for the attainment of LDN targets is the year 2030. This is so as to align it





to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG target 15.3). The set LDN Targets were as follows;

➤ **LDN at the national scale**

- LDN is achieved by 2030 as compared to 2015 (no net loss)
- LDN is achieved by 2030 as compared to 2015 and an additional 10% of the national territory has improved (net gain)
- LDN is achieved by 2030 as compared to 2015

➤ **LDN at the sub-national scale (if applicable/done)**

- LDN is achieved in each of the former 10 states of South Sudan by 2030 as compared to 2015 (no net loss)
- LDN is achieved in the semi-arid areas, northern borders of South Sudan, and around main towns in South Sudan as well as on Dongotono, Didinga, and Imatong mountains by 2030 as compared to 2015 and an additional 25% of the territory has improved (net gain)

➤ **Specific targets to avoid, minimize and reverse land degradation**

- Improve productivity in 21, 950.6 km² and 2,194.4 km² SOC stocks in lands of South Sudan by 2030 as compared to 2015
- Rehabilitate 27,019.6 km² of degraded and abandoned land of South Sudan by 2030
- Halt the conversion of forests and wetlands to other land cover classes by 2030
- Increase forest cover by 20% by 2030 as compared to 2015
- Reduce the rate of soil sealing (conversion to artificial land cover) by 100% by 2030 as compared to 2015.





5. Outline of policy measures to integrate LDN into selected national priorities, such as sustainable development and poverty reduction

The Government of the republic of South Sudan has put in place a wide range of policy, institutional and legislative framework measures to manage land and environmental degradation and its consequences. These policy measures include but not limited to;

1. Passing and signing into law all the environment related bills.
2. Setting up of a number of bodies to govern natural resources management
3. Include environmental education in school curriculum.
4. Conduct outreach or awareness campaigns.
5. Review of existing legal frameworks.
6. Inclusion of LDN targets, and transformative projects and programmes into national policies or development plans.
7. Sufficient increase of Environmental Governance Capacity.
8. Expedite enforcement of Environmental Law.
9. Generate environmental data through investing in research.
10. Improve human resources capacity-building and the development of state-level legislation.

6. Call to other stakeholders, including the private sector, to contribute to the country efforts to achieve LDN

Land degradation is a serious and enormous problem that government widely recognized and as a Government it cannot tackle it alone. Consequently strong technical and financial support from both the government and international partners is required if the LDN target setting and implementation is going to succeed. The role of the civil society and the importance of enabling







all members of civil society to be actively engaged in sustainable development will be fundamental in LDN.

Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) offers a number of chances to mobilize climate financing, private investment and national budgetary resources. Government of the Republic of South Sudan will be engaging these funding sources including International and regional agencies, institutions or organizations such as Global Environment Facility (GEF), the African Development Bank (ADB), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Environment (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Green Climate Fund and the LDN Fund.

Endorse by



Hon. ...*Onyoti Adigo Nyilkwe*...

Minister of ...*Agriculture and Food Security,*...

