



Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and National Resources

Republic of The Gambia

Republic of The Gambia National Land Degradation Neutrality Targets

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**THE GLOBAL
MECHANISM**
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Introduction

The geographic location of The Gambia in the Sahel region of Africa makes it very vulnerable to drought, land degradation and desertification. The government has taken a number of steps to address these issues since the Sahelian drought of the 1970s. These include the preparation of the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification (NAP) in 2000 and the revision and alignment of the NAP to the ten-year UNCCD strategy in 2015. However, the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme (LDN TSP) provides a unique opportunity for the country to set voluntary national LDN targets in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other national and international commitments and engagements, to achieve a land degradation neutral world by 2030. The LDN targets set, have been translated into policy and technical measures to achieve LDN. Policy measures address indirect drivers of land degradation while technical measures address direct drivers of land degradation.

The high-level note reflects The Gambia's ambition for achieving LDN based on the national LDN targets defined and taking into account domestic circumstances and capabilities, and underline the country commitment to the LDN response hierarchy (avoid, reduce, reverse). The high-level note is ambitious, leading to transformative projects and policies; and transparent, so that stakeholders can track progress and ensure the country meets its stated targets.

Achieving LDN as a national priority

The Government of The Gambia is committed to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets set by World Leaders at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2015.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in Ankara, Turkey in October 2015, endorsed SDG target 15.3 and the concept of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) as a strong vehicle for driving the implementation of the Convention. As a party to the convention, The Gambia has expressed an interest in the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, and is fully committed to setting and achieving voluntary national LDN targets in line with its national and international obligations.

LDN Baseline

A review and interpretation of the default LDN TSP data indicated that forest cover in The Gambia, declined from 41 sq km in 2000 to 37 sq km in 2010, representing a decrease of 4 sq km. However, during the same period, shrubs, grasslands and sparsely vegetated areas increased from 1575 sq km to 1576 sq km, representing an increase of 1 sq km. Cropland also increased from 7308 sq km to 7310 sq km, representing an increase of 2 sq km. All land use categories except forest and bare land and other areas, show declining, early signs of decline and stable but stressed. Shrubs, grasslands and sparsely vegetated areas show 2.3% decline in productivity, croplands 15.7%, wetlands and water bodies 5.9% and artificial areas 36.7%.

Soil organic carbon is generally low in the country, ranging from 26.2 (ton/ha) in artificial areas to 43.6 (ton/ha) in wetlands and water bodies.

Gambia's LDN Targets and associated measures

In order to achieve LDN, the government has set national, sub-national and specific targets:

LDN at the national scale

- LDN is achieved by 2030 as compared to 2015 and an additional 10% of the national territory has improved (net gain)

LDN at the sub-national scale

- LDN is achieved in the West Coast Region of The Gambia by 2030 as compared to 2015 (no net loss)
- LDN is achieved in the Lower River Region of The Gambia by 2030 as compared to 2015 (no net loss)
- LDN is achieved in the Upper River Region of The Gambia by 2030 as compared to 2015 and an additional 5% of the provincial territory has improved (net gain)
- LDN is achieved in the North Bank Region of The Gambia by 2030 as compared to 2015 and an additional 20% of the provincial territory has improved (net gain)
- LDN is achieved in the Central River Region of The Gambia by 2030 as compared to 2015 and an additional 15% of the provincial territory has improved (net gain)
- LDN is achieved in the land degradation hotspots: Njaba Kunda (Central Baddibu), Ngain Sanjal (Sabah Sanjal) and Njau (Upper Saloum) by 2003 as compared to 2015 (no net loss).

Specific targets to avoid, minimize and reverse land degradation

- Improve productivity and SOC stocks by 50% in cropland and grasslands by 2030 as compared to 2015
- Rehabilitate 1099 sq km of degraded grassland and cropland with declining productivity and early signs of decline for crop production and forestry by 2030
- Halt the conversion of forests and wetlands to other land cover classes by 2025
- Increase forest cover by 10% by 2030 as compared to 2015

Leveraging LDN targets through the national sustainable development agenda

The following policy measures have been proposed to integrate LDN into selected national priorities:

- a) Integrate LDN in the national land policy currently being formulated.
- b) Integrate LDN in the Agriculture and Natural Resources policy currently being formulated.
- c) Include LDN in the National Development Plan (2018-2020) currently being developed by the government.
- d) Integrate LDN into issues addressed by the newly established Gambia National Think Tank.
- e) Integrate LDN in the next phase of The Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan (GNAIP).
- f) Include LDN issues in policy documents formulated by the government.

Joint bold action to achieve LDN

The government of The Gambia has taken steps to formulate policy and technical measures in order to achieve LDN by 2030. However, the active participation of all stakeholders is crucial to the achievement of LDN. All LDN stakeholders, such as the private sector, academic and research 2 organizations, civil society organizations, development partners, elected and other representatives, communication service providers, etc, are urged to contribute to the country's efforts to achieve LDN.

