



European Community

Support to African countries in implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (Report to the Third Conference of the Parties)

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1. Overview: EC- Africa relations

The European Community's relations with Africa have been governed over the past twenty four years by the Lomé Convention, a unique framework of multilateral co-operation with the African¹, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. The Convention provides the ACP states with predictability of aid through its financial instrument, the European Development Fund (EDF). Africa has had and will continue to have, as a result, opportunities for implementation of National Action Programmes (NAPs) within the framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The region, in addition, has access to two thematic budgetlines, "Tropical Forests and Environment in the Developing Countries," managed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Development (DG VIII). It also benefits from the research activities of INCO-DC (International Co-operation with Developing Countries), a sub-programme of the Framework Research Programme of the Directorate-General for Science, Research and Development (DG XII).

Desertification in Africa has been a major concern of the European Community since the great Sahel drought of the early 1970s. Indeed the Community became so concerned during the mid 1980s when a series of extreme droughts resulted in serious crop failures and heavy losses in livestock, that it launched, by Council Resolution of 17 April 1986, a special "Action Plan for the Protection of Natural Resources and Combating Desertification in Africa." Under this plan, 230 programmes were carried out throughout the continent between 1986 and 1989 at a cost of nearly €2 billion.

2. European Development Fund

There have been four Lomé Conventions since 1975. The first three, signed for a period of five years each, placed altogether €16 billion (95% in grants) at the disposal of the ACP states. Lomé III, in particular, placed strong emphasis on food security and food self-sufficiency with drought and desertification control specifically addressed within the agricultural policy provisions.

The fourth Convention- the current one - was signed in 1990 for ten years. Twelve billion euros were allocated under the 7th EDF for the implementation of the first part. The Convention was revised in 1995 (Lomé IV*bis*) with a number of innovations, most notably the provision for policy dialogue to take account of Community's development objectives of poverty alleviation, sustainable economic and social development, progressive integration into the world economy, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as outlined in the Maastricht Treaty. A new Protocol on the Sustainable Management of Forest Resources was also added. It gives "special priority to actions which support and encourage the efforts of ACP states and their organisations to preserve, re-establish and use sustainably their forestry resources, including the fight against desertification."

¹ This report covers mainly Sub Saharan Africa. The European Community relations with North African Mediterranean countries are governed by the association agreements signed between the EU and Magreb countries (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) and Mashrek countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria), Isreal, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. Between 1991-1996, the European Community provided nearly €2.4 bn in aid to the region on the bases of bilateral agreements. Areas covered included training in the fields of environmental protection and remote-sensing. In 1996, the European Community set up the MEDA programme for the region (details will be contained in the revised EC's report on desertification to be issued at the Fourth Conference of the Parties.)

Negotiations are currently underway for post-Lomé arrangements with the ACP states with a view to strengthening EU-ACP partnership through deeper political dialogue in an era of globalisation. Environmental protection will remain a major area of co-operation.

2.1 Programming of aid

The ACP states and the European Community follow a standard procedure for programming of aid. At the beginning of each Convention, each ACP draws up a National Indicative Programme (NIP) based on its priorities - focal areas for Community funding over the five-year period. It negotiates and receives a financial envelope for that purpose and signs the indicative programme with the European Commission. The same procedure applies to the six recognised regions within the ACP Group. Each produces a Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) to which a financial envelope is also allocated.

The period of execution of programmes and projects under NIPs and RIPs are flexible: it can extend beyond the five-year period. Indeed it depends on the country's or region's own aid absorption capacity. There are thus funds still available under past EDFs for a number of ACP (African) countries and regions.

2.2 Lomé IV bis.

Under Lomé IVbis (1995 to 2000) €14.6 billion have been placed at the disposal of the ACP states (€12.96 bn under the 8th EDF, 11.9 bn of which in grants), a 22% increase over the first period.

Lomé IVbis saw the introduction of a new concept in programming - the idea of a two-tranche allocation of funds to ensure greater flexibility in the use of resources and to encourage good performance in implementation. Countries were allocated 70% of their overall financial envelope in the first tranche. A second tranche is allocated after review, which must take place latest in the third year of implementation after the entry into force of the Financial Protocol or much earlier at the request of any country which has achieved 80% of its commitments.

2.3 Focal areas of National Indicative Programmes of African countries under Lomé IV bis

It is important to emphasise that, under of the provisions of the Lomé Convention, it is that the ACP states which establish their own priorities.

Under the revised Lomé IV Convention, the National Indicative Programmes of five Africa countries (Botswana, Malawi, Swaziland, Mauritania and Zimbabwe) and one Regional Indicative Programme (East Africa) stand out clearly in giving considerable importance to natural resource management and participatory approach to environmental protection. They reserve a reasonable percentage of funds to these broad categories in which programmes and projects against desertification can easily be undertaken. Others have focal areas that are less clearly targeted on the protection of natural resources but have rooms for relevant measures.

A selection of both categories of programmes are described briefly below:

Botswana: 33% of NIP (€ 12.54 m) to sustainable use and conservation of natural resources. Botswana has a national conservation strategy and a national policy on natural resources. It

committed itself to instigate a taxation system, during the National Development Plan period, and other measures for livestock to deal with the problem of overgrazing. **EC support** includes, among other things, studies on improved livestock management strategies to reduce pressure on community rangelands and savannah in general and institutional support to the Wildlife and National Parks Department. A certain amount of resources are being allocated to microprojects and decentralisation.

Malawi: 20% of NIP (€34.8 m) to promote sustainable and effective use of natural resources through appropriate agricultural and environmental policies and practices. Botswana's first priority is to accelerate agricultural and rural development to combat poverty through better management of natural resources, particularly soil and water, vegetation and land use. **EC support** includes assistance in the reform of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, strengthening of the Department of National Parks and Nature Reserves, rehabilitation of degraded areas with the participation of local communities.

Swaziland: 70% of NIP (€20.4 m) to agriculture and rural development. Swaziland is aimed at improving productivity and diversification of small holders so as to increase rural incomes and job opportunities and improve nutritional standards. It is paying particular attention to conservation and development of lands, pastures and water resources. **EC support** includes technical assistance and training to create a policy and institutional environment appropriate to sustainable agriculture.

Mauritania: 20% of NIP (€15 m) to rural sector and preservation of the environment. As well as aiming at increasing productivity and viability of economic activities and food production in rural areas and ensuring the preservation of the environment, Mauritania is committed to land law reforms and to nature reserve management by communities and populations. **EC support** includes land use planning and management by communities, pilot application of land law reorganisation and investment in village infrastructures such as dams and wells.

Zimbabwe: 33% of NIP (€36 m) to agriculture and natural resources. Zimbabwe is committed to implementing the National Conservation Strategy which aims at harmonising sustainable use of resources with economic and social development and at rehabilitating degraded resources. It is also committed to investigating the processes of degradation of the environment and soil erosion. **EC support** includes encouragement to agriculture and land reform and measures to improve the economic situation of small farmers and access to soil and water.

East Africa: 20% of Regional Indicative Programme (€38.8m) to Food Security and Conservation of Natural Resources and implementation of strategies adopted in COMESA, EAC and IGAD. **EC support** to reform of livestock services (ensuring a more co-ordinated approach to livestock development and marketing), to the use of remote-sensing for forecasting and environmental monitoring, managing of transboundary natural resources (such as water and pasture) and creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the CCD - education and public awareness of desertification issues, development of alternative sources of energy, etc.

Burkina Faso: 20% of NIP (€45 m) to rural development. Through the PASA (*programme d'ajustement sectoriel agricole*), which is supported by several donors, Burkina Faso aims at updating the agricultural growth strategy in the medium and long term and at defining a policy for rural credit. **EC support** to increased access to rural credit through the banking systems and decentralised networks, and assistance with the framework plan for the management of natural resources, particularly in the sectors of water and agroforestry.

Ethiopia: 9% of NIP (€26.46m) to food security or rural development with focus on agriculture. Ethiopia aims at increasing food production taking into account varying natural conditions, improving the capacity of regional and local administrations in the agricultural sector and implementing land tenure policies. *EC support* includes supply of agricultural inputs, development of an early warning system and food security.

Mali: 15-20% of NIP (€ 28-38m) to the agricultural sector and 20-25% (€ 37-47m) to decentralisation reforms.

Senegal: 32% of NIP (€44.8m) to boosting the private sector in agricultural production and export; 14% (€19.6m) shared by five non-focal areas, including regionalisation, fisheries and environment. These programmes are supporting Senegal's overall policy of diversification of agricultural production, greater food security, restructuring of agricultural credit, implementation of NEAP) National Environmental Action Plan (measures to combat desertification, soil recovery and use of appropriate cultivation techniques, etc). The country expects a number of activities under the NEAP to be undertaken in conjunction with the CILSS.

Southern Africa: 15% of RIP (€18.15m) to food, agriculture and natural resources. *EC support* to information systems, facilitation of regional trade, promotion of sustainable management of water resources and elaboration and implementation of conservation strategies and sustainable management of natural resources.

2.4 Non-focal NIPs

Although a number of countries did not indicate environment and agriculture as focal areas, their national indicative programmes contain measures in support of these sectors. For example, **Lesotho** reserves 20% of NIP (€12.3m) for agriculture, livestock, environment and economic reform. **West Africa**, reserves 15-20% of RIP for three non-focal areas - human resources, natural resources and protection of the environment.

The mid-term reviews of National and Regional Indicative Programmes for Lomé IVbis of some countries have already taken place, others are being carried out this summer for the allocation of the second tranche of the 8th EDF.

3. Budgetlines: tropical forests and environment in the developing countries

Tropical Forests and Environment in the Developing Countries are among other budgetlines set up at the instigation of the European Parliament. They are used mainly for the development of policies and strategies, promotion of pilot projects, funding of small-scale NGO projects or research studies.

One of the five priority areas of the environmental budgetlines concerns improving practices for the conservation of soils and farmland, management and protection of forests and fight against desertification. Between 1990-95, €20.6m were committed to desertification-related projects under both budgetlines, more than 50% of which in Africa. Details of these projects are contained in a report distributed by the European Community to delegates at the First Conference of the Parties in Rome in October 1997.

Between 1996-1998, DG VIII committed a total of €24.5m and €43.7m under Environment and Forests budgetlines respectively. Numerous anti-desertification activities continue to be

undertaken. Details will be contained in a revised report, which will be distributed at the Fourth Conference of the Parties in 2000.

4. Research activities within the framework of INCO -DC

Since 1994, DG XII has funded numerous research projects in agriculture and natural resources in ACP states to the tune of around €18m within the framework of INCO-DC. They include a variety of activities in Africa ranging from improved quality of sorghum and impact of land use policy on environment, demographic and socio-economic indicators in the savannahs in East Africa to methodologies and design criteria for soil and water resource management and policy formulation in southern Africa. It co-financed a workshop, which took place in Addis Ababa in November 1998, on strategies for sustainable development in the dryland areas of East Africa. DG XII plans to hold another workshop, in October 1999, in Sassari, Italy, on data and information requirements for interdisciplinary research into desertification. This workshop will concentrate on the Mediterranean Basin and on sub-Saharan Africa.

5. Implementation of National Action Programmes

As can be seen from the foregoing, the European Community funds a diverse range of programmes and projects against desertification in Africa as advocated under the UN CCD, whether through soil and water conservation, better agricultural and pastoral methods or reforestation to improve vegetation cover or replenish woodlands which have been over-exploited for fuel. It also funds activities which indirectly address desertification such as the promotion of alternative energies and the raising of awareness among local populations and officials. These activities are largely funded in Africa through the European Development Fund and thematic budgetlines. It is within this context that the European Community sees the implementation of National Action Programmes against desertification in Africa.

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