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Report on Sida's contribution to the implementation of the CCD during 1998/99.

An assessment made of Swedish development assistance to dryland areas during the past ten years showed that 101 projects had been supported in 17 countries, 13 of these in Africa. These projects cover a variety of subject areas, from water and sanitation to agriculture and land rehabilitation. Sida has traditionally focussed geographically on Eastern and Southern Africa and thematically on soil and water conservation. Based on this assessment and the Convention to Combat Desertification a strategy for dryland development has been developed.

As the major part of Sida's funds are tied in bilateral agreements, Sida's strategy in the implementation of the CCD is to integrate the dryland issues into its ongoing dialogue with individual Governments regarding the respective country strategy. At present, Sida is revising its strategy for collaboration with Africa in order to strengthen the idea of partnership rather than the traditional donor-recipient relationship. This means that the dryland issues must be prioritised and pushed by the respective Government as well as by Sida, in order to increase the share of resources targeted for implementation of dryland projects.

However, land rehabilitation and land husbandry has for the past 15-20 years been one of the major activities within the Natural Resources Sector. As each program is developed within a specific context with respect to ecology, geography and socio-political conditions, they may address the central problem of land degradation in many different ways. Sida's most successful experiences are from the less dry areas in Eastern Africa. Earlier attempts to address land degradation problems in dryland areas has been less successful and to find the right approaches for dryland areas still represents a challenge for Sida.

During 1998 more than 200 projects and activities related to the CCD were carried out within Sida's regular programme. The total budget for these amounting to approximately 280 million SEK (35 m USD).

Sida is also in the process of developing a programme in Western Africa. A point of departure for this assignment has been to develop it in line with the intentions of the Convention. So far, preliminary contacts have been established with representatives of Burkina Faso and Mali, as well as the NGO communities and the multilateral organisations. It is still too early to indicate volume or content of the project, but preparations are ongoing.

In order to further support the Convention, Sida has during 1998/99 made available a grant of 1 million SEK to the Global Mechanism, which enabled the GM to start operating already during 1998, in advance of receiving the earmarked funds through the Convention.

Sida has also made available a grant of in total 2,8 million SEK to the CCD secretariat for the following projects:

- support to the strengthening of NGO's in Central Asia, SEK 894 000.
- participation of NGO's at COP 2, SEK 600 000.
- regional seminars on local knowledge in the IGADD and SADC regions of Africa, SEK 400 000.
- fund for participation of representatives from LDC's, SEK 590 000.
- contribution to an inventory of existing networks and institutions of relevance for the Convention, SEK 316 000.

A report on the outcome of the activities is due at the end of June 1999.

Enclosure: Development of dryland areas – Sida's response to the Convention to Combat Desertification, June 1997.