



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

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FORWARD MOTION: UNCCD's message for GEF

Albert Einstein....a man who knew a few things about making the numbers add up once said..."Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving".

So what does forward motion look like?

GEF will be able to keep its balance if it can move forward boldly - taking account of emerging political realities and framing a concrete plan for delivery at country level.

I may come across a little bit old fashioned – more "penny-farthing" than racing bike but to move forward GEF does not need to "reinvent the wheel".

It will have the greatest impact if it sticks to what it does best.

By focusing on its core mandate and financing the incremental costs associated with transformative projects at the national level, it can be pivotal for the delivery of all three Rio Conventions.



Let us be honest. We can dream that we will have all the money in the world. But we don't.

With that in mind, we would propose three crucial approaches:

First, a tighter focus on a limited number of core focal areas/impact programmes.

There is a risk our focus will be diluted if resources are spread thinly across so many programmes and areas. Our preference would be to see the number of Impact Programmes reduced – or at least consolidated and simplified.

Secondly, enhanced synergies between the focal areas and the conventions.

We need an approach that maximizes the delivery for all the Conventions - at the same time. From the UNCCD side, we are very clear that an investment in land, especially when women are involved, is also an investment in biodiversity and in climate change adaptation and mitigation in most, if not all, cases. Nearly 60% of all projects reported to UNCCD by country Parties (2012-2013 biennium) targeted all 3 Rio Conventions.



Finally and most crucially - greater country ownership.

We need projects that deliver the biggest co-benefits to countries - especially the poorest. Let us be clear, the STAR system has worked. As we go forward, to remain relevant, we need to ensure “buy-in” from countries. And that enough money remains in the STAR allocations so that GEF remains relevant.

For UNCCD, “geographical priority areas” are emerging strongly from the LDN target setting exercise. At least 107 countries have bought in to LDN and are looking to GEF 7 to make these targets actionable.

If a pipeline of projects can be established, the rehabilitation of land in these geographical priority areas is a natural fit for a transformative project based approach to financing. It would deliver multiple benefits for climate change and biodiversity conservation. At the same time, these projects would also contribute to the wider sustainable development goal agenda especially in terms of employment creation and poverty reduction.



The writer H. G. Wells once said - "Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race".

If GEF moves forward boldly, the future of the human race is a little more secure and a lot more hopeful. Thank you.