

## **Remarks of Monique Barbut at the Bonn Challenge 2.0 20-21 March 2015, Bonn, Germany**

### **1. Opening remarks (387 words)**

Despite the multiple functions of land and their high value to society, nearly 2 billion hectares – an area twice the size of China – are already seriously degraded.

This includes large areas of croplands, grasslands and forests where reduced productivity also negatively impacts biodiversity and the flow of vital ecosystem services, and increases vulnerability to climate change.

Each year, between 10 and 12 million hectares are lost for agricultural production. This poses a serious challenge to sustainable development.

The UNCCD and its 195 country Parties work in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders not only to protect and sustainably manage the land, but also to rehabilitate degraded land.

Of the 2 billion hectares identified by the Bonn Challenge for their restoration potential, 75% are considered **mixed use landscapes**. Sustainable land management practices focus on preserving key ecosystem processes in these **working landscapes** – one where people both live and work.

In the case of working landscapes, tree-planting is part of a mosaic or integrated approach. Here, the priority given to reforestation is very much context specific and depends on the needs of the community.

For instance, agroforestry is an effective strategy that improves the health of the land while enhancing food security and household incomes for small scale farmers. In Africa, this has proven to be a low cost and sustainable solution which can be less than 20 USD per hectare.

It is also important to consider the historical status of land – for example, planting trees on former grasslands can often be detrimental to water and other services.

To put this approach into practice, the UNCCD has been leading the call for a target on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) – that is, to maintain and improve the amount of healthy and productive land resources over time.

LDN is now a target within the SDG proposal and can be implemented at local, national and even regional scales – and the Bonn Challenge is one vehicle that will help us achieve this target.

The LDN target is expected to guide the future implementation of the Convention to improve livelihoods and restore ecosystem functioning as well as provide other benefits such as carbon sequestration and resilience building.

The UNCCD welcomes the Bonn Challenge 2.0 and its potential to help achieve Land Degradation Neutrality while explicitly recognizing the importance of trees in our **working landscapes**.