



UNITED
NATIONS



**Convention to Combat
Desertification**

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.3
29 October 2002

ENGLISH ONLY

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
First session
Rome, 11-22 November 2002
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2(A) AND (B), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION**

**REVIEW OF REPORTS BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES ON MEASURES TAKEN TO ASSIST IN
THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES OF AFFECTED COUNTRY
PARTIES OF ALL REGIONS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON FINANCIAL RESOURCES THEY
HAVE PROVIDED, OR ARE PROVIDING, UNDER THE CONVENTION**

Addendum

COMPILATION OF SUMMARIES OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES^{1 2}

Note by the secretariat

1. By its decision 1/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to establish a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC). It decided also that the first session of the CRIC, to be held in November 2002, shall review updates to reports already available and/or new reports from all regions.
2. Furthermore, pursuant to decision 11/COP.1, the secretariat was requested to compile the summaries of reports submitted by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention. The same decision also defined the format and content of reports and required, in particular, a summary of report by developed country Parties not to exceed six pages.
3. The present document contains the summary of report submitted by the United States of America. The secretariat has also made this report available on its Web site (<http://www.unccd.int>).

¹ Reproduced without formal editing.

² This document is to be considered as supplementary to ICCD/CRIC(1)/6/Add.2.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICAPolicy overview

Since the United States of America (U.S.) became a Party in February 2001, the Department of State has focused on policy issues related to the effective functioning of the UNCCD secretariat and the issue of opening a land degradation (desertification and deforestation) window in the GEF. The U.S. supports the idea of a UNCCD focused on action and grassroots solutions. Bilaterally and regionally, the U.S. works with affected developing country Parties to the UNCCD, local and international non-governmental organizations, and multilateral development banks on anti-desertification programme activities, including education, community development, and capacity building, with the goal of empowering local people to combat desertification by identifying needs and solving problems themselves.

U.S. programme activities to implement the technical provisions of the Convention are carried out chiefly by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Department of the Interior (Bureau of Land Management) and the Department of Agriculture also carry out programme activities in support of the implementation of the Convention.

Resolution of advice and consent

The Congressional Resolution of Advice and Consent for the UNCCD set forth, *inter alia*, the following understandings, included in the U.S. instrument of ratification:

1. as a developed country Party, the United States is not obligated to satisfy specific funding requirements or other specific requirements regarding the provision of any resource, including technology, to affected country Parties;
2. the Convention does not impose mandatory obligations to provide funding for the Global Environment Facility (GEF); and
3. no changes to existing U.S. land management practices and programmes will be required to meet obligations incurred under the Convention.

Roster of experts

Article 24 of the Convention provides for the establishment of a Roster of Independent Experts with expertise and experience in disciplines relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The U.S. Government (USG) has established a website, hosted by the Smithsonian Institution, to receive applications for membership on the Roster. Applications are received by the Department of State, submitted to an interagency review process to ensure they meet basic criteria, and the names of nominees are then submitted to the UNCCD secretariat by the Department of State. The website may be viewed at <http://www.si.edu/intrel/unccd>.

International activities by USG agencies in support of the UNCCD

Education and information sharing are essential to the successful implementation of the Convention domestically and at a global level. In October 1994, the United States Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sponsored an international symposium and workshop on "Desertification in Developed Countries." In May 1997, the Bureau of Land Management and the International Arid Lands Consortium sponsored another international symposium and workshop titled "Combating Desertification: Connecting Science with Community Action." Both were very successful and involved more than a total of 340 people from more than fifty countries.

These two conferences generated interest on the part of the governments of South Africa and Namibia. Those countries, with the help of the Bureau of Land Management, are organizing an international conference to be held April 2002 in Africa titled "Alternative Ways to Combat Desertification: Connecting Community Action with Science and Common Sense."

USAID and implementing the UNCCD objectives

USAID is the lead USG agency implementing the UNCCD overseas. The tenets of the Convention, calling for a bottom-up and participatory approach to combating desertification, echo the focus of USAID's approach to natural resource management, improved agriculture practices, and integrated water resource management. The mainstay of USAID's involvement in the UNCCD is carried out through its Mission and Washington-based activities that address the root causes of desertification.

USAID addresses these objectives in a variety of diverse programmes in all geographical regions, but primarily in Africa. Seventy-one percent of Africa's area is classified as drylands. Since the great Sahelian droughts of the 1970's, efforts to combat desertification have been a major focus of development activities in Africa. USAID has 20-30 years experience in natural resource management in Africa aimed at increasing livelihoods and the quality of life, while maintaining and increasing land productivity. Desertification is a critical issue in other regions of the world, but it has not gained the attention that it has in Africa. This report reflects this greater depth of experience.

While few USAID programmes worldwide have a stated objective of combating desertification, it is through the actions of programmes that address sustainable agriculture, improved agricultural practices, natural resource management, conservation of natural resources and integrated water management in arid, semi-arid and dry sub humid habitats, that the process of desertification is slowed, halted and, eventually, reversed.

USAID and its partner organizations focus on building the capacity of communities and local institutions to utilize new technologies and tools to improve management of agricultural lands and natural resource areas. Community based natural resource management (CBNRM) promotes the devolution to, and capacity of communities to effectively manage their resources.

The range of programmes that address desertification generally falls within the technical focus of USAID's new Pillar Bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade. Many of these programmes, especially those in natural resource management, environment, small-scale agriculture and integrated water resource management have strong links to the Pillar Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. Some of these activities are highlighted below; for more complete descriptions of activities please refer to the regional annexes to the report.

Sustainable agriculture and natural resource management

Sound environmental management of agricultural activities is essential for sustaining the natural resource base in dryland ecosystems and mitigating the effects of drought. Farming practices that increase soil organic matter increase the soil's ability to hold water and allow deeper rooting of plants making crops better able to withstand drought. Appropriate pasture and livestock management reduces overgrazing and resulting land degradation. More efficient irrigation systems conserve water for critical needs other than agriculture, thereby reducing conflict over this increasingly scarce resource. Involving local stakeholders in the management of natural resources ensures that those most dependent on the natural resource base are able to maintain its productivity for their children.

At the regional and national level, USAID supports research, capacity building, and the development of information systems that inform decision making and policy development related to agriculture. Monitoring systems such as the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS-NET) harness technology to provide decision-makers with critical information on weather patterns, food scarcity and land use management. Participatory research carried out by the International Agricultural Research Centers and U.S. Universities is identifying management practices and technologies that mitigate the impact of drought. This research includes farmers in developing technologies that are well suited to local conditions. Breeding programmes develop high-yielding crop varieties appropriate for arid and semi-arid environments. In addition, USAID staff are actively involved in the UNCCD's Committee on Science and Technology, particularly in the areas of early warning systems and information and technology transfer.

At the community level, USAID interventions increase local participation in the management of the natural resource base. CBNRM activities involve those most dependent on the long-term preservation of natural resources in their management. This encourages more transparent governance and improved stewardship of the land. The promotion of diversified cropping, agroforestry, conservation farming, contour farming and alternatives to slash and burn farming increase soil organic matter, improve water infiltration and reduce erosion. These farming systems are more productive, better able to withstand the effects of drought and other disasters, and reduce the contamination of streams and groundwater by animal waste and agricultural chemicals. Examples of USAID programmes are presented in the following bullets. For more complete programme descriptions please refer to the regional annex to the report.

- In Mali, USAID's inputs to the Upper Niger River Valley Organization (OHVN) has contributed to 33,000 producers, organized by a USAID partner into cooperatives, adopting practices that improve and diversify livelihoods while decreasing degradation rates. Agricultural intensification and the widespread adoption of soil and water conservation techniques have been a large factor in halting or reversing deforestation in many of the village lands. OHVN support has led to over a dozen communities negotiating agreements with the highly centralized Forestry Service giving the communities rights and responsibilities over local forestlands. This has led to decreased degradation in eight of nine forests assessed by the U.S. Geological Survey – a result that is helping to form a new paradigm for sustainable rural economic development based on a partnership between communities and the State.
- In areas of Uganda, farmers are challenged by steep hillsides and severe demographic pressure. Collaboration amongst USAID partners (the International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), Agro-Forestry Research Network for Africa (AFRENA), Africare, and Heifer Project international (HPI)) has assisted farmers to establish fodder banks, boundary plantings, and rotational woodlots to improve soil fertility and reduce erosion, and to grow trees on-farm to enhance food security through cash earnings and increased productivity. Productivity and sources of livelihood have increased, and fallow requirements and erosion have decreased. An independent evaluation showed that the programme had contributed directly to sustainable production, higher productivity of land, significantly better incomes, local control and environmental protection by reducing runoff and consequent erosion by as much as 70%.
- In Mali - the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (SANREM) Collaborative Research Support Programme (CRSP) builds capacity for natural resource decision making, democratization, and conflict management; and conducts research on improved land management practices to enhance soil fertility and maintain productivity. In addition, SANREM's West Africa Project seeks to improve natural resource management practices in agro-pastoral systems of the arid and semi-arid regions of West Africa. Project activities are organized around building and supporting institutions for effective natural resource management decision-making.
- The objective of FEWS NET is to help establish more effective and sustainable food security information networks in Africa that reduces the vulnerability of groups at risk. FEWS NET works directly with African organizations to gather, analyze, and distribute information on agriculture, weather, and other areas important in monitoring for early signs of food insecurity. FEWS NET field representatives work with African partners to produce monthly food security reports and periodic assessments of vulnerability.
- In Malawi, USAID is extending improved natural resource management technologies to a large segment of the rural population that depend on a natural resource base for their livelihoods and growth. The number of farmers adopting improved soil conservation practices and sustainable

natural resource management has significantly increased over the years. The Malawi Agroforestry Extension Project (MAFE), implemented through a cooperative agreement with Washington State University (WSU), has had success in introducing technologies that control runoff and soil erosion. In 2001, 52,000 farm families adopted improved soil conservation practices, including *vetiver* contour strips.

- In Haiti, USAID seeks to slow the rapid pace of environmental degradation by improving natural resource management through: increased adoption of sustainable natural resource management practices; replication of successful models of watershed/catchment rehabilitation, and civil society organizations implementing environmental solutions. As a result of tree planting and other activities, soil erosion, loss of soil fertility, and other damage that traditionally accompanies tropical downpours have been visibly and dramatically reduced in all areas of USAID interventions.
- USAID supports the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which is well positioned internationally and has the experience and expertise to address the on going problems associated with desertification (see annex to the report). The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics provides one such example: The research programme, "Combating desertification and reducing poverty in the desert margins of sub-Saharan Africa," focuses on identifying technologies, policies, and institutional innovations to raise agricultural productivity and farmer incomes while combating land degradation and promoting sustainable use of the natural resource base in the desert margins.

Natural resource management and biodiversity conservation

Desertification results in the loss of productivity and the reduction of ecosystem health. Combating desertification requires a multi-pronged approach. The main focus is on the wise use of agricultural land, increasing yields in combination with decreasing erosion and the inappropriate use of water. When arable land is desertified, agriculture is often attempted in less suitable, or more arid lands, thereby exacerbating the desertification process. Marginal lands are often already under stress due to over-grazing by domestic livestock. Historically, these more marginal areas are also often the remaining key biodiversity areas for large assemblages of grazing wildlife and their ecological communities. Natural resource management and biodiversity programmes address the maintenance of these ecological systems and their key species and communities for the benefit of stakeholders. Many benefits are tangible, such as the development of ecologically sustainable businesses and resource uses. Other, less tangible benefits, in both protected and multiple-use areas, relate to ecosystem processes such as pollination, water purification and soil formation.

Through its natural resource management and biodiversity programmes, USAID promotes alternative land uses for the benefit of local communities and the ecosystems in which they live. Foremost in these programmes, is the devolution to these communities, of both resource decision making authority

and the capacity to manage their natural resources. Many of these activities overlap with improved agriculture programmes. Often these activities act as buffer or multiple use zones between strictly protected areas and more traditional agriculture. Community lands often provide critical wildlife dispersal areas between protected areas.

Promotion of wildlife-friendly activities has economic benefit for both local communities and governments. USAID natural resource management programmes work with communities to set-up ecotourism businesses, promote non-cultivar agriculture such as veld products in southern Africa, bee-keeping, non-timber forest products (e.g. essential oils from dry forests in Nepal), medicinal plants, sustainable hunting for food and trophy hunting. The aim of these programmes is promote alternative uses suitable to fragile landscapes. Examples of USAID programmes are presented in the following bullets. For more complete examples please refer to the regional annex to the report.

- The results from USAID's support to decentralization and environmental governance in Senegal is providing hope that both management can be improved and that conflict over natural resources can be mitigated through negotiated agreements. The 73,000-hectare Pata Forest in southern Senegal has been a source of deadly conflict between indigenous populations and people coming from other parts of Senegal. Through a process mediated by USAID teams, the communities formed a joint natural resource management monitoring committee and a plan for better communication. No conflicts were reported in 2001.
- Many rural Kenyan communities' livelihood options have been severely limited by the ever-diminishing arable land caused by past frequent droughts and dramatic population increases. The natural resource management programme aims to reverse, halt or lessen unsustainable use of natural resources outside the protected areas by working with communities to enhance their abilities to manage their resources more sustainably. The programme implemented site specific natural resource management activities, including organization strengthening, business and financial management, benefit sharing and mentoring to target community-based organizations (CBOs). In 2001 an increase in land area under improved natural resource management increased to 650,040 hectares from 540,341 hectares, and in number of nature-based enterprises to 41 from 22.
- In Namibia, USAID in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund supports a community-based natural resource management programme that focuses on helping communities to register as conservancies, organize and effectively run conservancy management committees, establish and implement resource management plans and enter into joint ventures with private sector investors and tour operators. The programme introduces economic incentives, supported by sound social, democratic and environmental principles, through effective natural resource management. Conservancy formation has served as a base for politically active civil society. Conservancies have moved rapidly to formalization, with 15 now gazetted, and 34 more communities currently organizing. Almost 4,100,000 hectares of communal land are now under local management.

- In Tanzania, USAID's efforts in the environment and natural resources sector directly impact and support the objectives of the CCD. USAID's work on policy development and application has assisted Tanzania's 1997 ratification of the UNCCD move a step further to the process of domesticating the treaty into the national legal framework. In addition supporting integrated policies, the programme supports their application to benefit communities, promote community-based conservation and improve the health of the environment. Innovative partnerships have recently been established between the environment and private sector programmes, thereby strengthening these linkages with increased effectiveness and impact.
- In Paraguay, USAID addresses local desertification related issues by strengthening the sustainable management of the Chaco and Pantanal Ecoregions. USAID/Paraguay has supported a local NGO, *Fundación para el Desarrollo Sustentable del Chaco Sudamericano (DeSdelChaco)*, to prepare, in cooperation with local governments and the Environmental Secretariat, the national action programme for the implementation of the UNCCD. The programme has included capacity building and raising awareness on many aspects of sustainable development issues including: existing land use and production systems; deforestation for the creation of pastureland; maintenance of pastureland; land-use planning and zoning; and, water resources in the Chaco.

Integrated water resource management

The Global Water Partnership defines Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) as "a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems." IWRM has proved to be successful in many cases for the equitable allocation of water resources, often in scarce supply, across a variety of diverse user groups. However, IWRM does not focus solely on water supply; demand management is an equally important element in the IWRM process. Demand management includes improvements in the efficiency of water delivery systems, cost incentives for water conservation, water quality protection, and the reuse of treated wastewater by the agricultural and industrial sectors. Many of these demand management activities are essential to wider efforts aimed at combating desertification. Examples of USAID programmes are presented in the following bullets. For more complete examples please refer to the regional annex to the report.

- Central Asia is dependent on its principal natural resources, oil, gas, and water, for its economic growth. USAID is providing technical assistance, training, and selected equipment to water managers and/or policymakers in each Central Asia Region nation to improve the management of the water resources in these semi-arid and arid nations. Assistance is provided on the national level to national hydrometeorological services, ministries of agriculture and water resources and river basin management agencies in order to better collect, process, and exchange water data.

Such data is used for improved planning, allocating and controlling water resources throughout the region.

- To prevent a water-induced crisis in Morocco, fundamental changes in water availability and use, based on equitable and transparent decisions involving the participation of community groups, the private sector, and water users associations, are essential. USAID has worked to improve water resources management in the agricultural, urban, and industrial sectors since 1992. These activities include work in the areas of improved irrigation efficiency, watershed management, water quality control, municipal water and sanitation services, and training for municipal officials in financial management and environmental planning.

Africa - USAID lessons learned in combating desertification

USAID's Africa Bureau (AFR) has been actively supporting the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification since the conception and negotiation phases of the Convention, through implementation and ratification by the USG. At the international level AFR continues to participate actively in the Conference of the Parties, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, the Committee on Science and Technology and other international fora. At the subregional level AFR supports several organizations such as the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) that are involved in the preparation and implementation of subregional plans. In the ten years since the Rio meetings, African countries have made promising progress in attacking the causes of desertification. USAID has been a critical partner in many of these cases. Bilaterally, AFR supports a number of country level programmes that directly or indirectly address the issues of desertification and land degradation in African countries. In fiscal year 2001 investments in support of the UNCCD by AFR (Mission and Bureau) in sub-Saharan Africa were estimated at approximately US\$ 50 million.

The UNCCD has several characteristics that coincide with and support AFR's approach. It is the most developmentally oriented of the environmental conventions coming out of Rio. This corresponds well with USAID's mandate not only to help protect the world's environment but to spur economic growth and good governance. The UNCCD encourages a bottom-up approach that USAID has been promoting in the African region for many years. The Convention also addresses the roles of major groups such as civil society and the private sector. USAID similarly supports these groups as both engines of growth and as essential for good governance.

The planning and implementation of the Convention is part of the development context and process. In this context, these investments over the last 20 to 30 years have produced important results in terms of policy changes, management of natural resources, reduced degradation rates, improved livelihoods and better governance.

There are numerous cases where positive trends in terms of environment, governance and economic growth indicate that some countries and regions are on the right path and that investments have produced positive results. In

some areas rates of degradation and impoverishment have declined. However degradation and quality of life deterioration continues, particularly in certain areas, sometimes associated with conflict.

USAID Africa Bureau programmes have revealed a number of lessons learned, both to USAID and its African colleagues. Several are briefly noted below.

National Will and Capacity - National level commitment and capacity are crucial to implementation of the UNCCD. One of the important measures of national will to implement the spirit and letter of the UNCCD is the degree to which the central government shares authority with the rural population over the management of natural resources. Progress has been made on this front in numerous African countries. In sixteen of seventeen countries where USAID has provided support, governments have reformed inappropriately centralized policies and institutions and made progress in moving toward becoming a partner with rural populations in the management of wildlife, forests, habitats, range land and watersheds.

Integration of the national action programmes (NAPs) - NAPs should build on progress achieved from past initiatives. The UNCCD should add value and energy to institutions and policies that countries have worked so hard to establish. Efforts to combat desertification should be mainstreamed and not marginalized.

Challenges of the Bottom-Up Approach - Both strong governments and increased local participation are needed to fight desertification. Organizing and unleashing local initiative and potential is difficult and has transaction costs. However, mechanisms are being developed and refined for assuring local control and authority. USAID partners helped to develop democratically elected, business-oriented CBOs that negotiate management plans with government institutions and then ensure that those agreements are followed. Since they are organized on a business basis, the CBOs help the local populations maximize local benefits from responsible management. These community organizations have become models for effective local governance where local populations share both authority and responsibility with the national government for the stewardship of natural resources.

Measuring/Indicators/Monitoring and Evaluation - Anti-desertification activities require learning and adaptation. For this to be effective, monitoring and feedback are needed. The UNCCD has put significant effort into the area of benchmarks and indicators. Further work is needed on socio-economic and governance indicators as well as strengthening feedback mechanisms. One of the major problems for the sector has been quantifying and reporting results. With current accounting methods, it is difficult to capture the results in national statistics or satellite imagery using current approaches. However, thanks to the release of high-resolution satellite imagery and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), it is now possible to more effectively compare and contrast change overtime. The Famine early warning system is another monitoring success story. Since the establishment of this programme, no country, even those suffering important droughts, have had a famine.

Economic and Financial Issues - In many instances good land husbandry will not take place unless the economic incentives are right. In numerous cases economic reforms have led to better land management but attention still needs to be paid to long-term management versus short-term gain. Although some progress has been made on financial instruments to support desertification activities, more needs to be done to develop innovative and sustainable mechanisms. Recognizing that policy reforms that share authority and responsibility are necessary but not sufficient, USAID helped pioneer approaches that linked responsible management with improved livelihoods.

Knowledge Management - Strategic environmental decision-making depends on sufficient good quality information and the ability to analyze and process this information. The ability to share information and knowledge and to apply it to problems is central to attempts to fight desertification.

African Ownership - Desertification in Africa can only be addressed by millions of Africans taking daily individual and group decisions and actions. Africans have to own and take responsibility for desertification. The UNCCD has been very productive in promoting African ownership.

Importance of Governance - The ability to fight desertification depends to a large extent on the local governance context. Property rights (security of access to resources and the ability to exclude) as well as procedural rights (access to environmental information, decision-making processes and justice) provide the essential foundation and enabling conditions on which people make decisions on investing in the environment. Well functioning democratic countries tend to be resilient to famines and perform better in fighting desertification.

Fiscal year 2001 funding relevant to implementing the objectives of the UNCCD

Table I. Funding by region

Africa	US\$ 53,771,400
Asia	US\$ 17,766,500
Latin America and the Caribbean	US\$ 12,682,100
Central and Eastern Europe	US\$ 850,000
Global ¹	US\$ 8,700,000
TOTAL REGIONAL FUNDING	US\$ 93,770,000

¹ CGIAR funding not disaggregated by region.

Table II. Funding by activity
(data from table I sorted by main subject focus)

Agriculture Development	US\$ 9,748,950
Improved Agriculture Practices	US\$ 13,120,000
Biodiversity	US\$ 5,952,500
Biodiversity / Natural Resource Management ¹	US\$ 9,058,550
Agriculture ² / Natural Resource Management	US\$ 12,900,000
Natural Resource Management	US\$ 17,300,000
Forestry	US\$ 720,000
Early Warning Systems and Satellite Monitoring ³	US\$ 7,200,000
Integrated Water Resource Management	US\$ 16,250,000
Water Re-use for Agriculture	US\$ 1,400,000
Water and Energy Efficiency Improved	US\$ 120,000
TOTAL	US\$ 93,770,000

¹ Programmes have a significant amount of biodiversity activities in addition to other natural resource management activities.

² Programmes primarily Agriculture-based Natural Resource Management.

³ Includes US\$ 6 million for FEWS-NET.

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