



International Forum
**Forging innovative partnerships for the implementation of the
Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative**
Rome, 16-17 December 2013
Ethiopia Room, FAO Headquarters

Background

Since its adoption in 2007 by the African Heads of State and of Government, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) has gradually emerged as the flagship initiative of the African solidarity to combat effects of climate change and desertification in view of improving living conditions of the most affected populations.

Aiming to strengthen the resilience of the people in the region and the natural systems they depend on, as well as achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sahel-Saharan countries involved in the Great Green Wall (GGW) initiative have developed, and in some cases implemented, a mosaic of actions contributing to a variety of rural development and natural resource management programmes in a sustainable development perspective.

These programmes are situated in particular regional context marked by humanitarian and security challenges, as well as the fight for the reduction of natural disaster risks, which often lead to the forced migration of the populations exposed to such threats.

Achievements

The GGW initiative has so far achieved concrete results, many of which are worth sharing and strengthening. These include:

- The existence of a common African vision, shared with its partners, through the **Regional Harmonized Strategy** for the implementation of the GGW, understood as a mosaic of sustainable land management practices targeting both adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement. The Regional Harmonized Strategy was approved in September 2012 by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and endorsed in January 2013 by the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government.

- The translation of this strategy into a **regional capacity building program** and a **communication plan**.
- The development of a **platform for knowledge management**, sharing of experience and dissemination of best practices including on resource mobilization.
- The **mobilization of resources** by several partners of the initiative, including the African Union Commission, the European Union (EU), the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Bank (WB), the Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Sahel and Sahara Observatory (OSS), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Walloon Region of Belgium, the Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew and others, in support of South-South cooperation, monitoring and evaluation, capacity-building, field action and knowledge management, for the benefit of more than 20 countries covered by the GGW.
- The development of National GGW Action Plans and their integration into strategic development frameworks in the majority of the countries.
- Field action started in several countries aimed at transforming degraded lands into productive landscapes, through restoration of agro-sylvo-pastoral systems including farmer-managed natural regeneration.

From defining priority to field actions

The GGW National action plans are catalysts for sustainable land management projects based on local best practices providing long-term solutions in response to the pressing challenges of desertification, land degradation and drought .

They emphasize the critical role of local actors in natural resource management, including women and youth, and on the importance of the role of local and regional authorities with regard to local development planning that integrates natural resources management.

The concerned Governments are now poised to mobilize the necessary resources for the implementation of the developed GGW action plans and related projects, giving them due priority when negotiating with bilateral and multilateral financial partners.

International partners are encouraged to consider these priorities when investing in African drylands development.

Objectives and expected results

Global objective

The global objective of the forum is to promote a common vision and participation of partners in the implementation of the GGWSSI.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives are:

- Sharing of GGW results and development prospects
- Identification of innovative partnerships, designed for local, national and trans-boundary GGW projects/programs
- Definition of coordination and exchange mechanisms among multiple financial and technical partners.

Expected results

1. Participants are informed on the importance and role of the GGW in drylands development in response to humanitarian, security and governance challenges in the region.
2. Concrete ways are defined for building partnerships in support of the GGW action plans, programs and projects.
3. A mechanism is established for coordination and exchange between financial and technical partners on the GGWSSI under the auspices of the AUC.

Format of the meeting

The *forum* will be organized in the form of plenary sessions, round tables and working groups, according to the agenda below.

Organizers

The *forum* is jointly organized by the GM of the UNCCD and FAO, under the auspices of the African Union Commission.

Date and venue

The event will take place on 16 and 17 December 2013 at FAO headquarters in Rome, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome.

Participants

Participants invited to the *forum* will include representatives of GGW and partner countries involved in Africa, global and regional development banks, as well as other financial institutions active in Africa, United Nations organizations, civil society organizations as well as the private sector.

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Draft Agenda

Day 1		
Timetable	Item	Speakers
9h00 - 9h30	Opening session	
	Welcoming remarks by FAO	Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General for Natural Resources, FAO
	Statement by the UNCCD	Monique Barbut, UNCCD Executive Secretary
	Statement by the European Union	Christine Pasca Palmer, Head of Unit Climate Change, Environment, Natural Resources, Water, European Commission
	Opening statement by the African Union Commission	Dr Abebe Haile Gabriel, Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture Department, AUC
9h30 - 13h00	Session 1 – The Great Green Wall For the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative: Achievements and Prospects	
	Chair: Dr Abebe Haile Gabriel, Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture Department, AUC Rapporteurs: Abdou Maisharou (Niger), Francois Tapsoba (FAO), Youssef Brahimi (Expert GM-UNCCD), Issa Martin Bikienga (resource person)	
9h30 - 9h45	Presentation and adoption of the draft Agenda	Presentation by Ines Chaâlala, GM-UNCCD
09h45 – 10h05	The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel initiative: Key achievements and lessons learnt	Presentation by Almami Dampha, AUC, Nora Berrahmouni, FAO
10h05 – 10h15	Questions and answers	
10h15 – 10h30	Coffee break	
10h30 – 10h50	Building the Great Green Wall Community: Examples from International partners and civil society	Presentation by Patrice Burger, Drynet and Ines Chaâlala, GM-UNCCD

organizations		
10h50 – 11h00	Discussion	
11h00 – 12h00	Examples of priority actions at national and subregional levels: • Creation of Community Nature Reserves and Ecotourism development in the Great Green Wall in Senegal (10 mn) • The Challenge of providing quality seeds for the Great Green Wall (10 mn) • Resilience: the cement of the Great Green Wall in Mali: the Government of Mali-FAO-WFP-UNICEF partnership (10 mn) • Transboundary project « Combating desertification and adapting to climate change impacts: Support to local authorities across borders of the Liptako-Gourma area within the framework of the Great green Wall” Initiative » (10 mn) Discussion	Speakers Matar Cissé, Senegal Dr Moctar Sacande, MSB, Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew, UK Nora Berrahmouni, FAO Issa Martin Bikienga (resource person)
12h00 - 13h30	Lunch	
13h30 - 15h00	<u>Round Table 1</u> The Green Economy, an opportunity for the GGWSSI Discussion	Co-chairs: African Development Bank/ GM-UNCCD Panel: AfDB, FAO, ICRAF, European Commission, South Korea (tbc); South Africa (tbc), World Bank, CARI, GM-UNCCD
15h00 - 15h30	Coffee break	
15h30 - 17h00	<u>Round Table 2</u> Local development within a regional approach: a response to food security and forced migration in the Sahara-Sahel region	Chair: Monique Barbut, UNCCD Executive Secretary Panel: IOM, FAO, WFP, IFAD, World Bank, European Commission, Algeria, Drynet, ILC

Discussion		
17h00-17h15	Closing of Day 1	
18h00	Reception (Indonesia Room)	
Day 2		
Time table	Item	Speakers
09h00-17h30	Session 2 – Defining the way forward	
	Chair: Monique Barbut, UNCCD Executive Secretary Vice-chair: Eduardo Mansur, Director FOM, FAO	
9h00 - 10h00	Presentation of Day 1 results – Youssef Brahimi, GM-UNCCD Expert Discussion Presentation: Update on the development of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with special attention to Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought Introduction to working groups session - Nora Berrahmouni, FAO	
10h00 - 12.30	Working Groups Session (including coffee Breaks)	
Working Group A Oasis across the Maghreb and the Sahel: How to support sustainable natural resource management in this unique ecosystem? WG-A Coordinators: RADD0 /Abdelkader Khelifa (Algeria) Rapporteurs: Youssef Brahimi (GM Expert)/ (CARI)	Working Group B What is the most appropriate partners coordination mechanism to put in place in support of the African Union Commission efforts to mobilize resources for implementation of the GGW plans and programs? WG-B Coordinator: Dr Abebe Abebe Haile Gabriel (CUA), Siv Oystese (GM-UNCCD). Rapporteurs: François Tapsoba(FAO@AUC)/ Inès Chaalala (GM-UNCCD)	Working Group C How to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships in the context of a landscape approach? WG-C coordinators: Sally Bunning (FAO), Rudo Makunike (Secrétariat du NEPAD) Rapporteurs: Nora Berrahmouni (FAO)/Matar Cissé (Senegal)
12h30 - 14h00	Lunch	
14h00 - 15h00	Working Groups (cont’d)	
15h00 - 15h30	Coffee break	

15h30 - 17h00	Presentation of working groups results Discussion and conclusions	Rapporteurs
17h00 - 17h30	Closing of the forum Monique Barbut, UNCCD Executive Secretary Eduardo Rojas-Briaes Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, FAO Dr Abebe Haile Gabriel, Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture Department, AUC	