



**drynet**

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October 2015  
special issue for COP 12

# News from Drynet

A global initiative giving future to drylands

Drynet is a project of 14 organizations from all over the world. They work together to combat land degradation

## Desertification COP 12 in the eye of a hurricane?

*Patrice Burger (CARI- WEOG Representative)*

The forthcoming UNCCD Conference of Parties (COP12) is of particular importance for all people on the planet. This COP will be the first headed by Executive Secretary Monique Barbut and will also be the last major international event before UNFCCC COP21, the much-anticipated global climate change conference in Paris in December.

There is an opportunity for the COP12 negotiators to influence some aspects of the Paris outcomes. In the light of the latest report of the IPCC and the country commitments made in terms of voluntary contributions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we are facing a cataclysmic future. This global warming scenario opens the way for a far less predictable global climate regime, with dire local and global consequences and threshold effects that could well shatter national adaptation plans, especially in developing countries. Voices saying "the party is over" are becoming louder all around the world. But empty promises will not be enough to contain burgeoning anxieties. Putting blankets on the glaciers in Switzerland will not resolve the problems as droughts or floods increasingly hit harder, not only to the south or in the mountains of Bolivia, but also in agriculture in developed countries.

This is one reason why the voices of those who claim that agriculture, land and soils are part of the solution have become more audible than in the past. Soils with their carbon storage capacity equivalent to the annual surplus greenhouse gas emissions could prove to be one of the few credible options for carbon sinks that can function at the same scale as the problem.

### **Neutrality on land degradation, the use of private financing, ecologically intensive agriculture...**

Chance and necessity can sometimes combine and it is undoubtedly the case for the concept of neutrality in terms of land degradation resulting from the RIO + 20 declaration "The future We Want" which informed in the agenda of COP12.

This concept carries with it the twofold potential to: Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by carbon storage, both by measures to combat degradation and measures to restore degraded land, and in so doing combining mitigation and adaptation. Increase the productivity of land to meet the food security needs of an expanding population, and by doing so also fostering development.

There can be little doubt that this is a driving force behind many of the initiatives that have land in common, such as the Global Soil Partnership, Economics of Land Degradation, discussions about agroecology at FAO, or the French initiative to include '4 per 1000' initiative as a potential solution on the agenda of COP21. This initiative is based on calculations that indicate that in the absence of deforestation, an increase of 0.4%, in the carbon stored each year in all the world's soils would fully compensate for manmade CO2 emissions.

The lack of adequate public funding to assure the well being and development of humanity has increasingly induced recourse to private funding as the panacea. Indeed, the impression is being created that private funding and investment are the answer to the woes of the planet. Is this not clutching as straws that may well lead to ever-deepening inequity?

Under what conditions can, and should private money be invested in ways that are both productive for investors and in the public interest? And what safeguards will need to be put in place? These are undoubtedly key issues that will underlie the debate on the admission of private sector observers to the UNCCD and the general trend within the UN system of dependence on private sector finance and leadership.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted in September in New York should all be questioned the critically in terms of issues of governance, monitoring and evaluation and funding. If these aspects are not fully addressed, these SDGs will fail to deliver on their promises. Goal 15 ('Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss') and its associated target 15.3 ('By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world') poses all these questions. This topic will inspire discussions at COP12.

In this context, and in the absence of satisfactory responses from states, the movements of civil society not only have the right, but also the duty to be proactive and involved in discussions that deal with the future of the planet. COP12 and COP21 have a crucial role to play in addressing the fundamental and interlinked problems of climate chaos, degradation, poverty, war and mass migration. Global security in the coming decades will depend on the wisdom of decision makers at all levels, including the UNCCD and the UNFCCC. If they fail the potentially disastrous results will rapidly manifest. This is not the future we should wish upon our children.

## Going Beyond Progressive Land Reforms

*Karin van Boxtel (Both ENDS)*

Secure tenure rights are vital for a stable livelihood of local communities, including food security, peace and socio-economic development. Yet, many local people in the world still have profound difficulties to gain and maintain secure access to land.

The growing recognition of people's tenure rights in progressive legal regulations is promising. Many countries such as Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia and the Philippines have adopted progressive policies that recognize the rights of communities to live in and manage their (forest) land resources. Positive developments are also occurring in other countries such as Liberia. Recent studies by Both ENDS (2013)<sup>1</sup> and WRI (2014)<sup>2</sup> show how strong legal recognition of community rights can play a crucial role in helping indigenous and local communities gain control over forest resources, resist outside pressures and keep their forests healthy. Yet, laws and policy which acknowledge and guarantee land rights of local communities are only one step in the right direction. What is lacking is their implementation.

People's land rights are not always clear-cut and multiple rights to the same plot of land are common in many rural areas. The large diversity of customary land (use) rights often lead to confusion about the actual control over land on the ground. This is frequently complicated by weak local land governance institutions with limited legitimacy on the ground, as well as a larger and more complicated political economy. Furthermore, legal land tenure regulations are often complicated, bureaucratic and involve long procedures, which demand a lot from local people. The more vulnerable people (such as women, youth, and minorities) are typically less able to ensure their rights to land on the ground.

### Strengthen people's ability

A key question is how to ensure people's ability to actually claim and use land in order to guarantee benefit for local people who are entitled to the land? The renowned 'theory of access' of Ribot and Peluso (2003)<sup>3</sup> argues that people's ability to engage in negotiations and defend their positions is crucial when le-

gal land tenure regulations are implemented on the ground. For this reason, awareness raising and capacity building activities are vital.

Both ENDS supports local NGOs in different countries (such as India, Indonesia and the Philippines) to build the capacity of local communities to claim their rights. These capacity development processes include training community members on what legal frameworks are in place and how to file claims since this is a very complex, bureaucratic and time-consuming process. This is particularly important in cases of competing land claims between community members or instances of land grabbing in the course of commercial investment processes. Furthermore, local NGOs assist communities to develop participatory land use plans to sustainably manage land with a long-term perspective.

In Sanggau District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, a constructive dialogue started in 2009 between the district government, local communities and NGOs to promote the adoption of local community maps in the formal land use planning and land registration procedures. This was organized with support from ICRAF, Both ENDS and international partners. Local village communities were better-informed, and thus in a stronger negotiation position in processes of land acquisition for investments, such as for palm oil plantation development by companies. This process of strengthening participatory land use planning is still continuing and new pilots are currently also starting in other districts in Kalimantan.

The movie 'Mapping our Future'<sup>4</sup> provides a comprehensive overview of the dialogue in Sangau. Moving beyond legal land reforms.

### Moving beyond legal land reforms

Progressive policy frameworks and land laws are not always adequate to ensure land tenure security on the ground. Governments are responsible for guaranteeing an enabling environment for the implementation of its

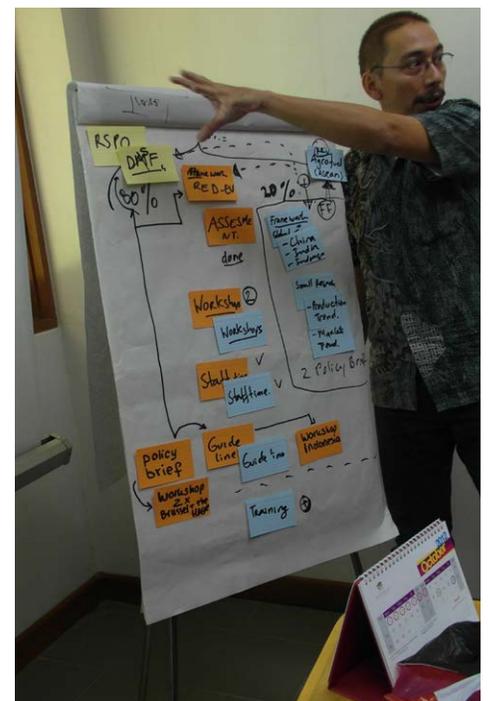
regulations at community level. This implies a duty to equip implementing bodies with the financial and technical means to effectively process land claims. Moreover, governments should facilitate the necessary awareness raising activities to strengthen the ability of local communities to claim land. NGOs play a crucial role in organizing trainings and transferring knowledge about existing land laws, and about procedures and possibilities to secure their tenure. Donor agencies are also decisive in this process since financial means are needed to enable NGOs to act as a bridge between communities and local governments.

1 Kusters, K., Sirait, M., De Koning, P., Lumangkun, A., Nijpels, R., Pili, M., Ros-Tonen, M., Snelder, D., Sulaiman, Van Sluijs, Wezendonk, L., Witsenburg, K., Wolvekamp, P., Wösten, H., Yas, A. (2013). Formalising participatory land-use planning – Experiences from Sanggau District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Both ENDS, Amsterdam. Available at: [http://www.bothends.org/uploaded\\_files/document/203\\_07\\_13\\_PLUP\\_Background\\_document.pdf](http://www.bothends.org/uploaded_files/document/203_07_13_PLUP_Background_document.pdf) [5th of October 2015].

2 World Resources Institute (2014). Securing Rights, Combating Climate Change: How strengthening community forest rights mitigates climate change. Available at: <http://www.wri.org/securingrights> [5th of October 2015].

3 Ribot, J., & Peluso, N. (2003). A theory of access. *Rural Sociology-Baton Rouge*, 68(2), 153-181.

4 <http://www.bothends.org/en/News/Laatste-nieuws/newsitem/282/NEW-VIDEO-Mapping-our-Future-for-survival-of-local-communities-in-Indonesia>



## Land Degradation Neutrality

*Patrice Burger (CARI), Noel Oettle (EMG)*

The concept of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) has gained legitimacy and is now included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG Goal 15 is to “sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss”. The associated target is “By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world”.

The rapid depletion of the world’s land resources has been a topic of increasing concern in the past decades. The statistics are daunting: the United Nations estimates that 12 million hectares of land worldwide – an area half the size of the UK – is degraded every year to sustain our global economy. In light of burgeoning global populations and the impacts of global warming on agriculture, this is a major concern.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was adopted in 1994 to promote sound governance of land-based resources, and governments agreeing to the Convention undertook to involve local communities in planning and implementing sustainable land management interventions. Viewed as “Africa’s Convention”, the UNCCD failed to attract significant donor support, and in many signatory countries governments have failed to create conditions in which affected populations are enabled and empowered to manage the land resources on which they depend in more sustainable ways. According to a UNCCD publication, “despite the twenty-year-long endeavours throughout the globe, the situation became worse”. This sweeping statement ignores both the primary drivers of degradation and their proliferation, and the significant successes achieved in some areas and countries.

The concept of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) first gained credibility at the UNCCD COP10 in 2011, and subsequently the concept of LDN entered the debate at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) the following year. Its most recent iteration is as a target for Goal 15 of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015: “Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss”. The LDN-specific target is: “By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world”.

What exactly is meant by LDN? Based on the Report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the follow-up to the outcomes of Rio+20: “Land Degradation Neutrality is a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.”

On the face of it this is a compelling proposition. Governments commit to ensuring that the rate of restoration is at least of equal magnitude as the rate of degradation. Food production and ecosystems are maintained, thus also contributing to political and economic stability.

However, at its worst this initiative could be seen as giving governments and powerful interests the right to degrade as long as they can rehabilitate an equivalent area elsewhere. The assumption appears to be that the area within which “neutrality” must be achieved is either the nation state or the natural borders of an ecosystem.

From a scientific perspective, the concept of LDN has not been refined to the point where it is robust and practical. One ‘banked’ hectare might not be of the same quality as a hectare that is lost, and the services provided by the restored hectare may not be as valuable as that provided by the degraded land. The proposed voluntary reporting on LDN could become a meaningless exercise of manipulation of data to show a zero loss, when in fact productive resources are still diminishing.

Sound governance is a pre-requisite for sustainable land management, and has been strongly highlighted by civil society as a significant and dangerous omission in the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals. It will be of vital importance to articulate and adopt governance indicators related to land degradation and restoration, such as indicators for retention of rights of resource use when land is restored, indicators reflecting the perceived quality of life of affected land users, and indicators against which to assess the relevance and effectiveness of institutions for management of communal land.

In the context of the UNCCD the question of equity must be adequately addressed. Article 4/2/c of the UNCCD obliges Parties to “integrate strategies for poverty eradication into efforts to combat desertification”. Achieving LDN should thus not be at the expense of the poor, who might lose access to land if it is “restored” in ways that increase its productive and economic value. When poor people lose access to land, many become economic migrants, adding to the pressures on resources and governance in nearby (and even distant) towns and cities.

Land Degradation Neutrality is a top-down concept, and even though it appears relatively harmless, it may prove the undoing of millions of people who make their living on land that others judge to be degraded. Land users around the world are generally entirely ignorant of the concept, or the mechanisms now being proposed. Profound efforts will be needed to engage land using communities in understanding and supporting the concept.

## The proposal for a LDN Fund in the White Paper

*Patrice Burger (CARI), Noel Oettle (EMG)*

In the White Paper on the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund (LDNF) published by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD in June 2015, the cause of the problem of land degradation is described as being a paradigm of “exploit-deplete-migrate”, which is seen as characterising the management of natural infrastructure. What is proposed is the establishment of a Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, which would facilitate investments that would enable the rehabilitation of as much land as is being degraded.

Recent findings from the Sahel show that farmer-led restoration of agricultural lands has had impacts on a scale that is beyond anything ever achieved by funded projects and interventions. However, the proposals for the LDNF do not seem to be focused on supporting these sorts of highly impactful approaches, but rather propose a brand-new model for funding an innovative approach to restoration. The new is always attractive, not least because it has not yet been tested and the possible negative impacts are either unimagined, or overshadowed by the promise of success and profit.

The vision articulated for the LDNF is: “Our vision is one where economic growth does not result in long-term net losses to the environment and society that will be borne by future generations.” There is a dissonance here between the characterisation of the cause as “exploit-deplete-migrate” (clearly this refers to the global poor and brings to mind displaced environmental refugees, many of whom are currently pouring into Europe), and the link to economic growth as the potential driver of LDN.

Uncritical advancement of unlimited economic growth has been widely recognised as the primary driver of global environmental collapse, and many growth-oriented economic activities such as mining, urban expansion, industrial development and extractive agriculture are inimical to sustainable land use. It is thus important to clarify which aspect the LDNF seeks to address, and in what ways.

The White Paper is informed by the belief that “with the right incentives in place, a critical mass of private sector initiatives will rapidly emerge, grow to scale and become self-sustaining”. It promises that “under the right conditions, the returns from these investments will be huge”.

The intention of using the concept of LDN is to ensure continued ecosystem functionality in the landscape. However, it also has the potential to lock communities out of their own lands and could even provide a licence for unfettered degradation.

The Fund is envisaged as a “coordination platform” to leverage investments that would establish a framework to “ensure adherence to certain standards and alignment with investors’ demand(s)”. Whereas alignment with investor’s demands is prioritised, meeting the needs of traditional land users is not. The LDNF “... seeks to provide a struc-

tured portfolio through which private and public sector actors can engage”. The interests that are to be served by the creation of this Fund are clearly not those of the poor.

The Fund intends to support “a steady transition toward a land degradation neutral economy.” What sort of economy might this be? Apparently it is a neo-liberal one in which investors are enriched and the land is restored. It does not appear that the investments in restoration of the land are intended to directly benefit the poor, other than by providing them with employment opportunities, probably of the most menial type.

The Fund will “enable the scaling up of the many viable business models based on upgraded land that generate suitable financial returns while contributing to broader food, water and energy security goals.” In order to do so, it will establish a public-private partnership (PPP) among private institutional investors, international finance institutions and donors. This approach is grounded in a perception that the profit motive is the primary motive for sustainable land management, and ignores the wealth of research that reflects the more subtle, profound and sustainable motivations such as sustainable livelihoods, culture and tradition, often rooted in traditional knowledge and belief systems. It is also one that marginalises small-scale land users, and puts the power in the hands of the big players.

This approach reflects the thinking of a limited set of disciplines and interest groups, and excludes the perspectives of small-scale land users and civil society.

Civil society calls on the Parties to ensure that no agreements are concluded on LDNF without a comprehensive and thorough process of equitable and participatory engagement with the key stakeholders, who are the people living on the ground and depending on the affected resources. No matter how officials and scientists may assess the relative state of degradation of land-based resources, it is the land users whose assessment and participation is most legitimate and has the greatest potential impact.



## Concession-led land transformation in Africa: Lessons for the LNDF

*Noel Oettle (EMG)*

### Transformation and restoration

Transforming land from its current state into a more productive one is the basis of agricultural development. In the context of the current debate around LDN, this transformation is conceptualised as degraded land being transformed into restored land that is also productive and profitable for investors. The Global Mechanism White Paper on the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Fund describes the current process of negotiating “the framework that will guide the transition by nations, industries and businesses to land degradation neutrality by the year 2030”.

The model that is proposed by the White Paper is based on the granting of concessions for land restoration. The Fund will make land degradation neutrality profitable by supporting land rehabilitation and generating revenue streams from sustainable production/use of upgraded lands. The investment model proposed in the White Paper “will typically follow” a process of acquisition of concession licenses on degraded lands, rehabilitation (outsourced to partner operators or production companies against a leasing fee), sustainable production/use (contracted to national and international producers against a concession or leasing fee) with additional income streams from restoration credits generated by the rehabilitation, and finally “exit by returning upgraded land to landowners or by selling land concessions to new investors”.

### Land concessions in Africa

In the past decades many African governments have given concessions to investors to develop large-scale agricultural production. Granting concessions has a long history: more than a century ago the Belgian King Leopold II granted concessions on large areas of tropical forest land in the Congo: Lever Brothers developed palm oil plantations and successfully exploited them for many decades. When the going got tough in DRC, Lever Brothers transferred its interests to Feronia, which in turn is owned by ..... The plantations are currently being expanded, and investors are encouraged to seek profits by investing in this.

More recently many African governments have seen concessions as a ‘fast-track’ way of promoting ‘development’, earning foreign exchange, building a tax base and generating wealth. But what are the impacts on the communities that had been living in these areas?

### Impacts of land concessions on local communities

Investments of this nature have resulted in the alienation and proletarianization of rural populations. People who have been resource users become either labourers or are displaced to other areas. In Africa, in terms of legal wording and perceptions held by government officials, community land is frequently perceived as unused land or wasteland.

An example of this sort of “development” is the grant by the government of Cameroon of 73,000 hectares of land to SG Sustainable Oil. The communities were confronted by ‘offers’ from the company to become involved in palm oil development, which were often accompanied by intimidation by government officials. Elites were ‘persuaded’ that the development would be in their interest. Some local Chiefs became proponents of the developments against the wishes of the majority of the community and agreed to cede the land use rights of their people. As a result, conflict within and between communities erupted. With a 10 year tax ‘holiday’, and paying a rental of only US\$1.00 per year for the land, the investors have an opportunity to reap vast profits, whilst there is little benefit either to the local community or to the national treasury. Not only have land users rights been negated, but the environment has been very negatively impacted by the clearing of forest to plant endless hectares of ‘sustainable’ palm oil. This is one of many examples of how corporates have adopted the language and concepts of ‘sustainable development’ to maximise profit.

Further examples come from Ethiopia, where the establishment of 100,000 hectares of sugar cane in the valley of the Awash River, on land that had been used by Afar pastoralists since time immemorial exposed them to deepening poverty as a result of loss of access to their richest traditional rangelands. According to GIZ (<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/23119.html>), more than 56% of the population lives in absolute poverty, a situation exacerbated by the depletion of the remaining natural resources and the effects of climate change.

The granting of a huge concession and subsequent investment by Saudi Star in the Gambella lowlands of Ethiopia had a cataclysmic effect on the local people. Gambella is a wetland the size of Belgium in Ethiopia’s southwest, whose rivers (collectively known as the Baro-Akobo River Basin) feed the Nile. Much of the flow of this system has been diverted to irrigate rice for export to Saudi Arabia. Genocide Watch reported a “campaign of genocidal violence” that forced between 6,000 and 8,000 Anuak people to flee Gambella for the relative safety of Sudan. Long-term land concessions granted by the government made these “developments” possible.

Investments in agricultural businesses in the developing world are attracting ever-more capital. However, the Africans that benefit from these enterprises tend to be investors, politicians or employees, not small-scale farmers, let alone non-farming, resource-using communities.

### Environmental impacts

Recent research indicates that in many cases the granting of concessions has directly resulted in massive environmental degradation. With sound legislation, governance and concomitant enforcement, environmental impact can certainly be mitigated. However, in many African

countries political instability, inadequate legislation, capacity challenges, corruption and lack of fiscal resources severely hampers efforts to mitigate negative environmental impacts. Under these conditions, concessional land development is a risky undertaking.

### Relevance of the African experience in the UNCCD context

The LNDP plans to mobilise USD 2 billion per annum to invest in the rehabilitation of at least 12 million hectares of degraded lands, primarily in the developing world.

The Fund intends to make land degradation neutrality profitable by supporting land rehabilitation and generating revenue streams from sustainable production on 'upgraded' lands.

Within the model proposed in the White Paper, the role of land-using communities will probably be as providers of labour; however, if they are not compliant or are surplus to the needs of the operators or production companies they might well find themselves unwelcome on their own lands.

In the course of COP 12 discussions will focus on decisions will be made that will shape the future of investment in land restoration on a global level.

Underpinning the logic of the LNDP is the persistent belief in the exi-

stence of 'un-utilised' or 'under-utilised' land in the developing world. Legal land tenure systems often uncritically accept this concept, leading to structural marginalization of rural communities from their lands. Further, the belief that foreign direct investment is inherently virtuous and necessary for economic development leads governments suppress any potential impediments to foreign direct investment, and to offer generous terms to investors to the detriment of their own citizens. Investors in Africa have a long tradition of offering incentives to decision makers, and this tradition of bribery continues to flourish.

As with many new developments, there is considerable enthusiasm for the LNDP as the 'next big thing' in the struggle to achieve greater sustainability. However, it could prove to be the Trojan Horse that leads to the alienation of the rights, livelihoods, culture and lifestyles of millions of people in the world's drylands. There is ample evidence that new instruments are readily exploited by vested interests for their own benefit. Extreme caution is advisable in formulating the LNDP. More sustainable benefit will probably be derived by the people of the global drylands and by the ecosystems that they depend on if the vehicles currently available for funding SLM, restoration and rehabilitation are provided with the resources that would otherwise be invested in a new Fund.

## Desertif'actions 2015

Drynet participated in the organizing committee of the Desertif'Actions Civil society forum in Montpellier ( France). All members of the network were invited to participate in the four days meeting including plenaries, workshops and a general public day downtown in Montpellier city. The forum produced the Desertif'Actions civil society declaration on land and climate. Taking the opportunity of being together, the Drynet board could also meet and prepare for COP12.

All informations can be found <http://www.desertif-actions.fr/en/>



## Agriculture, soils and the challenge of climate change and food security

*Patrice Burger (CARI)*

A conference entitled "Agriculture and agricultural soils and the challenge of climate change and food security; public policies and practices" was held on the 1st September at the OECD headquarters in Paris. A set of actors from the international research arena and French and international institutions (USDA, INRA, IRD, Polytechnic University of Madrid, etc.) shared three sessions to discuss the issues of (i) state of play: the agricultural sector facing the triple challenge of productivity, food security and climate change, (ii) state of play of the link between agricultural soils, climate change food productivity and security, and (iii) what practices and policies agricultural to effectively meet the challenges of the triple challenge and what role in this framework for action on soil?

The meeting reaffirmed that agriculture is a key sector for many countries, particularly in view of the socio-economic and food security issues. Links between productivity, resilience and sustainability are very strong and related issues are exacerbated by climate change. Agricultural soils are located at the interface of these issues. Their good management is a major challenge to meet the triple challenge of food security, adaptation of agricultural systems to climatic disturbances and mitigation of anthropogenic emissions.

### **A real but late awareness...**

The conference recalled the various challenges that are facing global agriculture in terms of production, productivity, environment and food safety. Taking into account the work of the IPCC in terms of climate change, any doubts about the urgent need to change the way of farming have been removed. Moreover, the required changes are not at the margin, but require a change of whole agricultural paradigm. Multiple inputs confirmed that "if agriculture is part of the problem, it is also a good part of the solution," concluding that targets to reduce global warming cannot be achieved without the support of agriculture and soils.

The good news is that several interventions from Brazil, the United States and Ireland have shown that other pioneering ways of producing are already at work here and there and that lessons can be drawn. One of the questions that must be asked is: "why is this awareness coming so late?" Furthermore, why are political or economic decisions not adequately aligned to address these challenges? The conference concluded that contradictory policies in this area must cease.

One can regret that in this regard few of the debates on issues relating to development in many countries have focused on this issue..

A significant amount of uncertainty remained on how to proceed to make the necessary changes: knowing the problem and being aware of it does not help if there is no strategy or common willingness to bring about the necessary changes. Some stakeholders, including the representative of the International Organization of Fertilizers (IFIA) do not seem willing to change their 'business model' or to examine their credo that "without the use of chemical fertilizers we would lose 50% of current world food production and that these inputs are both positive and negative". This corporatist vision ignores studies on the well-known negative externalities of chemical-based agriculture.

Surprisingly enough the alarm bell was ring by the representative of the World Bank in the role of whistle blower, who declared that "if we continue this way we will be responsible for 70% of gas emissions contributing to the greenhouse effect in a few years, because we work with an out-dated model that is not sustainable". The representative went on to say that "80% of subsidies to agriculture are going to what is unsustainable, including the use of subsidized fossil fuels: we must rethink the agricultural model. The carbon footprint issue should the focus of our reflection and agriculture should be a net carbon sink"

### **Proposals for initiatives**

In terms of initiatives the "agro-ecological project in France" was presented by a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and

defended by the Minister of Agriculture Le Foll himself. It seeks to meet the three challenges of food security and nutrition, the environmental challenge and the social challenge. The initiative is based on three levers through (i) an overall reflection phase on each farm avoiding recipes, (ii) seeking for a valuation of positive interactions of biological systems and (iii) the search for autonomy and robustness of farms by promoting synergy cycles. It is based on training, mobilization of research, the use of a diagnostic tools, renovation of public support, grouping of stakeholders, changing the evaluation system for seeds, and regular monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to this national initiative, the Minister also presented the initiative 4 per 1,000 for soils, food security and climate as part of the agenda of solutions for COP21. The initiative is focusing on carbon storage in the soils through agriculture with an annual growth of 4 per 1000 of the carbon stock, in order stop the accumulation of CO2 concentration in the atmosphere. "The initiative is open to all offers to engage all stakeholders in a transition to a productive agriculture, highly resilient, based on appropriate management of land and soil, creating jobs and income and thereby supporting sustainable development".

The analysis of this event illustrates that agriculture and soils are now in an orbit that makes them indispensable in the negotiations on climate change and not just in the SBSTA. The voluntary reduction of emissions by the countries in terms of their INDC are not adequate achieve the ambition of limiting warming to 2° C. The concept of LDN (neutrality of land degradation) adopted in the Rio Declaration 20 and taken forward by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has "a particular relevance" according to Sergio Zelaia. Let's hope that the initiative for 4 per 1000 and LDN are able to contribute to a successful COP21.

## Fertile lands in Anatolia are destined for sacrifice

*Özlem Kattısöz (TEMA)*

### Coal and climate change

The role of coal investments in climate change discussions is a hot topic heading to the climate conference in Paris. The electricity generation by coal is a key driver of climate change; a third of all carbon dioxide emissions come from burning coal. On the other hand, the coal industry has been aggressively pursuing its efforts to make investments in this potentially lucrative industry.

### Turkey and its addiction to coal power

Because of the high costs of energy imports at the time, the Turkish government declared year 2012 as ‘the year of coal’. National growth projections spurred the government to adopt programs and plans to produce energy using local resources such as coal. The target is to double the amount of electricity generated from local coal. To succeed in this, it is intended that significant agricultural basins such as Konya-Karaman, Eskişehir Alpu, Afyon Dinar, Trakya where local coal reserves have been explored will be converted to coal mines and coal power plants will be built in those basins.

TEMA has been working in one of those regions (Konya Closed Basin) since 2006. A number of research and implementation activities have been held for soil and water conservation in this region, where intense agricultural activities are a threat to natural resources. However at the moment a bigger threat is looming. As a result of the exploration work, the second largest lignite reserve of the country has been found in this region. It is a 1,8 billion tonne reserve and experts claim that it is enough to fuel a 5800 MW coal plant for 30 years. Coal-powered plants are typically composed of 300-600 MW units, which implies that the government is planning to build at least 10 coal plants in what is one of the most fertile lands of Anatolia.

### What will happen in Mid-Anatolia’s Konya Closed Basin if coal is exploited here?

Exploitation of coal resources will probably have a number of severe effects, including soil contamination, water stress and human health risks. 20,000 hectare land is about to be converted to a vast coal mine, which in turn will mean that almost 5,000 people will lose their livelihoods and will be forced to migrate to cities or seek alternative local employment, where jobs in the coal mining industry will become available.

Approximately 200,000 people whose lands are outside of the reserve will suffer from the effects of mining and the associated coal power plants, such as water stress due to loss of water resources from the site, air, water pollution and soil contamination.

Konya Closed Basin covers 10% of all of the agricultural lands of Turkey and has the highest agricultural potential of the country. Population projections indicate that Turkey will have an additional population of 5 million people by 2020. A million tons of grain will be needed to feed this additional population, meaning that 400,000 hectares agricultural land will be needed to meet this demand. In an environment where food security is an critical issue, the sacrifice of 20,000 hectares of fertile land and the negative impacts on agricultural production in the surrounding areas makes no sense.

As can clearly be seen in Konya Closed Basin case, land grabbing is not merely the transfer of ownership or invasion of a land by some certain interest groups. It is also a violation of people’s right to food, right to water and of the rights of future generations.

(image Copyright Beyond Coal and Gas)



## Sustainable Land Management and Combating Desertification

*Ibrahima Semega (GCOZA)*

Can public-private partnership be an opportunity for regional and local authorities in arid and semi-arid areas to advance the implementation of their development plans?

In the revised or aligned National Action Plans (NAP/CCD) of the signatory countries of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the focus is on the devolution of responsibility for NAP implementation to the local level. Regional and local authorities in arid and semi-arid areas have been urged to integrate Sustainable Land Management and Combating Desertification in their local development plans.

In line with this, the Initiative of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel (IGGWSS) has adopted a similar approach with those local authorities that are increasingly experiencing the effects of desertification and climate change.

It is up to local authorities in arid and semi-arid areas to be proactive in developing and implementing integrated investment frameworks for Sustainable Land Management, with incentives and proper planning measures for forming innovative partnerships.

To do this, in addition to conventional traditional financial support provided by the state, local authorities also have other opportunities to initiate appropriate activities. These opportunities could include decentralized cooperation, collaboration with non-governmental organizations as effective community partners, and engagement with the private sector (companies, Economic Interest Groupings (EIG), consultants specializing in environmental issues, associations and corporate groups of pastoralists, farmers and others.).

Of these three categories of partners, the private sector is the one that is most appropriate, given his vocation and skills to accompany communities in SLM. Some examples of possible initiatives

- A community can assign a forest management contract to an Economic Interest Grouping under ecotourism.
- A federation of pastoralists can negotiate the management of local pastoral infrastructure with the authorities.
- A construction and public service company can negotiate for a production site for construction materials
- An EIG of loggers can negotiate the development of several hectares of rubber plantations or other economic woody species.
- An office of environmental studies may sign a contract with an intermediary authority to register in the Carbon market.



In all these configurations, a clear and precise contract defining the liabilities and responsibilities of each party must be established between the relevant authorities and the operator.

This contract should focus on environmental protection, ecosystem restoration and the financial benefits that the action will provide for the community. Safeguards will be essential to prevent any attempts to expropriate community lands.

These innovative partnerships will need to be based on the “win / win” principle. However, in the case of non-fulfillment of obligations they should also allow the local authorities to terminate the contracts if necessary.

Local authorities can also create sustainable benefits through twinning with other cities and the implementation of cross-border projects.

The debate on how best to shape public-private partnership is an ongoing one. The RéSaD network, Drynet and RADD0, beneficiaries of the FLEUVE project, will explore opportunities for this type of partnership that can provide target communities of the project with effective partners in local development.

## UNCCD Africa Regional Preparatory Meeting for COP 12

*Noel Oettle (EMG)*

Between 31 August and 4 September South Africa hosted the preparatory meeting of African UNCCD Focal Points for the upcoming twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD (COIP 12) in Ankara, Turkey. The meeting was held in Pretoria, and Drynet members Emmanuel Seck of ENDA and Noel Oettle of EMG attended as observers and participants.

The meeting recognised that Africa’s desertification is strongly linked to poverty, migration and food security, and was organised to formulate regional positions on the different agenda items of the COP. The meeting agreed upon coordination mechanisms and task divisions among African Focal Points to ensure adequate support to the African Group in the negotiations of different agenda items.

One of the key issues addressed in the meeting was the need for a strategy to promote the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets into the implementation of the UNCCD. The meeting noted that the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) includes issues not yet fully agreed upon, which will have to be resolved in order to align with the implementation of the SDGs.

Discussions also explored the possible need for revisions in the formulation, revision and implementation of action programmes to accommodate the post-2015 sustainable development framework. Review or even fundamental revision of the UNCCD Ten Year Strategic Plan and Framework may be needed.

Land rehabilitation is one of the pathways to sustainable development. By rehabilitating degraded land, many of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) would be more attainable. Land that is properly nurtured fosters food and water security and can mitigate negative climate change impacts by cultivating opportunities for growth and ensuring stability. To invest in the land is to invest in sustainable livelihoods, therefore the goal of COP12 is to provide practical steps to make the rehabilitation of degrading land areas a reality.

The COP delegates expressed their intention to strengthen and expand stakeholder engagement and encourage more involvement of the parliamentarians, civil society organizations and the private sector in identifying and developing solutions to land degradation.



SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE



## Sustainable Territory-Based Range Management Plan (STBRM)

### A Model for Resilience of Indigenous & Community Conserved Areas & Territories (ICCAs)

*Nahid Naghizadeh, Taghi Farvar (CENESTA)*

#### Rationale

Rangelands used to be managed and sustainably used in Iran by indigenous nomadic tribes (Nomadic Pastoralists) based on their own traditional norms, customary practices, indigenous knowledge and unique spiritual beliefs regarding natural resources. But, since Agrarian Reform and Nationalisation of Natural Resources in Iran (as part of the 1963 'White Revolution') conservation was shifted to government authorities and customary systems were replaced with expensive and inefficient government bureaucratic systems. These policies were not in harmony with customary rules and norms and severely weakened customary institutions, mutual aid associations and governance systems of natural resources such as soil and water use, conservation of biodiversity and local monitoring systems of natural resource management in all types of ecosystems.

It is now clear at least to some policy-makers that a different approach is needed, one that is based on the participation of indigenous and local communities in the form of Sustainable Territory-Based Range Management approach with integration of indigenous knowledge of the tribes with the latest scientific findings in the field of range ecology and sustainable land management. Territories of Indigenous Nomadic Tribes are today spread over 32 million hectares of the country's rangelands— nearly 37 % of the total land mass.

#### Natural Resource Governance & Management by Indigenous Nomadic Tribes

Today, despite the attacks received and the losses suffered, the nomadic communities of Iran are still alive and are making serious efforts to restore the integrity of their customary territories and ICCAs, prevent their further fragmentation and develop sustainable and productive management systems for their fragile territories. These efforts make a significant contribution to national conservation as well as the national economy while preserving the traditional systems of ICCA and community-based natural resource management .

#### Sustainable Territory-Based Range Management Plan

Indigenous Nomadic Tribes of Iran have consistently identified control of their territories as ICCAs (Indigenous & Community Conserved Areas & Territories) as one of their main priorities. Since 2003 CENESTA has been working with Indigenous Nomadic Tribes to help them revive their customary institutions, over the last several years the work entered a new phase of getting closer to achieving their main goal: to secure control over their territories and their conservation and sustainable use regimes in accordance with their indigenous knowledge.

The result, which is a proposal for a Sustainable Territory-Based Range Management Plan (STBRM) aims at improving rangeland management, conservation, restoration of indigenous knowledge for rangeland rehabilitation and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for nomadic communities. Since the main rationale currently used to deprive nomads of access to their lands is that they are destroying the ecosystems, the project recognises that securing access to their territories touches on issues related to knowledge, science and research systems (Farvar 2003) .

The main incentive for the government to hand back management of territories to nomadic councils is to assure the sustainable land management and sustainable use of the rangelands. Over the past decades efforts have been made by governmental organizations to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources but these have been unsuccessful due to the lack of participation of the right-holders (the nomads) in decision-making, policy-making, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

It has taken some years of work and many meetings simply to develop the project proposal shows that this is a difficult challenge that faces some opposition. We expect that this year the first part of this project will be implemented in customary territories of a number of indigenous nomadic tribes and then become a model for other tribes and regions of the country. Its aims are:

- Strengthening traditional and indigenous governance and management systems for conservation and sustainable use;
- Revival and promotion of indigenous knowledge of conservation and sustainable land management and sustainable use;
- Sustainable use of natural resources on tribal territories;
- Improving managerial and executive capacities of nomadic communities;
- Strengthening the sense of belonging of tribes to their territories;
- Creating a diversity of incomes and strengthening sustainable livelihoods;
- Respect for customary rights to their territories and ICCAs.

All stakeholders recognise the importance of benefiting from the best of both indigenous knowledge and formal knowledge systems. To achieve this, the project is based on following strategies:

- Ensuring that any research activities that need to be undertaken at any stage of the project (including monitoring and evaluation) are conducted in a participatory manner controlled by the nomadic communities;
- Seasonal migration as a historical adaptive strategy for sustainable range management

*(continues at page 12)*



had an opportunity to review and comment upon the draft of a new comprehensive natural resource law. The comments– in support of community conservation and sustainable use of natural resources– were sent to the Parliamentary Committee in charge, with copies to the Supreme Leader, the President and the Minister of Agriculture . Therefore the sense of self-confidence among indigenous nomadic tribes has been improved as a result of their participation in reviewing and elaborating the comprehensive natural resource law in Iran.

*\*for full article with reference visit [www.dry-net.org](http://www.dry-net.org)*

- Introducing the concept of non-equilibrium ecosystems (NEE) as the basis for range management which inherently validates and recognises indigenous knowledge related to range management and conservation. It also tends to do away with the conventional wisdom on range ecology that, based on the habit of what the government, academia and research institutions have been imposing on indigenous nomadic tribes and local communities, has brought about much devastation of both natural resources and human communities who depend on them. NEE science, now nearly mainstream in many institutions in Europe, US, Africa and Asia, is far more friendly towards and respectful of customary natural resource management systems. The investigation of the NEE approach, and its comparison with the conventional imposed systems from above, and its compatibility with customary natural resource management systems and indigenous knowledge will provide much needed support to strengthening both the nomadic and some sedentary livestock herding communities.

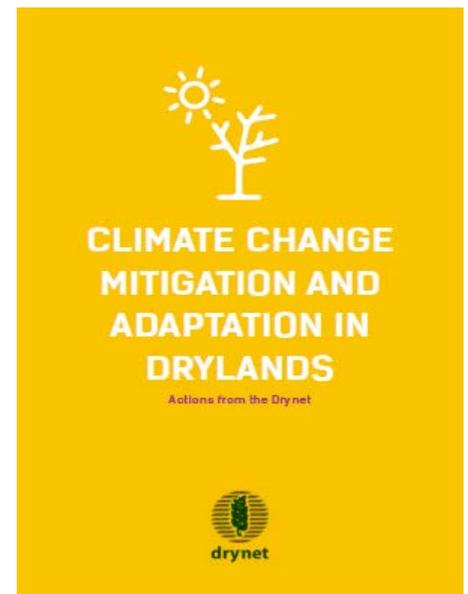
- Integrating and benefiting from both traditional and formal knowledge.

### Achievements

Indigenous nomadic tribes will pursue their push to have the government support their proposals for Sustainable Territory-Based Range Management Plan (STBRM), which is the closest the government has come to recognition of the ICCAs of Indigenous nomadic tribes and local communities organisations will keep offering their advice in policy making processes at various levels for community-based natural resource management and empowerment of Indigenous nomadic tribes and local communities to reclaim their rights over their territorial ICCAs (forests, rangelands, wetlands, marine and coastal areas), which would then be conserved and used sustainably in accordance with customary science and management.

In addition, the 2011 Law of the Fifth Five Year Development Plan approves the proposal for developing a model of ecosystem management with territory-based rangeland governance by nomadic tribes with financial support by government in the context of pilot projects . This followed the specific admission that their prior sedentarised (ranching) management policies had failed and the government needed to go back to support transhumance practices.

In 2012 and 2013 Indigenous nomadic tribes and local community representatives



*Available at the Drynet stand in the exhibition area and at [www.dry-net.org](http://www.dry-net.org) !!!*

For comments, questions and suggestions, please contact us at [drynet@tema.org.tr](mailto:drynet@tema.org.tr) or visit [www.dry-net.org](http://www.dry-net.org)