



UNCCD and global policy on desertification and land degradation – state of play

Brussels, 10.06.2013



**Patrick Wegerdt,
International relations, DG Environment, European Commission**

patrick.wegerdt@ec.europa.eu

1. Follow up to Rio+20

- 11th Conference of the Parties (COP11) to United Nations Convention to combat Desertification (UNCCD) - Windhoek, Namibia 16-27 September
- SDG process

2. Economics of Land Degradation (ELD)

Rio+20 outcome document 'The future we want' emphasises the need to take action to address desertification and land degradation, and the important role of the UNCCD:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/thefuturewewant.html>

Para. 206 states:

We recognize the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. In view of this, we will strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development.

UNCCD is the only legal instrument dealing with desertification and land degradation globally, therefore it has taken on the task to examine actions necessary to achieve a 'land degradation neutral world' (LDNW).

Problem is with current limited scope of the Convention, essentially addressing only monitoring and reporting.

UNCCD COP11 – taking place in Windhoek, Namibia, 16-27 September will be the first opportunity post-Rio+20 for parties to the Convention to consider means to achieve LDNW.

One possibility: a **protocol** or **annex** under UNCCD to identify steps for parties to achieve LDNW by specific date (2030, 2050)?

In a parallel process, Rio+20 called for the elaboration of a global set of **sustainable development goals (SDGs)** with open working groups established to identify priority areas for SDGs and defining an associated measurable set of goals.

Discussions on potential subjects for SDGs underway at UN headquarters in New York.

A meeting to discuss the thematic area of 'food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, desertification, land degradation and drought' took place 22-23 May 2013. EU interventions agreed on the individual topics.

The discussion highlighted need to address the drivers of land degradation, including unsustainable agricultural and livestock management practices as well as mining and industrial pollution.

Number of questions raised:

- whether land degradation should be a stand-alone goal or a target linked to food security or perhaps sustainable natural resource use;
- practicalities of notion of neutrality and implied offset approach, in particular highly localized costs.

Further meetings scheduled to February 2014 to consider other priority areas, after which the group will begin to elaborate a set of specific goals.

Study on the Economics of land degradation (ELD)

- Global study, produced in partnership with German Development Agency (GIZ) taking a lead, aims to make the economics of land degradation an integral part of policy strategies and decision-making.
- Aims to follow the model of the TEEB report and increase public awareness of the costs of land degradation as well as support policy-making regarding sustainable land management at various levels.

First reports due in second half 2013.

For information on possible scientific research input:

<http://eld-initiative.org/>