Combating Desertification for Resilience to Climate Change in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

FAO’s Experiences in the Sahel

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### Introduction: Desertification and Resilience to Climate Change in the Africa Drylands

- Desertification, land degradation, and loss of biodiversity, aggravated by climate change are major challenges of the arid regions of Africa, especially the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.
- These conditions have far-reaching adverse impacts on human health, food security, economic activity and rural employment, physical infrastructure, natural resources and the environment and national and global security.
- There is strong political will and ongoing partnership in Africa to combat desertification and climate change, to halt and to reverse land degradation.

**Main focus:** the Great Green Wall, Action Against Desertification, and other FAO interventions to combat desertification.

### How FAO addresses these challenges

- The **SDGs** are top on FAO's global approach to address the challenges relating to Sustainable Food and Agriculture. FAO’s five Strategic Programmes are well aligned with the SDGs:
  1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
  2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable
  3. Reduce rural poverty
  4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
  5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to disasters

- Other global commitments FAO has adhered to: Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, Paris Agreement (COP21), etc.

- Regional Initiatives in Africa:
  1. Zero Hunger Challenge
  2. Sustainable Intensification and Value chain
  3. Building Resilience in Africa’s Drylands
Key FAO programmes on combating desertification and building resilience: the Great Green Wall

- The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) is a pan-African programme developed by African Head of States and Government and launched by the African Union in 2007.
- The Great Green Wall brings together more than 20 African countries and international partners.
- The aim is to:
  - Reverse land degradation and desertification in the Sahel and Sahara
  - Address increasing challenges of food insecurity, poverty and forced migration
  - Improve resilience of human and environmental systems to climate change
- It involved building a mosaic of interventions in order to stop desertification, protect ecosystems and strengthen communities’ resilience to climate change and desertification.

Map of restoration opportunities for the GGW, depicting the 166 million hectares around the Sahara that need to be restored.
Action Against Desertification programme: FAO’s support to the Great Green Wall

- Launched in 2014, implemented by FAO in 8 ACP countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Fiji, the Gambia, Haiti, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal).
- Total funding: 41 M Euros till 2019
- Mosaic of sustainable land management and restoration of degraded lands
- Resilience to climate change, contributing to food security and poverty alleviation
- Interventions on the ground, capacity development, knowledge management, South-South cooperation
- Global partners: African Union Commission, ACP Secretariat, European Union, Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew, Walloon region (Belgium)

Action Against Desertification programme: Example: Key achievements in Burkina Faso

Restoration of degraded lands with mechanization and manual soil and water conservation measures in 45 villages in the Sahel region

- 57 ha fenced for natural regeneration and enrichment;
- 1,055.3 ha manually worked for water harvesting and planting;
- 1,824 ha ploughed (mechanized activities)
- 12 ha of trial plots for a PhD research to boost productivity of gum-producing species;
- 25 native species selected for restoration (500 kg of seeds for direct sowing + 150,000 seedlings)

→ total of 2,963 ha of degraded lands restored, involving 6,931 individuals (47% women)
Action Against Desertification programme: Opportunities and synergies

• **Synergies** with related programmes and initiatives – enhanced funding and support

• **Scaling-up** because of increased attention to restoration (SDG 15, Bonn Challenge, African Forest & Land Restoration (AFR 100), Land Degradation Neutrality, etc.)

• Expressed interest of other GGW countries to **extend Action Against Desertification (AAD)** technical support (during the 1st GGW Conference – Restoring Africa landscapes, in Dakar, May 2016)

• AAD offers a good chance to develop and demonstrate a **model for effective South-South cooperation** and serve to connect related SLM initiatives in each country and in all 3 regions

• **Prospect for RM:** Green Climate Fund, GEF, ODA, National budgets, etc.

Key FAO programmes on combating desertification and building resilience: *Other FAO interventions*

FAO is also involved in a number of other interventions for combating desertification in the region, involving national and regional partners. FAO's interventions to combat desertification are across a wide range of thematics:

• **Enabling the environment:** FAO supports countries and regions to adopt and implement policies for combating desertification
  
  o **E.g.:** FAO supports Chad’s National Action Programme for Adaptation to Climate Change (PANA), FAO assisted the preparation of Mali’s National Action Plan and Action Programmes Against Desertification (PNAE-CID), etc.

• **Vulnerability reduction:** combat desertification through implementation of good practices (SLM, water conservation measures, etc.)
  
  o **E.g.:** various GEF-funded projects in the region for climate resilience, Rome-Based Agency collaboration in Niger, Somalia and DRC with SLM practices implemented

• **In emergency contexts,** FAO supports longer-term resilience building interventions
  
  o **E.g.:** sustainable land management activities in the Kanem region (regularly affected by drought and bordering areas of massive displacement of populations)
FAO on-the-ground arrangements in support of programme implementation

- Vulnerability analyses
- Projects formulation and implementation
- Policy guidance and technical guidance for governments and partners
- Platform for resource mobilization
- Implementation of good agricultural practices and sustainable land and water management practices
- Monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment of SLM interventions
- Platform for experience and knowledge sharing and technology transfer
- Communication strategy

FAO’s support to building resilience to shocks (drought, flood, conflicts, transboundary pests/diseases)

- FAO’s Regional Initiative on “building resilience in Africa’s drylands”, supports 10 countries in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa in meeting prioritized resilience building needs as well as promoting knowledge, information sharing and learning.
- Supporting the commitments and initiatives by RECs such as IGAD’s Drought Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) and the Global Alliance for the Resilience Initiative (AGIR) in the Sahel, as well as in support on coordination of food security, nutrition and resilience information and analyses to inform policy and investment actions.
- Support on cross border programming
- Development of country level resilience building strategies
Thank you