

GTOS in support of UNCCD

Systematic observations needed by UNCCD

Summary

UNCCD is the only Rio Convention not yet having an observing system. There is a mandate from COP 9 in Argentina, held in October 2009, to work on two indicators; poverty line and land cover and to start reporting on these two indicators in 2012. The indicators are of importance as the convention addresses both ecosystems and populations in areas affected by desertification and land degradation. In the context of *land cover status* it is necessary to: establish a harmonized definition of the indicator and an appropriate classification, scale and resolution, methods to be used, available data, baselines and trends. Regarding these matters UNCCD is not going to “invent the wheel” but look for support and cooperation with organizations and networks as well as synergies with other conventions. UNCCD would also require support of GTOS and others to assist in provision of data and reporting of Land cover status at global and regional levels. In addition, assistance would be needed to Country Parties in reporting at national level including access to appropriate data, training and capacity building.

A decision was also taken during the COP 9 on the establishment of an *iterative process* to develop additional indicators on a long-term basis. Such process would include scientific peer review of the relevance, accuracy and cost-effectiveness of the indicators, possible synergies with relevant programs, projects and institutions, followed by application and review by affected countries. The work is supposed to take its departure in, but not being limited to a set of proposed indicators out of which the following would be relevant in the context of GTOS: Water availability, change in land use, level of carbon stocks above and below ground, and land under sustainable land management.

During the 1st UNCCD Scientific Conference, held in connection with the COP 9, new approaches in monitoring and assessment were brought up. Among those are models integrating social and economic aspects with biophysical measurements. On a more long-term basis, *integrated models* are of interest for UNCCD as the convention deals with both ecosystems and affected populations.