



**Validation Meeting of the Regional Harmonized Strategy for the Implementation of the “Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative”**

**Banjul, The Gambia, 19 -20 April 2012**

**General Report**

## Acronyms

ACMAD	African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BADEA	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DLDD	Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
GGW	Great Green Wall
GGWSSI	Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative
GM or GM/UNCCD	Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LADA	Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NAP	National Action Programme to Combat Desertification
NCSE	National Capacity Self-Assessment for Environmental Management
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OSS	Sahara and Sahel Observatory
PGGWA	Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
RAP	Regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification
SLM	Sustainable Land Management (water, soil, vegetation)
SRAP	Subregional Action Programme to Combat Desertification
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme of FAO
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biologic Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WOCAT	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The technical validation workshop of the “Harmonized Strategy for the Implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI)” document was held from 19 to 21 April 2012 at the Ocean Bay & Resort Hotel in Banjul. The workshop brought together:

- The Great Green Wall Initiative national focal points of countries covered by the African Union projects (PCT project funded by FAO and Project funded by the European Union, the UNCCD Global Mechanism and FAO);
- Institutions in charge of coordinating the implementation of the Great Green Wall at continental and regional levels in Africa;
- The institutions that provide technical and scientific support to the countries for preparing their action plans;
- The non-governmental institutions and organizations that provide support for the implementation of the Initiative through field programmes and projects;
- Resource persons (see participants list in annex).

## 2. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

### 2.1 Background

Efforts to conceptualize the Great Green Wall Initiative by various institutions including the African Union Commission, the CEN-SAD Secretariat, OSS and the Senegalese scientific commission have conferred to the initiative legibility and success mainly marked by an increasingly significant adhesion of African countries and stakeholders and increasing interest from the international community. Thus, at the level of African institutions and countries, as well as at the level of international technical and financial cooperation institutions, several projects and programmes are developed in support to the implementation of the initiative. These projects and programmes often aim at the same targets (countries, geographical zones within a country, local communities) and are designed and implemented without proper consultation and coordination, especially regarding the involvement of stakeholders at the various levels and the technical tools to be used.

Conscious of this situation, the African Union Commission (AUC), mandated to coordinate at policy level the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative, has **wished**, in the context of the project jointly funded by the European Union and the UNCCD Global Mechanism (GM) and implemented by FAO, that all stakeholders agree on an harmonized strategy for the implementation of the initiative, in order to ensure that all parties involved are looking in the same direction and that their actions are complementary. AUC’s concern was supported by the participants to the first Africa Drylands Week held in Senegal from 10 to 17 June 2011. The meeting produced a recommendation in that regard.

### 2.2 Objectives

The main objective of the meeting was to perform a thorough review and technical validation of the Draft Harmonized Strategy for the implementation of the GGWSSI Document submitted by the coordination unit of project “GCP/INT/120/EC-Support to the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative”.

More specifically, participants were tasked to assess the content of the document submitted, to enrich it with concrete proposals and to mandate the AUC to submit it for adoption by the relevant bodies of the African Union.

## 3. THE WORKSHOP

Proceedings started with participants introducing themselves and the presentation of the objectives and expectations of the workshop. This was followed by the opening ceremony and review of the draft document during plenaries and group sessions.

### 3.1 Opening Ceremony

The Opening ceremony was marked by the following addresses:

- ✓ The first address was delivered by the FAO Representative in The Gambia who after thanking the Government and people of the Gambia, the European Union and African Union Commissions for their partnership with FAO in implementing the GGWSSI, highlighted the relevance of that initiative in improving food security and the living conditions of populations in drylands bordering the Sahara. After recalling the role of FAO in implementing the two projects of the AUC in support to the implementation of the GGWSSI, the speaker argued that the validation of the strategy will, on the one part, help countries to accelerate the formulation of their strategies and action plans; and on the other part, the AUC and the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency (PGGWA) to implement the decision by the AU Conference of Heads of State and Government held in Malabo in July 2011 and requesting them to submit regular reports on the implementation of the initiative.
- ✓ The European Union representative started his address by thanking the Gambian Government, the AU and FAO for organizing the meeting. After a brief history of the GGW and of previous interventions by the EU (feasibility study in 2009), he recalled that some key areas of the GGW are of special interest for the EU, particularly in the area of water resources management, climate change adaptation actions and strengthening the resilience of populations to climate changes. He highlighted that EU's support through the funding of the African Union project will continue and that more substantial funds will be allocated.
- ✓ The Representative of the African Union Commission thanked the Government of The Gambia, FAO, the EU, the UNCCD Global Mechanism, ACMAD, CILSS and OSS for their financial and physical contribution to that important gathering. He then assured that the GGWSSI, thanks to its ambitious objectives, will free Africa from food insecurity through improved land productivity, the improvement of the circum Sahara natural and human settings' resilience to climate change and will ensure biodiversity conservation. Moreover, he requested partners to increase their involvement in the implementation of the GGWSSI. The Representative of the African Union concluded his address by stressing that as a framework federating all the local, national, regional and international initiatives, the GGWSSI aims at encouraging synergies in the management of scarce resources while facilitating transboundary cooperation for the wellbeing of populations in the affected zones.
- ✓ The Opening Address was given by the Minister for Forestry and the Environment of The Gambia. The Minister started off by welcoming participants on behalf of His Excellency the President of The Gambia whom, she said, shares with his peers from CEN-SAD, the merit of this great African dream of a green wall to protect human and natural environments bordering the Sahara against desert encroachment and the adverse effects of climate change. The Minister then expressed the expectations of her country, that is, "the GGWSSI should bring sustainable solutions to the issues of drought, security, and land degradation in the countries facing the issue of desertification, land degradation and droughts (DLDD)". She highlighted her country's vision of the GGWSSI being, not an isolated programme, but a programme with links and contributing to the implementation of the environmental programme of NEPAD and the Ten-year Strategy of UNCCD. In conclusion, she insisted on the need for Africans to rely on themselves and to illustrate that point, she recalled that the Gambian National Action Plan for the Great Green Wall has been developed and will be implemented with funding from the national budget. She then officially opened the workshop and wished participants successful proceedings.

### ***3.2 Presentation of the regional harmonized strategy for the GGWSSI implementation***

The draft strategy document was presented by the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) of project GCP/INT/120/EC "Support to the implementation of the GGWSSI". In his introduction, the CTA recalled a number of observations, especially on food insecurity in the GGW area, the alarming predictions of the IPCC for Africa, the history of the GGWSSI and the evolution of its concept.

His presentation continued with the following points:

- ✓ Geographic coverage
- ✓ Vision
- ✓ Objectives (overall objective, strategic and operational objectives);
- ✓ Expected results;
- ✓ Strategic framework for the implementation of the Great Green Wall:
  - Guiding principles
  - Stakeholders and their roles
  - Communication and knowledge management
- ✓ Resource mobilization for the implementation of the Great Green Wall.

The last point was further expanded on during another presentation by a Global Mechanism Representative who straightaway assured that resource mobilization requires the establishment of an integrated investment framework in order to increase, diversify, complete and optimize the funding, as recommended by UNCCD's ten-year strategy.

She also expanded on the importance of establishing a GGW-specific platform, especially for partnerships, in order to facilitate the sound implementation of the GGW. This platform would be organized around:

- Common knowledge management (knowledge development and sharing)
- Networking and establishment of financial partnerships
- Innovative resource mobilization through the strengthening of networks and capacities at all levels.

The Representative of the Global Mechanism concluded by presenting the **SLM-FINANCE** platform for ACP countries, a dynamic platform with a chapter dedicated to the GGWSSI.

After these two presentations, an introductory debate ensued. The following main issues and questions were raised and the discussions were facilitated by the ECOWAS representative:

- The vision and strategy to be copied to the GGWSSI vision;
- Geographic coverage/which part of the country will be involved;
- Links between on the one part, the strategy presented and, on the other part, the objectives and the consolidated five-year action plan of the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency, the AUC and the CEN-SAD Secretariat's 2008-2010 action plan and the Convention establishing the PGGWA signed by 11 States;
- Annex 1 on resource mobilization should be part of the document thereby changing the title of the document to: *Strategy for the implementation and resource mobilization of the GGWSSI*;
- Display the logo of all partners on the document;
- Is this strategy not late after some countries have already finalized their action plan?
- The need to restructure the document to include the various comments made;
- Identify zones that will benefit from carbon taxes;
- Invite each citizen to contribute to the success of this initiative;
- See the institutional anchoring of the PGGWA which is a hindrance for the implementation;
- Integrate adaptation mechanisms and development mechanisms and not to consider the GGW as a reforestation process, but as a planning and rural development process;
- Put the emphasis on prevention and management of natural disaster risks, especially the mitigation of the impact of droughts;
- Develop a monitoring-evaluation process by assessing basic needs.

These issues and suggestions were followed by fruitful discussions in the form of responses or comments summed up as follows:

***i. Ownership of the harmonized strategy***

The strategy was developed within the framework of the African Union project funded by the European Union and implemented by FAO to link the actions of all stakeholders. This strategy renews and expands on the strategy elements previously defined by the AUC and the CEN-SAD Secretariat (2008-2010 Action Plan Document). The objectives and results refer to those contained in the 2008-2010 action plan which should be the basis of all the interventions. Thus, it does not duplicate the strategy elements previously adopted by stakeholders under the aegis of the AUC. On the contrary, it constitutes a step forward since it is no longer "strategy elements" but a strategy.

***ii. Should we not use the objectives of the PGGWA as basis?***

The methodology to identify objectives and results to be included in the strategy was as follows:

- Based on the consensus attained among the stakeholders before establishing the PGGWA and which enabled to define and include the objective of the initiative in the 2008-2010 action plan as follows:

“The Great Green Wall programme aims at strengthening the establishment of the continental frameworks applied and the action plans to **combat the threats of soil degradation and desertification at the borders of the Sahara desert**. These mechanisms include the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), regional, subregional and national action programmes to combat desertification (RAPs, SRAPs and NAPs). **The objective is to encourage a synergic approach to implementing the activities of various national and subregional bodies geared towards land degradation and desertification control in Africa**. Thus, the assets of the African Union and CEN-SAD in terms of advocacy and capacity to mobilize actors can be highly developed in the context of this programme. However, it should be noted that the final ownership and the conception and implementation of activities is the responsibility of States and specific communities. **It is hoped that these collaboration and coordination efforts will help to reach the common objective which is to reduce land degradation and natural resources degradation in zones bordering the northern and southern Sahara**<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the programme should enable the optimal mobilization and use of resources, a feat hardly attainable by individual countries or regions.”

- This consensual objective defined since 2007 with the contribution of the Government of Senegal is the basis of all the interventions for the GGWSSI. Given the position of this consensual objective as compared to the UNCCD, the objectives contained in the harmonized strategy document (strategic objectives, operational objectives) are simply a reformulation of this objective mentioned in the 2008-2010 action plan considering the precisions provided in the UNCCD ten-year master plan on the way to formulate the objectives to combat desertification/land degradation within the context of climate change and loss of biodiversity.
- The consolidated action plan of the PGGWA is based on the national action plans. To date, these action plans, the formulation of which was supported by the African Union projects implemented by FAO, renew all the objectives and results of the AUC and CEN-SAD’s 2008-2010 action plan. Therefore the objectives of the PGGWA should not depart from them and there should be no contradictions between the objectives of the PGGWA and those of the regional harmonized strategy.

**iii. The Convention signed by 11 Member States of the GGWSSI should serve as basis for this strategy**

The convention binds only the 11 signatory Member states and not the other member countries or partners of the initiative such as Algeria who insisted on this point during the meeting. However, the objectives contained in this convention cannot contradict those of an international convention (UNCCD) that these countries have signed and ratified and which should supersede their national legislation, let alone other pledges made at international, regional or subregional levels.

**iv. Annex 1 on resource mobilization should be an integral part of the document, thereby changing its title to: GGWSSI Implementation and resource mobilization strategy**

The need for an harmonized strategy as recommended by the first Africa Drylands Week or wished by the AUC in the context of negotiations for the project to support the implementation of the GGWSSI with the European Union, concerns all the aspects of the implementation of the initiative; not only resource mobilization or communication. There is a need to provide a common baseline to the implementation of the initiative and enable all stakeholders to have one aim and speak the same language in order that, during the evaluation in years to come, the indicators and criteria be identical so as not to compare ‘apples to oranges’. However, the annex will be reviewed for its full inclusion in the primary document.

**v. Display the logo of all partners on the document**

Even though this concern is legitimate, only the following elements will be retained for the final document:

- a. Top of Cover: AUC and PGGWA logos

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<sup>1</sup> See paragraph 3.1 of the Strategy document presented and discussed in Banjul.

- b. Bottom of cover: inscribe the following: “This document was produced with the financial support of the EU and the technical support of FAO and the GM”.
- c. Front page: Acknowledgements; with the logos of all the partners.

**vi. *Is not the strategy too late after some countries have already finalized their action plan?***

Currently, only five out of the twenty countries covered by the Great Green Wall Initiative (it should be recalled that the GGWSSI does not cover only the 11 countries that signed the PGGWA convention) have a validated action plan: Chad, Djibouti, Niger, Senegal and The Gambia. The other fifteen countries, including countries such as Mali, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso currently preparing the validation of their action plans, can take advantage of the harmonized strategy document in order to improve their national documents. Even for the other five countries, it should be noted that the document is still undergoing technical validation and that amendments could be made before its submission to the Government for adoption. This process would help the government to avoid mistakes, especially regarding its pledges in the context of the UNCCD and UNFCCC.

**vii. *Identify zones to benefit from carbon taxes and enlist the contribution of each citizen for the success of that initiative***

This idea is already included in the document with developments on the “primary responsibility at national level in financing the initiative” and on innovative funding.

**viii. *See the institutional anchoring of the PGGWA which constitutes a hindrance in implementing the initiative***

The participants endorsed the recommendation contained in the document requesting the AUC to work at making the PGGWA a specialized institution of the AUC under the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) following the example of institutions such as SAFGRAD, IBAR, etc. This will facilitate access by the agency to the AUC’s resources and will be a breath of fresh air for the finances of countries signatories to the convention, as it will enable the Agency to work with all African countries.

**ix. *Integrate adaptation mechanisms and development mechanisms and not consider the GGW as a reforestation process but as a planning and rural development process.***

This idea is cross cutting in the entire document in its present format (concept, vision, objectives, and expected results).

**x. *Develop a monitoring-evaluation process by assessing baseline needs***

This idea is very important and should be invested in by the project. It should be addressed by the scientific committee proposed by the project but rejected by the first meeting of the steering committee which considered it as a duplication of PGGWA’s efforts. The project will work on the issue with the PGGWA over the coming months.

**xi. *The need to restructure the document to include the various observations formulated (see the work of group 3 in paragraph 3.3.3.).***

**xii. *Put a special emphasis on some of the approaches that have proved efficient on the field in the area of sustainable land management, such as the assisted natural regeneration, and that should be strengthened and expanded in partnership with the African Re-greening Initiative (ARI):***  
[http://www.unep.org/pdf/op\\_sept\\_2011/FR/OP-2011-09-FR-ARTICLE6.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/op_sept_2011/FR/OP-2011-09-FR-ARTICLE6.pdf)  
[http://www.unep.org/pdf/op\\_sept\\_2011/EN/OP-2011-09-EN-ARTICLE6.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/op_sept_2011/EN/OP-2011-09-EN-ARTICLE6.pdf)

The document discussed concerns the strategy. The proposed approach concerns the “tree planting” or “forestry” aspect of the initiative and it is the responsibility of each country, based on its national options and priorities, to choose one approach over the other, including the approach promoted by the African Re-greening Initiative.

### 3.3 Group work

After the introductory presentations on the draft strategy document, participants were divided into the following three working groups with terms of reference on the key themes in order to further examine the document:

- Theme for Group 1: Partnership and resource mobilization;
- Theme for Group 2: Capacity development
- Theme for Group 3: Way forward for the harmonized strategy document.

The outcomes of the group discussions are as follows:

#### 3.3.1 Group 1 Report: Partnership and resource mobilization

##### a. Objective of the partnership platform :

The sharing platform of the Great Green Wall aims at the following main objectives:

- ✓ Developing partnership between all the actors of the GGW;
- ✓ Financial, human and technical resources mobilization for the implementation of the GGW;
- ✓ Knowledge management;
- ✓ Information sharing and E-learning;
  - Communication

##### b. What type of partnership platform and why ?

The sharing platform of the GGW is a partnership space that should be accessible to all GGW stakeholders (from local to international levels). The main functions of the platform are:

- ✓ Setting technical and financial partnerships;
- ✓ Sharing experiences;
- ✓ Disseminating and promoting good practices;
- ✓ Strengthening capacities;
- ✓ Promoting monitoring-evaluation;
- ✓ Harmonizing the various approaches and methodologies for the implementation of the Great Green Wall;
- ✓ Promoting research-development;
- ✓ Scaling up the outcomes of research-development;
- ✓ Promoting the principles of sustainable development.

##### c. What types of actors ?

Type of actors	Actors
LOCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Private sector</li> <li>✓ NGOs</li> <li>✓ Collective interest associations</li> <li>✓ Local authorities</li> <li>✓ Devolved States departments</li> <li>✓ Farmers' organizations</li> <li>✓ Forestry organizations</li> </ul>
NATIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Research institutes</li> <li>✓ National focal points (GGW, CCD, UNFCCC, GEF, CBD, etc.)</li> <li>✓ Key sectors (including planning, finance, statistics)</li> <li>✓ Coordination bodies on environmental issues, rural development, etc.</li> <li>✓ Chambers of Agriculture</li> </ul>
REGIONAL	ECOWAS, CEEAC, UMA, IGAD, CILSS, COMESA, OSS, NEPAD, AUC, ICRISAT, CEN-SAD, MDG Centre for West and Central Africa
INTERNATIONAL	✓ Relevant International conventions and agencies such as: UNCCD, FAO, UNDP, UNEP,

	<p>UNFCCC, UNCBD, Disaster Risk Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ International technical organizations and programmes such as WOCAT</li> <li>✓ International scientific organizations concerned or interested;</li> <li>✓ International development actors: National and decentralized cooperation agencies (such as the Walloon Region-WBI), local authorities of developed countries;</li> <li>✓ Financial institutions and bodies such as GEF, EU, World Bank, AfDB, BADEA, IDB, IFAD</li> <li>✓ Emerging actors of the South-South cooperation such as; Brazil, Russia, China, India, South Africa (BRICS)</li> <li>✓ The African Forest Forum and ICRAF;</li> <li>✓ The Secretariat of Low Forest Cover Countries;</li> <li>✓ Etc.</li> </ul>
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**d. How to ensure a sustainable platform?**

The elements identified below could contribute to ensuring the sustainability of the platform:

- Open a portal/website “Great Green Wall” at the African Union Commission and/or the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency. This portal would be the entry point for the various existing or currently being developed theme platforms;
- Each platform making up the Green Wall should have clear Terms of reference;
- Define a sustainable financing policy for the platform.

**e. What are the existing initiatives that can contribute to developing the platform?**

At national level:

- Develop and capitalize on the platform in the area of SLM as established in the context of the TerrAfrica process in Ethiopia: Sustainable Land Management Platform (SLMP), in Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Senegal, etc.;
- Develop and capitalize on the Millennium villages experiences developed by the MDG Centre for West and Central Africa based in Bamako, in the various beneficiary countries, especially the establishment of national and local theme platforms on: Needs assessment; E-learning (Masters degree on sustainable development); Information system on the weekly prices of agricultural and pastoral products; the African Soil Mapping platform.

At regional level, there is a need to develop the achievements of CILSS institutions, especially AGRHYMET, the Niger Basin Authority, the Liptako-Gourma Authority, etc.

At international level, take into consideration:

- Efforts by the Global Mechanism which, in the context of its south-south cooperation programme, has created a “ SLM Finances Great Green Wall”(Project scope | ACP)
- The Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS, Tunis) to put in place a platform to exchange knowledge on the Great Green Wall in cooperation with CILSS and other scientific institutions involved in the African Union project financed by the European Union.

**f. What priority actions for the next steps?**

- ✓ Take stock of the various relevant initiatives to be included in the Platform of the Great Green Wall and organize a meeting of supporters of the various initiatives in order to ensure an integrated approach and streamlined actions;
- ✓ Seek and establish synergies between the various initiatives in the context of a common portal Great Green Wall to be created at the African Union Commission;
- ✓ Scale up the various initiatives by strengthening actors’ capacity for networking and communication among the various platforms;
- ✓ Put in place a website management structure.

### 3.3.2 Group 2 Report: Capacity development

#### a. What are the capacity strengthening needs?

Capacity strengthening in the area of environmental management is necessary not only in terms of knowledge gaps to be filled through trainings. Even with a sufficient level of knowledge, humans are not always able to put them into good use for development or project monitoring. Nowadays, to be competent increasingly means to be able to manage complex and unstable situations, and this is something most executives involved in managing environmental issues are not able to do due to their physical, legislative or institutional environment. It should also be noted that there exist scientific and technological skills in universities and research centres, however these are not sufficiently developed outside their context. Capacity strengthening should therefore expand to three levels:

- Systemic level to facilitate the coordination and harmonization of practices and approaches in implementing the Great Green Wall actions;
- Institutional level to facilitate the rationalization of consultation frameworks and increase their efficiency and efficacy;
- Individual level to strengthen and develop the scientific and technical skills of individual actors.

The most important is to identify for each level, the issues (with specific tools and approaches) to obtain sound informative layers. To that effect, there is a need to map in order to identify the capacity development needs. Each type of “strengthened capacity” proposal should take into account the sustainability aspect by including the environmental dimension.

In the case of trainings (individual capacity strengthening), they should be based on sustainable natural resource management modes. **The dialogue and knowledge sharing during exchange visits between partners is equally important.** The needs should be identified based on the target audience. Trainings should also be targeted in order to meet the concerns of each party. They should also be decentralized. The different targets are: the civil society, grassroots community organizations, national and local policymakers (municipalities, rural communes), opinion leaders, sectoral groups and farmers, ministry executives, agents in devolved State departments, parliamentarians. The rural world is a very large environment and each intervention should involve and affect the various services. In addition:

- Plan and guide professional training and diploma training in ecosystem management towards GGW issues. The development of new information and communication technologies should also be considered since isolation is crucial in the GGW zone and could slow down progress and reduce the visibility of actions.
- Strengthening monitoring-evaluation capacity should be envisaged to provide GGW actors with the tools to assess the environmental, economic and social impact of actions in the field.
- Research-development should be linked to all the capacity strengthening programmes of the GGW. The steering committee of the GGWSSI should integrate development actors in training programmes.

#### b. How to assess needs ?

The areas of intervention (national needs) can be derived from the GGW national action plans, but also, where possible, from the self-evaluation project of national priorities for strengthening the needed capacities for an improved management of the global environment (ANCR). In most countries, this project summarizes and identifies national capacity strengthening needs for the implementation of the three Rio Conventions (CC, CBD, CD), of POPs and Conventions related to water management. ANCR is a basis for mobilizing partnership with all national and global institutions in the area of environment. It also enables to highlight the collaboration with technical financial partners.

Moreover, it would be equally important to try and determine how capacity strengthening implemented in a country could interest another country (subregional and regional needs).

It is important to consider the importance of endogenous knowledge. In time, populations have adapted by developing tools and adaptation capacities. In the past, natural resources were managed in a sustainable manner. That local knowledge should be learned, exploited and transmitted. To that effect, there is a need to understand the language of grassroots communities by developing NGOs that play a crucial role in assessing the needs. Local languages could be communication tools to extend trainings. Community radios could assess training needs. Scaling up the level of education of communities will improve resource governance.

For each training, there is a need to put in place a monitoring system to assess its efficiency and impact. Thus, it is preferable to train a large number of individuals (critical mass) who master the tools and change the approach in strengthening capacity by funding the restitution of the training by the first person trained in his/her zone or intervention or with his/her working partners. This new approach should enable to multiply any initiative in that area.

Farmers' organizations and training (weakened by the various policies) should be rehabilitated to avoid the multiplication of costly projects at local level.

**c. What are the existing initiatives ?**

They include all the themes on natural resource management. All these initiatives should be capitalized on (tools, content, etc.) because significant efforts have already been invested to that effect.

Identify and record all the relevant efforts made in the context of the three Rio Conventions and the various mechanisms (financial and organizational). In this context, the project on irrigated agriculture in Burkina Faso is preparing a database of the individuals trained. The project plans on monitoring all the trainings in order to capitalize on, and manage information on capacity strengthening. A partnership framework should be put in place between the institution supporting this project and the GGW institution in Burkina Faso in order to exploit the information collected and avoid duplications.

The integrated management of natural resources has led to the establishment of local water committees (LWC) that bring together water users and uses based on the utilization rules defined by the community and Local energy resources Management Structures (LMS), especially wood.

The management of production chains (development of non-traditional sectors, non-wood forest products channels: fruits, gum arabic, resins, shea) offer several opportunities. There is a need to consider species in the concept of value chains, and regroup and diversify the production chains of various ecosystems, and this will contribute to combating poverty and increasing the resilience of local populations. Numerous initiatives exist and they should be mapped. Guides are developed for natural resources management, dune fixation, water management with irrigated agriculture.

The Mediterranean experience of a network of universities and research centres that created a research agenda on Mediterranean forestry, was presented. This network was funded by the European Union. The GGWSSI could copy this example by developing a training and research curriculum for the countries concerned by the GGW.

Cooperation between the University of Columbia (USA) and some Sahel Universities has enabled to establish a Masters Degree in sustainable development for Sahelian countries in order to train a different type of experts for the integrated management of natural resources. Thus, the IDB has funded a programme to strengthen capacities for the GGW CILSS countries. This initiative regroups ten universities and research institutions.

All these initiatives should be exploited in order to succeed in efficiently implementing the Great Green Wall Initiative.

**d. What are the next steps ?**

- ✓ Preparation of a capitalization worksheet of existing capacity strengthening sessions and programmes. An inventory on the training centres and intervention themes, is important to obtain baseline situation;

- ✓ An information collection sheet of experiences to capitalize on, will be submitted to the various organizations, centres, universities, projects, programmes, all data holders.
- ✓ The review of national action plans to identify capacity strengthening needs;
- ✓ FAO will organize in July 2012, for CILSS countries and Nigeria, a workshop on the state of forest genetic resources. The primary documents are national reports. One of the objectives of this workshop is to identify capacity strengthening needs of GGW countries covered by this workshop. The national focal points of the Great Green Wall of CILSS countries and Nigeria will be invited to the workshop.
- ✓ In June, the MDG Center together with students from the University of Columbia, will take stock of all the existing research work on the GGW route. All this information should be capitalized on in implementing the GGWSSI.
- ✓ A strategy and action programme for strengthening capacities will be formulated by FAO in collaboration with the countries affected and research partners and institutions on the basis of a mapping of needs and opportunities offered.

**e. Who are the potential partners ?**

- ✓ Research and development institutions and networks such as ANAFE, OSS, PAFO, CORAF, IRD, CILSS, NGARA, ICRAF, AFF, MDG Center, IITA, NAERLS, WASCAL (collaboration with the University of Bonn), Universities and NGOs.
- ✓ WASCAL is a research centre on environmental issues and was established following the intervention of the German Cooperation in some African countries. At the end of their intervention, they wanted to make the tools they had created available. Thus, they established a training centre, in collaboration with German and African universities, for PhD students in Ouagadougou and Accra.
- ✓ The GGWSSI should approach research centres and integrate training modules to avoid duplications.

**f. What are the potential resources ?**

African universities, the University of Columbia, private companies through the buying of carbon credits, UNESCO chair programmes, AGRA (Agrarian Green Revolution in Africa), international research institutions, GEF, the three Rio Conventions mechanisms, bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

### **3.3.3 Group 3 Report: Way forward for the strategy document**

**a. Why an harmonized strategy for the implementation of the Great Green Wall ?**

Actors' enthusiasm: multiplicity of initiatives, need to work together toward the same goal, integrate the ambitions of all actors.

A reference for action: federates the vision and ambitions of all Africa's actors and partners.

**b. Structure of the strategy document :**

**Participants agreed on the current structure and made a few amendments:**

- **Enrich point 5 : resource mobilization with elements from Annex 1, the results of the workshop on resource mobilization in support to the implementation of the Great Green Wall, held in Msila, Algeria in April 2012, as well as the results of the working group 2 above;**
- **Integrate references to previous Acts and Decisions on the Great Green Wall Initiative;**

- Include a page for the definition of acronyms and abbreviations appearing in the document;
  - Interchange the order of Chapter 6: Monitoring and Evaluation with Chapter 7: Communication and visibility of the initiative;
  - Replace paragraph *Grassroots Community*, with *Civil Society* as Grassroots community refers to a sub-element of the Civil Society;
  - Summarize the comments and observations with the rapporteurs (invite participants to better formulate their inputs) ;
  - Introduce actors and their role based on political and operational levels and not on national and regional levels;
  - Include a paragraph on the capacity strengthening strategy as a new point;
  - Insist particularly on the aspects of populations dynamics and peace as the expected impacts/results of the implementation of the Great Green Wall.
- c. Strategic scoping :
- Introduce a paragraph to highlight that the proposed strategy takes into account the three Rio Conventions and perfectly integrates the ten-year UNCCD strategy.
  - Add another paragraph to explain that the proposed strategy stems from the 2008-2010 action plan proposed in 2008 by the AUC and the CEN-SAD Secretariat with the contribution of the Republic of Senegal and does not question the consolidated five-year regional action plan developed by the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency and some member countries which is of an operational, and not strategic nature.
  - Produce a list of the documents consulted.
- d. Road Map / Perspectives/Next steps :
- Produce a version of the strategy document including the inputs of the workshop before mid-May and initiate, if possible its submission process at the next meeting of the African Union Assembly in June/July in Malawi for possible adoption;
  - Share the document and lobby during the next experts meeting on the GGW scheduled for July 2012 in Ouagadougou;
  - Present the strategy document during a Side Event organized by the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency at the RIO+20 Conference

### **3.4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Considering the persistence of institutional problems related to the roles of the African Union Commission and the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency (PGGWA);
- Considering that the solution to these misunderstandings does not fall within the competence of individual States;
- Considering the various deliberations of the African Union Assembly on the Great Green Wall and the Convention on the PGGWA signed by 11 AU member states;

- Considering the decision taken in Malabo regarding the coordination of the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative ;
- **The workshop recommends** to the African Union to play its role and to initiate, in consultation with the Secretariat and bodies of the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency, the necessary measures for the Pan-African Great Green Wall Agency to become a technical arm of the AUC to serve all the countries concerned by the Great Green Wall Initiative in Africa.

#### **4. CLOSING CEREMONY**

The closing ceremony was chaired by the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry for Forestry and the Environment of The Gambia, representing the Minister for Forestry and the Environment. In its closing address, the Deputy Minister thanked all participants for the tremendous work done in such a short time and recalled the main conclusions of the workshop. He further encouraged the partners present to work for a timely inclusion of all the observations and suggestions made in order to have a consensual strategy document ready for political adoption by the Summit of Heads of State scheduled later this year. He finally wished all participants a safe trip back to their respective homes.

Representing the AUC, Mr. Almamay Dampha thanked all the participants for their hard work. He also promised to endeavor, to the extent possible, to support the adoption of this strategy document by the African Union Commission bodies and exhorted the countries to be more united and make more efforts to mobilize increased financial means, especially at national level through bilateral and multilateral cooperation in order to implement the Great Green Wall Initiative which is very crucial in combating desertification and improving the living conditions of rural populations.