منتدى التغيرات المناخية

Forum sur les changements climatiques
Climate Change Forum

Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change
The Global Mechanism

1. Why is AFOLU relevant for the UNCCD and custodians of rural land resources?

Dryland systems and rural people are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. The combination of extreme events and temperature increases with other human-induced pressures is very likely to exacerbate degradation, de-vegetation and desertification. The degradation of agricultural lands will in turn increase pressure on marginal lands and on natural resources. Combating degradation of drylands, in fact, constitutes a significant potential for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Due to the vast amount of area, drylands store a major share of terrestrial carbon. The restoration of drylands and the mitigation of degradation and de-vegetation can therefore play an important role for combating climate change.

The potential of AFOLU for the creation and fostering of synergies, especially between UNFCCC and UNCCD, is based on several key links:

- climatic changes threaten marginal lands by increasing the risk of degradation processes and desertification;
- land degradation, particularly agricultural and unsustainable land management practices and deforestation, are major contributors to atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
- an increase in weather extremes such as droughts and heavy rains as a result of global warming will lead to further land degradation, while the desertification process also affects the climate;
- currently 1.6 billion people in the world without electricity and 2.5 billion people worldwide have no access to efficient energy supplies or rather rely on inefficient and unsustainable use of biomass, the majority of these living in rural areas (IEA 2006); and
- the impacts of climate change increasingly affect livelihoods, particular in these sectors and the rural areas. 262 million people were affected by climate disasters annually from 2000 to 2004, over 98 % of them in the developing world (UNDP 2007).

Within the synergies resulting from these links, the main overlaps and opportunities for action can be found in the agriculture, forestry and rural sectors, where harmful and unsustainable land management practices are encountered very frequently. Targeting these practices can contribute both to reduce GHG emissions and decreasing the risk of land degradation and desertification. The carbon finance through the carbon markets or other means offers an unprecedented opportunity for UNCCD stakeholders and further custodians of rural land resources to access innovative funding sources and channel some of these funds into activities that contribute to the objectives of both Conventions at the same time, thus fostering UNCCD (and potentially CBD) implementation.

2. **What's at stake and what should SLM stakeholders ask for to allow the full utilisation of the AFOLU mitigation and finance potential**

Little support exists for activities in the agricultural and other land-use sectors outside of REDD. Currently, SLM related AFOLU mitigation activities do not reach their full potential. For the most part these sectors are currently either ineligible, i.e. under the CDM or play a limited role in current voluntary carbon markets. However, the international community reengages with these sectors as part of the UNFCCC negotiations and starts to look into fully utilize the related mitigation options. AFOLU is of direct relevance to UNCCD stakeholders and other custodians of rural land resources, as many related activities are often situated in arid to semi-arid regions and therefore the most prone to land degradation and ultimately desertification. These stakeholders are also some of the most vulnerable to climate change and particular attention to their adaptive needs will be required in the years to come.

Projects in the rural energy sector are underdeveloped in the carbon markets and have not reached full potential. Far too little activity in this sector exists despite the potential to support rural development, mitigate emissions and contribute to adaptation. The potential for projects in this sector is great and requires more attention.

Full inclusion of the AFOLU sector in a future climate regime. This will incorporate missing sectors and their full mitigation potentials into the Kyoto compliance market or other mechanisms that may emerge from a post-2012 agreement, increasing the chances of SLM related activities benefiting from increased financial flows. Its inclusion will generate significant additional opportunities in the carbon markets, for example, in both the compliance and voluntary carbon markets.

Continued and further CDM reforms should consider the relevance to AFOLU and SLM. The simplification and promotion of Programme of Activities (PoA) is of direct relevance to the agricultural, land use and rural energy sectors. PoA CDM reforms will be critical to take advantage of the normally small point source mitigation opportunities, especially in the agricultural and rural (energy) sectors. CDM reforms should consider simplified rules and regulations, accounting for low grid emission factors and lowering transaction costs for projects in rural areas.

The potential and options with regards to sectoral CDM and/or sectoral approaches with a view to the agricultural and rural energy sectors. This is mostly relevant for middle-income economies/Non-Annex I countries which (could) consider to take on (no-lose) targets in the foreseeable future and therefore might phase out of the 'conventional' CDM and into sectoral approaches or a sectoral CDM

3. **How is the GM of the UNCCD supporting countries in accessing climate change financing**

Indeed, the GM recognizes that climate change, land degradation and desertification cannot be addressed separately and that long and short-term response adaptation measures must be encouraged. The GM's Climate Change Finanncing (CCF) programme responds to the call of UNCCD's Ten-year Strategic plan, to mitigate the effects of droughts, climate variability and climate change through preparedness and adaptive measures in order to reduce human and ecosystem vulnerability; and to the identify and mobilize innovative sources of finance to combat desertification including synergistic financing for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The CC programme supports GM's regional programmes in the development and implementation of Integrated Financing Strategies in participating countries, particularly in its component related to access innovative financing.
The overall objective is to ensure sustained adequate investment flows in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) for the benefit or rural livelihoods of populations living in fragile and/or degraded landscapes, tapping into carbon finance and adaptation funding opportunities for the implementation of projects in the agriculture, rural and land use sectors

The CC programme's approach focuses on:

- Developing and consolidating strategic approaches and methodological tools;
- Generating and disseminating knowledge and information on UNCCD relevant CC financing mechanisms;
- Promoting mutually-beneficial, public-private partnerships with multiple stakeholders;
- Facilitating through partnership the development of targeted CC initiatives, by providing advisory services to GM partner countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean; and
- Contributing with partners to the convergence of the UNCCD and the UNFCCC policy dialogue, by developing conceptual arguments, particularly on issues related to the future of financial mechanisms for GHG mitigation, adaptation funding, carbon trading and other compensation measures to be defined in the post 2012 international climate change regime;

4. The situation in the NENA region and the importance of SLM (taken from "Rising temperature, rising tensions – Climate Change and the risk of violent conflict in the Middle East a joint publication by IISD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark)

In a region already considered the world's most waterscarce and where, in many places, demand for water already outstrips supply, climate models are predicting a hotter, drier and less predictable climate. Higher temperatures and less rainfall will reduce the flow of rivers and streams, slow the rate at which aquifers recharge, progressively raise sea levels and make the entire region more arid.

These changes will have a series of effects, particularly for agriculture and water management. Under moderate temperature increases, for example, some analysts anticipate that the Euphrates River could shrink by 30 per cent and the Jordan River by 80 per cent by the end of the century.

Climate change poses some very real security concerns

This report argues that climate change present a security threat in six distinct ways:

THREAT 1 – Climate change may increase competition for scarce water resources, complicatingpeace agreements: The impact of increased water scarcity as a result of climate change may make some existing peace agreements untenable, could complicate the negotiation of new peace agreements and could be a factor in national instability.	**THREAT 4 – Climate change may lead to destabilizing forced migration and increased tensions over existing refugee populations:** Shifting rainfall patterns, spreading desertification and falling agricultural productivity are likely to undermine rural livelihoods, worsen job prospects in rural areas and accelerate migration to urban areas. This could strain services in cities and lead to increased resentment of existing refugee populations.

THREAT 2 – Climate change may intensify food insecurity, thereby raising the stakes for the return or retention of occupied land: Climate change could further decrease local agricultural productivity and make global food prices increasingly volatile, further politicizing the issue of food security. As populations and demand for food grow, this could further increase domestic pressure or Syria or the Palestinian Authority to secure the return of occupied lands and shift the strategic calculations in Israel on whether to withdraw from these areas.	**THREAT 5 – Perceptions of resources shrinking as a result of climate change could increase the militarization of strategic natural resources:** The allocations of resources (falling in absolute terms as a result of climate change and in relative terms as a result of population growth and increased demand) could become increasingly tense. Control over them may become perceived as an increasingly key dimension of national security, and resource scarcity could be a pretext for their greater militarization.
THREAT 3 – Climate change may hinder economic growth, thereby worsening poverty and social instability: The combination of higher unemployment, reduced government revenue and increased demands on services, as an indirect result of climate change, could weaken governments' ability to provide services and create jobs, in turn potentially creating the conditions for extremism of all kinds,	**THREAT 6 – Inaction on climate change may lead to growing resentment and distrust of the West (and Israel) by Arab nations:** If the international community is unable to come to a deal in Copenhagen that shows a commitment to mitigate the effects of climate change and to help poorer countries adapt to its impacts, it may reinforce the already pervasive sense in the Arab world that many countries in West (including Israel) are not acting as 'good global citizens'.

There are ways to pursue peace and sustainable development despite a changing climate

Strategy 1 Fostering a culture of conservation Raising awareness on climate change may help to encourage a culture of conservation and efficiency in the region. There are many gains to be had in terms of water and energy efficiency that could help offset the combined impact of growing demand, population growth and climate change.	**Strategy 3 Avoiding dangerous climate change** Quite apart from the stand-alone rationale to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, if Israel (as the largest per capita emitter in the Levant) and, to a lesser extent, the Arab nations were to take on commitments to tackle climate change it would be a powerful demonstration of global citizenship and solidarity. Moreover, increasing energy efficiency and moving to renewable sources of energy generation would have important economic benefits for this energy-poor region.
Strategy 2 Adapting to the impacts of climate change Adaptation projects could address core tensions through better water management, agricultural development and disaster prevention. Community level adaptation projects can help, in a modest way, to share skills and technologies and to build understanding between previously divided communities.	**Strategy 4 Enabling regional cooperation and international engagement** Clearly, the challenge of climate change is one that is beyond the capacity of any one country to tackle. Its shared security implications will be best resolved through cooperation: to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; to develop comprehensive international strategies to manage forced migration; to share the most innovative approaches for adaptation; and to manage shared resources.