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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAMME
FOR ASSISTANCE TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE INTERIM PERIOD**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	iii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. PROGRAMME RATIONALE	1
III. CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME	
A. Support for Local Dimensions of National Action Programming	2
B. Strengthening the Capacity of the CCD Interim Secretariat	5
IV. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND COORDINATION	5
V. PROGRAMME COSTS AND FINANCING	5



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCD	Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FUA	Free University of Amsterdam
LAPD	Local Area Development Programme
INCD	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.
NAP	National Action Programme
NGO	Non-governmental organization
TAG	Technical assistance grant



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to its resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992, the United Nations General Assembly established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (INCD). INCD negotiations culminated in June 1994 with the adoption of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (CCD) – together with four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern Mediterranean regions – and a Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa.

2. The CCD, which entered into force in December 1997, provides a framework for vertical and horizontal partnerships to pursue national, subregional and regional action programmes to counter the degradation of drylands and assist the more than one billion people living in dryland areas. As such, it represents a unique opportunity to harness political will and commitment to address the needs of IFAD's target groups.

3. The period between adoption of the Convention and the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties is referred to as the "interim period". At its Forty-Ninth Session in December 1994, the UN General Assembly resolved to maintain the INCD and its Secretariat during the interim period in order to facilitate the implementation of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa, lay the groundwork for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and deal with issues such as location of the permanent CCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism. The Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa requested African countries to begin the process of preparing for implementation of the Convention in the interim period, consistent with the stipulations of the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa. It specifically invited IFAD and others to mobilize resources and provide support to countries for this purpose. The resolution further established the role of the Interim Secretariat in facilitating implementation, as a matter of priority, consistent with relevant provisions of the CCD.

4. In order to enable IFAD to provide early assistance to countries preparing for the implementation of the Convention in the context of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa, a two-year technical assistance grant (TAG) programme amounting to USD 1.15 million was approved by the Executive Board in April 1995, to be financed out of resources available under IFAD's Technical Assistance Grant Programme. This report provides information on the progress made in implementing the approved programme.

II. PROGRAMME RATIONALE

5. The nature and intensity of action taken in the interim period in response to the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa was recognized as critical in shaping the course of eventual CCD implementation and determining its success. The active involvement of IFAD at this early stage of the process was intended to enrich the range of convention-driven interventions with approaches and instrumentalities based on the Fund's experience and to ensure a focus on the needs and economic aspirations of its target groups.



6. In the context of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa, a range of opportunities existed for strengthening the initial phases of the National Action Programme (NAP) process in African countries, either directly or through the Interim Secretariat of the CCD. Given the fluid nature of events in the interim period, there was a rationale for a programme of TAGs that would offer IFAD the necessary flexibility to respond to the needs of affected countries with varying degrees and types of assistance in the early phases of preparing and implementing NAPs. This would serve to reinforce and extend the impact of current and future IFAD lending operations in dryland areas in Africa, and would lay the foundation for IFAD investment operations in support of CCD implementation.

III. CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME

7. The broad objective of the programme is to facilitate implementation of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa for the benefit of the rural poor in dryland areas. The specific objective of the programme is to strengthen the local dimensions of the NAP preparatory process. The programme is conceived as a set of measures that promote this objective in order to complement and reinforce the role of IFAD lending operations in support of the CCD. The programme entails two complementary components, progress in which is described briefly in the sections below:

- (a) support for local dimensions of national action programming; and
- (b) strengthening the capacity of the CCD Interim Secretariat.

A. Support for Local Dimensions of National Action Programming

8. This component has four sub-components specifically aimed at strengthening the local dimensions of NAP preparation:

- (a) articulation of local dimensions of the NAP process;
- (b) support for initiation of the NAP process in individual countries;
- (c) subregional support for NAPs; and
- (d) information dissemination on the local dimensions of CCD implementation.

9. The first sub-component addresses the need to define the overall approach and modus operandi for supporting local dimensions of NAPs in the broader context of overall donor support. The second sub-component focuses upon leverage points for local-level support in individual countries. The third sub-component seeks to strengthen NAPs through facilitation measures at the subregional level. Finally, the fourth sub-component is geared towards sensitizing local populations to their rights and responsibilities under the CCD.

Articulation of Local Dimensions of the NAP Process

10. The objective of this sub-component (initial tentative allocation USD 50 000, actual commitments USD 87 113) is to provide a conceptual and methodological basis for introducing an explicit local programming dimension to the NAP process. A series of substantive papers have been prepared on: (a) Local Area Development Programmes (LADPs): Instruments for Implementing the CCD; (b) Enhancing Dryland Resource Management and Programming at the Local Level; (c) Natural Resource Management within the Context of LADPs: Boundaries and Opportunities; (d) Local Governance, Natural Resource Management and the Implementation of LADPs; (e) Linkages Between National Action Programmes and Local Area Development; and (f) National Desertification Funds: The Local Dimensions. An International Forum on Local Area Development Programmes in Support of the



Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) was convened by IFAD and the CCD Interim Secretariat on 5-7 June 1996 at FAO Headquarters in Rome.

11. The forum was attended by some 194 participants drawn from governments of developed and developing countries in all regions, southern and northern non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs), multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank, Global Environment Facility (GEF), and Asian Development Bank (AsDB), UN agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and UN Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *Club du Sahel*. This unique blend of convention negotiators, CCD national focal points, NGOs, donors and practitioners ensured a variety of perspectives and their cross-fertilization. The papers and results of the forum have been widely disseminated by the participants and have become firmly embedded in the NAP process in many countries. The forum outcome has also been disseminated through a publication entitled *Down to Earth: IFAD/CCD International Forum on Local Area Development Programmes in Support of the Convention to Combat Desertification*. The forum was financed through a USD 50 000 grant from the TAG programme, and cofinanced through Sweden/IFAD Trust Fund for Natural Resource Management for Rural Poverty Alleviation (USD 190 000) and the CCD Interim Secretariat (staff resources).

12. In addition, under this sub-component, foundations were laid for an interagency collaborative effort – in the form of an action-research programme – to assist interested governments in the formulation of a policy framework for incentive systems for natural resource management. To this end, a broad-based and issue-oriented review of practical experiences with direct incentives in sub-Saharan Africa was commissioned by IFAD with an allocation of USD 37 113 and conducted by the Free University of Amsterdam (FUA). The findings and conclusions of the FUA review were discussed at an international brainstorming session convened by IFAD in February 1996 and were presented at the June 1996 LADP forum. This initial study was followed by a review of experiences with indirect incentives for natural resource management as part of the action-research programme. Based on the stated interest in this programme by a number of governments, next steps will consist of sharpening the programme focus on a country-by-country basis in order to validate and fine-tune the lessons learned and to progressively develop a common platform for harmonization of approaches and donor coordination.

Support for Initiation of the NAP Process in Individual Countries

13. The objective of this sub-component (initial tentative allocation USD 600 000, actual commitments USD 562 887) is to assist countries to develop a sound basis for national action programming through measures to address local-level concerns in the preparatory phases. Under the programme, technical assistance grants were provided to Burkina Faso and Lesotho, and a third grant is under consideration for the United Republic of Tanzania.

14. In Burkina Faso, IFAD (Africa I Division) has been requested to play the role of multilateral *chef de file* in supporting the NAP process, with the Government of The Netherlands playing the role of bilateral *chef de file*. IFAD, as one of the earliest donors to support the process, has assisted the country in launching the preparation of its National Action Programme and garnering support from other donors. In addition to logistical support, IFAD assistance has been central to the development of a coherent, participatory methodology for NAP elaboration that places emphasis on the important role of local area development programmes as instruments for CCD implementation, responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

15. Facilitated by IFAD's financial and technical support, the national institution in charge of following up on the CCD (CONAGESE, *Conseil national pour la gestion de l'environnement*)



organized a bottom-up process of consultation at village, departmental and regional levels. In June 1997, this process culminated in the organization of the first national forum on the CCD, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders to agree on the process for NAP elaboration, as well as its methodology. The forum and the NAP process launched in Burkina Faso are widely recognized as an effective model for CCD implementation. IFAD's TAG for the NAP formulation process in Burkina Faso amounts to USD 200 000, and has resulted in cofinancing of USD 500 000 from bilateral and multilateral sources. In addition, USD 39 478 were committed under the TAG programme for technical backstopping of the Burkina Faso NAP, and cofinancing of USD 30 000 was provided from the Swiss grant for support to sub-Saharan countries.

16. In Lesotho, IFAD (Africa II Division) has also been the first donor to come forward with support for initiation of the NAP process. IFAD assistance has allowed the development of a coherent plan of work to prepare the first forum of the NAP process, provision of international and national technical assistance, preparation of concept papers, a national awareness-building campaign and local consultations. Under the current programme of work the first national forum is scheduled to take place in 1998. The major emphasis is on building the NAP from the grass roots up through district-level activities. Currently, in addition to the USD 200 000 grant from IFAD, cofinancing of USD 50 000 has been pledged by the United Kingdom.

17. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has requested IFAD support to develop the local dimensions of national action programming through the initiation of action-research pilot activities in selected dryland areas. The nature and scope of support is currently being discussed with the country's CCD focal point. A total of USD 123 409 has been committed under the TAG programme to support the Tanzanian NAP.

Subregional Support for NAPs

18. The objective of this sub-component (total allocation USD 50 000) is to support cross-fertilization and harmonization of NAP approaches within one African subregion to address local dimensions. Within the context of the cooperation agreement between IFAD and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) signed in May 1996, IFAD will support CILSS with a grant to organize and follow up on a technical consultation on the scope, content and modalities of the CCD subregional action programme for the Sahel and West Africa. In particular, the consultation will seek to: (a) define the steps and methodology for the subregional programme; (b) identify action areas and themes for priority intervention under the programme; (c) define mechanisms for the coordination and steering of programme preparation; and (d) initiate reflection on the funding mechanisms for implementation. The consultation will be organized by CILSS and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), bringing together CCD focal points from all CILSS and ECOWAS member states, regional farmers organizations and development partners. The IFAD grant of USD 50 000 will be complemented by USD 15 450 to be contributed by CILSS and the host country, Ghana.

Information Dissemination on the Local Dimensions of CCD Implementation

19. The objective of this sub-component (total allocation USD 50 000) is to provide simplified information on the CCD to a wide cross-section of stakeholders. An agreement was entered into with the Centre for Our Common Future, an NGO, to develop and publish a booklet entitled *Down to Earth: A Simplified Guide to the Convention to Combat Desertification* in conjunction with the CCD Interim Secretariat. Since its publication in June 1995, the booklet has been widely disseminated by the Secretariat in all official UN languages and has become a basic reference for all concerned with the CCD. It has also formed the basis for a large number of offshoot versions that have been developed in various countries using local languages. The production and translation of the booklet were financed by



IFAD at USD 50 000 and cofinanced by the Swiss Development Cooperation and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

B. Strengthening the Capacity of the CCD Interim Secretariat

20. The objective of this component (total allocation USD 400 000) is to strengthen the capacity of the CCD Interim Secretariat to facilitate national action programming in the interim period, with particular focus on local dimensions. The first instalment financed: (a) operational support to the Secretariat, including support to the Africa Programme Unit and National Awareness Days in Africa; and (b) expert services, including preparation of a meeting on best practices for enhancing participation of affected populations and low-income groups in CCD implementation; support to countries for grass-roots orientation in NAPs; and support to the Pan African Institute for Development to introduce the CCD participatory approach in the work programme of African intergovernmental organizations. The second instalment was approved for the following activities: (a) support for local-level consultation processes in African countries; (b) support to subregional bodies in Africa for formulation of subregional action programmes; and (c) support to the Secretariat's Africa Programme Unit, for expert services and travel related to CCD implementation in Africa.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND COORDINATION

21. An interdepartmental task force was established in IFAD to oversee the TAG programme under the chairmanship of the Assistant President, Programme Management Department. The individual sub-components of the TAG programme were implemented by the respective administrative units concerned.

V. PROGRAMME COSTS AND FINANCING

22. The programme was defined by necessity in a flexible manner, given that the precise nature of activities depended on the nature of requests received. The President was authorized by the Executive Board to approve individual technical assistance grants up to a total amount of USD 1.15 million over the programme's two-year implementation period. The tentative TAG allocations and actual commitments by component are provided in the table presented on the next page.

**TAG COMMITMENTS
(USD '000)**

	Tentative Allocations (USD '000)	Actual Commitments (USD '000)
A. Support for Local Dimensions of National Action Programming		
Articulation of local dimensions of the NAP process	50	87
Support for initiation of the NAP process in individual countries	600	563
Subregional support for NAPs	50	50
Information dissemination on the local dimensions of CCD implementation	50	50
SUBTOTAL	750	750
B. Strengthening the Capacity of the CCD Interim Secretariat	400	400
TOTAL	1 150	1 150