



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
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**ACCESSION OF IFAD TO THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR
UNCCD IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS**

1. The Executive Board is invited to note that IFAD intends to join the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) for UNCCD¹ Implementation in the Central Asian Republics.²
2. The SPA aims primarily to assist countries in their efforts to translate the UNCCD into action by coordinating the support activities of donor partners working in the Central Asia subregion. IFAD seeks to enhance its activities in Central Asia by strengthening its cooperation with the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD. Furthermore, it considers the GM-spearheaded SPA an effective vehicle for coordinating UNCCD implementation activities with other donors in the subregion. Relevant background information on the SPA is attached in the Annex.
3. In accordance with Article 8, Section 2, of the Agreement Establishing IFAD, the Executive Board is requested to authorize the President to negotiate and finalize the legal documentation necessary for IFAD to become a partner of the SPA along the lines of similar agreements already signed with other partners. The Executive Board will be informed of the content of the finalized legal document at a subsequent session.

¹ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

² Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan



**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR UNCCD IMPLEMENTATION
IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS (SPA)**

BACKGROUND

1. The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD developed a strategic initiative in 2001 targeting actors at all levels to support UNCCD implementation in the Central Asian Republics (CARs). At the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP5) held in October 2001 in Geneva, the SPA was constituted, bringing together the GM, the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) (through its Regional Technical Assistance Programme (RETA) 5941), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) (through its CCD project). This partnership has since been expanded to include the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).
2. In recognition of the SPA's innovative role in UNCCD implementation, it was selected for presentation as an official 'Type II Partnership' at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

OBJECTIVES

3. The SPA aims primarily to assist countries in their efforts to translate the UNCCD into action by coordinating the support activities of donor partners working in the Central Asia subregion. Coordination is achieved through regular information-sharing, joint missions, complementary programme development, cofinancing, parallel financing and the development of comprehensive and harmonized approaches for meeting dryland development needs in the CARs. Fundamental to such coordination is an approach that aims to ensure UNCCD implementation strengthening at the local, national and subregional level in the CARs.

MAIN INITIATIVES UNDER THE SPA SINCE 2001 AND PLANNED FUTURE ACTIVITIES

4. The primary initiatives under the SPA are listed below:
 - (a) In collaboration with the AsDB, the GM launched RETA 5941, an initiative to assist the five CARs with the implementation of their National Action Programmes. This initiative was concluded with the drafting for each CAR of a report on Issues and Approaches to Combat Desertification, in addition to a regional diagnostic study entitled *An Overview: A Regional Synthesis Report on the Issues and Approaches to Combat Desertification*. These reports identify gaps and assess the policy, legislative and institutional environment influencing the implementation of the Convention. They also review past and ongoing donor activity in the CARs. The reports were validated by the CARs and international partners at a Subregional Partnership Building Forum in June/July 2003 and will constitute an input in the orientation of SPA members' support to the countries. IFAD intends to use these reports as a basis for developing its regional strategic opportunities paper (RESOP) for the Central Asia subregion.
 - (b) Through its Community Exchange and Training Programme, the GM developed and will shortly launch a programme to support local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs), through the establishment of a cadre of community mobilizers/trainers. The GM is discussing with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) the possibility of their undertaking implementation of this programme in 2003.



- (c) The GM has allocated USD 100 000 for the priority activities of the Central Asia Subregional Action Programme to Combat Desertification (SRAP-CD). The GM will fund complementary components, or provide parallel financing or cofinancing for SPA partners' project activities, thereby leveraging resources from SPA partners. An example of this is CIDA's South Europe/Central Asia Climate Change Support Fund, which supports selected SRAP-CD pilot projects totalling approximately USD 1 million. In this regard, the GM financed the development of a project proposal on rangeland management in Kyrgyzstan for consideration under the Climate Change funding window for a total of approximately USD 200 000. The GM will provide cofinancing of up to USD 20 000 from its SRAP-CD funding. Similarly, the GM will pursue project development for the other CARs, to exploit the potential financing windows of each SPA partner. It is anticipated that the use of GM's catalytic resources will leverage significant financing for the Convention in Central Asia and will ensure the creation of holistic programme interventions for all CARs.
- (d) Through its CCD project, GTZ supported dryland development activities in the CARs totalling approximately Euro 900 000 in 2002, and has launched the second phase of a pilot initiative in Turkmenistan and new pilots in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan, NGO and CBO capacity-building is being pursued.
- (e) The World Bank/Global Environment Facility (GEF) Dryland Management Programme (DMP) in Kazakhstan does not strictly fall under the SPA. However, the GM's involvement in and financing of the DMP will enable the lessons learned from the programme to be shared with other CARs. The DMP was approved by the GEF Council in May 2003. The total project cost is USD 9.7 million and in June 2003 the World Bank/GEF approved a grant of USD 5.27 million. The GM will contribute up to USD 100 000 to the DMP and is negotiating cofinancing from interested partners.
- (f) **To address the emerging diversity of programmes and resulting challenges associated with managing SPA components, the GM entered into an agreement with ICARDA and IFAD to facilitate coordination of activities in the subregion. In this regard, the GM and IFAD are cofinancing a Regional Environmental Management Officer, stationed in ICARDA's Project Facilitation Unit in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The GM is covering 65% of the costs involved, and IFAD the remaining 35%. The officer has been involved in preliminary information gathering and other tasks for the launching of IFAD's RESOP formulation process.**
- (g) While the above initiatives were being pursued in the course of 2001-2003, the GM was in discussion with the CARs and international partners to develop a sustainable resource mobilization strategy for UNCCD implementation. This process culminated in the GM convening, under the aegis of the SPA, the Subregional Partnership Building Forum for Central Asian Republics: Confronting Land Degradation and Poverty through Enhanced UNCCD Implementation, 30 June to 4 July 2003 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- The broad objective of the forum was to discuss substantive issues and options relating to UNCCD implementation. It also aimed to provide developed countries; multilateral development cooperation agencies, and international financial institutions and NGOs with an opportunity to interact with government and civil-society stakeholders from the five CARs, with a view to identifying areas of common interest and developing coordinated responses for UNCCD implementation. At the forum, participants acknowledged that the SPA is an effective framework for advancing the UNCCD implementation process in the CARs.



ANNEX

- A total of 78 national and international stakeholders attended the forum, among them representatives from relevant ministries and agencies (environment, finance, agriculture, water, forests, land management, hydrometeorology, economy, planning and foreign affairs), civil-society organizations and NGOs from the respective CARs, and 24 international partners.³
 - A comprehensive set of challenges and opportunities was identified in relation to UNCCD implementation in Central Asia, and the Tashkent Joint Platform of Action for UNCCD Implementation was formulated. The Joint Platform of Action outlines a clear set of objectives and preliminary tasks for each CAR, and for development cooperation agencies and other partners.
 - The forum concluded that one of the first steps in the strengthening of the UNCCD implementation process at both the national and subregional levels, would be the establishment of national Working Groups on Partnership Development for UNCCD Implementation. It was agreed that the working groups would comprise key technical ministries and agencies (such as environment, agriculture, water, forests and land resource management), non-technical ministries (planning, finance and external cooperation) and representatives from local governance bodies, key research institutes and civil society organizations. Likewise, it was agreed that one or more bilateral or multilateral partners would be active members of these working groups. Among the bilateral and multilateral donors identified were Germany, Canada, Switzerland, Japan, AsDB, the World Bank, IFAD, UNDP, EU and the Islamic Development Bank. It is anticipated that the working groups will function as facilitation mechanisms for both national and external stakeholders committed to enhancing UNCCD implementation.
 - Furthermore, a matrix of activities was identified for each CAR including preliminary commitments by donors for the activities. In addition, several development cooperation agencies have indicated their interest in enhancing their support to the CARs. The GM has been working closely with them to incorporate the Convention into their development cooperation strategies and programmes and identify financing opportunities. For example, the GM has provided inputs for including UNCCD in AsDB's Central Asia Country Environment Analyses and Country Strategy Programme, in addition to CIDA's Central Asia programme
- (h) **The next steps envisaged for the SPA will focus on consolidating the forum outcomes by establishing the Working Groups on Partnership Development for UNCCD Implementation in each CAR, finalizing donor/country cooperation agreements, collaborating with GEF's implementing agencies for the development of a project pipeline under GEF's Operational Programme on Sustainable Land Management (OP15) and convening country-level resource mobilization forums to ensure sustainability of UNCCD implementation.**

³ These included representatives from Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, European Union, the United States, Turkey, AsDB, IFAD, GEF, UNDP and the Dryland Development Centre, Islamic Development Bank, ICARDA, United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the UNCCD secretariat.