



**IFAD**  
**INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Governing Council – Twenty-Fourth Session**

Rome, 20-21 February 2001

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE GLOBAL MECHANISM  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION  
IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR  
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA**



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AsDB	Asian Development Bank
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CETP	Community Exchange and Training Programme
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
COP	Conference of the Parties
DAC	OECD/Development Assistance Committee
DESELAC	Desertification Information System for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCCC	Framework Convention on Climate Change
FIELD	Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GM	Global Mechanism
GRULAC V	Fifth Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Group
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
HIPC DI	Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILWI	Integrated Land and Water Initiative
NAP	National Action Programme
NDF	National Desertification Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RAP	Regional Action Programme
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
RETA	Regional Technical Assistance Programme
RIOD	Action Plan to Combat Desertification
SFI	Soil Fertility Initiative
SRAP	Subregional Action Programme
SRCF	Special Resources for CCD Finance
TA	Technical Assistance
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNSO	Office to Combat Desertification and Draught
WAICENT	World Agricultural Information Centre
WFP	World Food Programme



## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In October 1997, on the occasion of the First Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), IFAD was selected as the Host Institution of the Global Mechanism (GM) of the Convention. Under the authority of the COP, the GM's mandate is "to promote actions leading to the mobilization of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, on a grant basis, and/or on concessional or other terms, to effected developing country Parties". The GM began its operations in late 1998. It has submitted three reports to IFAD's Executive Board, in December 1998, December 1999 and December 2000 respectively, and two to the Governing Council, in February 1999 and in February 2000.

2. The present Progress Report provides an update for IFAD's Governing Council on the evolving Operational Strategy and the activities of the GM during 2000.

## II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM AND AREAS OF OPERATION

### A. Guiding Principles

3. National, sub-regional and regional action plans provide the framework for UNCCD implementation. Under the UNCCD, such plans are to be closely linked with other efforts to formulate policies for sustainable development. In other words, the question of desertification (defined as "land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climate variations and human activity") is very closely linked to the development process itself. In this context, special attention is paid to all aspects of sustainable rural development and to poverty alleviation, including access to and control of natural resources, support to alternative rural livelihoods and access to socio-economic infrastructure and services.

4. From this perspective, it is to be understood that the GM is not a central fund (duplicating existing funding sources and mechanisms) but rather a brokering institution that helps rationalize the allocation of resources and, where necessary, mobilize additional financial resources. That process involves drawing on classical funding instruments and the resources of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as well as those of relevant intergovernmental organizations.

5. The guiding principles on the use of the catalytic resources available to the GM are set out in Decision 25/COP.1, and are intended to ensure that it:

- is responsive to the needs and priorities of the Parties to the Convention;
- does not duplicate existing mechanisms and facilities, but adds value to them;
- is lean and efficient, drawing on other institutions, including its housing institution, as well as United Nations system-wide capacities and facilities; and
- is neutral and universal in its operations.

### B. Areas of Operation

6. At the request of concerned governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the GM intervenes in accordance with the following rationale:

- to help coordinate resource mobilization for the formulation and implementation of national action programmes (NAPs). To that end, NAPs are harmonized and interfaced with relevant government strategies at the sectoral or national levels and with the regular assistance programmes of technical and financial cooperation agencies;
- to facilitate a concerted approach to resource mobilization for the formulation and/or implementation of regional and subregional action programmes (RAPs and SRAPs). Special



attention is paid to the issues of transboundary ecosystems, cross-fertilization of experience and harmonization of policies;

- to contribute to developing innovative approaches to cooperation with NGOs and promoting stakeholder mobilization and networking for the transfer of technology, capitalization of traditional knowledge and information management; and
- to establish in conformity with the provisions of the Convention and with Decisions 24/COP.1, 25/COP.1 and 9/COP.3, an inventory of bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes and other sources and channels of funding available for implementing the Convention. That inventory has been organized in the form of a decentralized knowledge management system, known as the Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation (FIELD), which includes a database on good practices, projects and the financial needs of affected developing country Parties in developing action programmes and other activities related to the implementation of the Convention.

### **III. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: RESOURCES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Human Resources**

7. The GM portfolio allocation reflects the recommendations of COP.3 on the coverage of geographic regions. However, despite the recruitment of two programme officers in 2000, the staff of GM continue to work under tremendous pressure even though every effort has been made to prioritize interventions, in accordance with the guiding principles.

#### **B. Financial Resources**

8. The resources available to the GM comprise the following:

- allocations by the COP from the Convention's core budget to meet administrative and operational expenses, held in the Core Budget Administrative Expenses Account (first account);
- voluntary contributions from multilateral and bilateral donors and other sources (e.g. NGOs and the private sector) to cover administrative and operational expenditures in relation to services rendered by the GM, held in the Voluntary Contributions Administrative Expenses Account (second account); and
- resources made available in the form of trust funds or otherwise from bilateral and multilateral sources, which the GM uses as catalytic financial assistance in support of UNCCD implementation, held in the Special Resources for UNCCD Finance (SRCF) Account (third account).

9. A technical assistance (TA) grant of USD 2.5 million was approved by the Executive Board at its Sixty-Sixth Session in April 1999 as part of the initial capitalization of the SRCF account, pending mobilization of matching financing from other donors. In June 2000, the World Bank approved a grant of USD 1.25 million for fiscal year 2000 and a similar amount is anticipated for 2001. A voluntary contribution of CHF 250 000 has been received from the Government of Switzerland for the years 2000 and 2001 in continuation of earlier support. The Government of Norway has decided to contribute approximately USD 600 000 to the GM over a three-year period, and negotiations are under way with the Governments of Denmark, Japan, The Netherlands and Sweden regarding voluntary contributions to the GM's second and third accounts.

#### **C. Operational and Administrative Procedures**

10. As part of streamlining its operations, the GM is gradually developing a model intervention cycle based on emerging experience. Following a request for support, the GM prepares an inception note based either on a reconnaissance mission to the country or region concerned or on a desk review.



The inception note and review form the basis for drawing up both a tentative “road map” for GM intervention and a proposal for financial assistance.

11. As part of the review process, consultations are held with the GM Technical Advisory Group (GM/TAG) established to provide advice on the objectives and scope of activities to be funded under the SRCF Account. The GM/TAG includes representatives of the GM, the UNCCD Secretariat, IFAD and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The GM may invite others to attend meetings of the GM/TAG.

12. As decided at such meetings, initial financial assistance is provided to countries and intergovernmental organizations as catalytic resources towards leveraging additional funds to support implementation of the Convention.

13. The GM/TAG meetings are part of a continuing process of technical reviews and consultations that also include sessions of the Facilitation Committee and continuous interaction between the GM and the members of the Committee.

14. Efforts to streamline the GM’s administrative procedures have been pursued throughout the period under review, including the development of standard agreements for grants to support governments and organizations in collaboration with relevant divisions of IFAD.

#### **D. Operational Strategy**

15. As part of the GM’s operational strategy, the mobilization of resources for implementation of the Convention involves an iterative and participatory approach to integrate NAP objectives and activities into government strategy formulation, planning, budgeting and negotiation of external funding on the one hand; and, on the other hand, to mainstream NAP objectives and activities into the framework of interventions and programmes of financial and technical cooperation agencies.

16. As requested by COP.3, a separate document has been prepared on the GM’s operational strategy for review by COP.4. The GM intends to consolidate its operational strategy over the next two years in light of its evolving experience, as a basis for submission of an updated operational strategy for review by COP.6, as per Decision 9/COP.3.

17. As requested by COP.3, the GM has started on the development of a communications strategy based on the same paradigm as that applied to resource mobilization, i.e. to mainstream UNCCD-related issues into the respective communications strategies of governments and their institutions, as well as into those of technical and financial cooperation agencies. Consequently, the GM’s communications strategy is being developed through the elaboration of a concept note (with inputs from IFAD and FAO) for consideration and feedback from regional stakeholders attending both COP.4 and the forthcoming regional and subregional workshops on resource mobilization.

18. A fully-fledged strategy will be developed on the basis of the concept note and consultations with stakeholders for submission to COP.6, together with an updated version of the operational strategy document.

### **IV. STRATEGIC ALLIANCES: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

#### **A. Facilitation Committee: Cooperation with Multilateral Agencies**

19. In order to improve the coordination of interventions in support of UNCCD implementation the GM receives support and advice from its Facilitation Committee, which brings together representatives of IFAD, the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), FAO, the Secretariats of UNCCD and GEF, and the



regional development banks (African Development Bank (AfDB), Asian Development Bank (AsDB) and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)). The Committee thus includes representatives of major multilateral and technical organizations which have mandates relevant to the Convention.

20. The Committee is becoming increasingly useful to the GM, as reflected in the decision to prepare a business plan to define how the GM cooperates with Committee members to provide support to countries and subregional organizations in the development and implementation of their action programmes. This decision shows the involvement of the Committee as a whole in supporting the Convention, as well as the progressive internalization of UNCCD objectives within each Committee-member institution. The World Bank took an important step in this direction in 1999 by organizing a seminar that brought together members of its senior management and individuals of international standing that had been involved in negotiating the Convention. Similar initiatives are being discussed with other Committee-member institutions.

### **B. Collaboration with Bilateral Agencies**

21. Bilateral donor agencies are a key constituency of the GM. Indeed, the bilateral donor community has a major role to play in supporting the GM and, as mentioned earlier in this report, negotiations with a number of such donors are coming to fruition. However, in the longer term, the bilateral donor community should contribute more in terms of financing the preparation and implementation of action programmes.

22. In this vein, the GM is pursuing contacts with a number of other donors at headquarters and country levels. However, a mechanism similar to the Facilitation Committee that would enable the GM to streamline its interaction and cooperation with the bilateral donor community, would be of great advantage to the GM.

23. The GM was contacted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) regarding the preparation of an OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) document on poverty-environment linkages, for which inputs were solicited from members of the Facilitation Committee and submitted to the OECD Secretariat. Following this initial cooperation, the GM has been requested to provide comments on an OECD/DAC guideline document on poverty. Collaboration with OECD/DAC has also involved a pilot study on aid in support of the objectives of Conventions adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Earth Summit), held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, for which the GM provided a comparative analysis of financial assistance to affected developing country Parties reported by OECD members to COP.3. These initiatives are important in the longer-term perspective in that they provide an opportunity to argue for mainstreaming the Convention and what it represents into key policy documents for the entire bilateral donor community.

### **C. Partnerships with Intergovernmental Organizations**

24. The GM has gained experience in cooperating with intergovernmental organizations over the past two years. Based on that experience, which primarily relates to Eastern, Southern and West Africa, West Asia and Latin America, the time has come to systematize GM cooperation with such organizations in view of the important functions they perform in relation to the Convention.

25. Intergovernmental organizations are often charged with coordinating the formulation and implementation of SRAPs in developing countries. As such, they are the natural partners of the GM, as reflected in ongoing cooperation regarding SRAPs on the GM's agenda (see below). The GM intends to further develop cooperation with subregional organizations in the context of their role as a forum for policy dialogue and exchanges of experiences within their respective regions. The GM also sees these organizations as partners in providing support to individual countries in the development of action programmes and as a way of ensuring best use of the limited human resources available to the





GM. Moreover, the GM intends to develop formal agreements with intergovernmental organizations to serve as a framework for managing cooperation and for the provision of financial resources through the GM's SRCF account.

#### **D. Partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations**

26. High priority is given to the involvement of civil society in UNCCD implementation, in recognition of which the GM has developed a special initiative to support NGOs —the Community Exchange and Training Programme (CETP), discussed in greater detail below. The objective is to ensure the systematic involvement of NGOs at national and subregional levels. The International NGO Network on Desertification and Drought, Action Plan to Combat Desertification (RIOD) is the GM's main partner in the initiative.

#### **E. Multiple Partnerships for Knowledge-Sharing**

27. Extensive consultations with stakeholders have shown that sharing knowledge on the supply, demand and flows of funding not only facilitates the institutional brokering role of the GM but also constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for effective partnership building, gap analysis and implementation monitoring, to the benefit of the entire stakeholder community. The knowledge information system known as FIELD, developed by the GM in collaboration with the World Agricultural Information Centre (WAICENT) of FAO and IFAD, responds to the above-mentioned objectives.

28. The main comparative advantage of FIELD is that it supports stakeholders in decision-making by providing transparency on the status of UNCCD financing and facilitating the identification of resource gaps and development partners.

29. One of the main features of FIELD is that the knowledge is originated by the data owners themselves (i.e. recipient organizations and their development partners) who are requested to identify information at the source (e.g. country-level databases) and regularly enter it into FIELD system, using standard definitions and classifications. This makes FIELD a knowledge management system with decentralized responsibilities for data collection, codification, maintenance and sharing.

30. In order rapidly to collect a critical mass of data, the GM requests the active participation of many FIELD partners, from both the donor and the recipient communities. Such collaboration facilitates not only the initial collection of data and establishment of systematic knowledge management and maintenance procedures, but also the development of electronic templates for the preparation of reports to the COP and for capacity building, language support, fine-tuning of the system and awareness promotion.

### **V. OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL MECHANISM ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF UNCCD: IMPLEMENTATION SINCE THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

#### **A. Catalytic Support to Resource Mobilization through the Mainstreaming of National Action Programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America**

31. The GM works with a number of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and more and more governments are seeking GM support for the formulation and implementation of their NAPs. While most countries have initially approached the GM for assistance of a specific nature, the evolving facilitation tasks of the GM now encompass a broad range of activities. The UNCCD country representatives usually express interest in receiving support from the GM during discussions at UNCCD-related events; others approach the GM for assistance once the NAP has been approved. However, where applicable, some form of GM involvement with



governments at the planning stage would be desirable as this would provide an early opportunity for the GM to hold discussions with governments on how their NAPs might add value to existing frameworks at the sector or national levels. Moreover, early dialogue between the GM and the donor community in the countries involved would facilitate proactive mainstreaming of NAP objectives and components into the strategies and programmes of such donors. In line with this approach, which is being developed more systematically as experience is gained, the GM is seeking to support NAP implementation by, *inter alia*, providing assistance in identifying the interlinkages between NAPs and other national-level initiatives and development programmes supported by bilateral and/or multilateral donors. However, the GM will need to base its support to action programmes on the current situation in the country, sub-region or region concerned and, as made clear through initiatives already under way (as indicated below), the process is, and will continue to be, tailored to individual situations.

32. In light of the decisions taken at COP.3, the first two meetings of the GM/TAG were convened in January 2000 and June 2000, respectively, to exchange views on the overall orientation and content of initial GM interventions. The meetings also provided an opportunity to initiate discussions on prospective linkages with development partners' ongoing or planned activities of relevance to UNCCD. Following these meetings, the GM earmarked specific amounts for financial support to NAPs and SRAPs in a number of countries and regions, including:

- Algeria (NAP formulation);
- Argentina (NAP implementation);
- Burkina Faso (NAP implementation);
- Central Asian countries (NAP formulation/implementation);
- China (NAP implementation);
- Cuba (NAP implementation);
- Ethiopia (NAP implementation);
- Haiti (NAP formulation);
- India (NAP implementation);
- Iran (NAP formulation);
- Mali (NAP implementation);
- Mongolia (NAP formulation);
- Pakistan (NAP implementation);
- Senegal (NAP implementation); and
- Tunisia (NAP implementation).

33. Facilitation grants were approved in favour of the concerned governments, for an aggregate of USD 1.08 million.

34. Since the second meeting of the GM/TAG, requests have been received from other country Parties, including D.R Congo, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The GM is preparing to support these countries in accordance with the above-mentioned intervention cycle. A summary of specific interventions at the country level is provided in Appendix I.

#### **B. Catalytic Support to Facilitate the Financing of Selected Regional and Subregional Action Programmes**

35. The aims of the GM in relation to RAPs and SRAPs under the Convention are to:

- help define the orientation and content of SRAPs at the inception/formulation stage of the consultation process, and support the process of designing and/or validating SRAPs;
- support SRAP focal institutions in defining interlinkages between the SRAPs and the NAPs concerned, and render the interface between them operational;



- encourage the forging of strategic alliances among subregional bodies with mandates relevant to SRAP objectives, especially those with a proven capacity or potential to contribute as cofinanciers to SRAP implementation; and
- seek methods and opportunities to foster the relationship between UNCCD and other Conventions, as foreseen under Article 8 of the UNCCD, especially the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity approved by the 1992 Earth Summit. To that end, the GM will, *inter alia*, assist in rendering operational the interface between SRAPs and focal areas of the GEF (including biodiversity, climate change and international waters) as they relate to land degradation. In addition, cooperation is being developed with regard to the Ramsar Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands.

36. In the above context, the GM has undertaken to provide initial support to the development of activities in several subregions, including West Africa, West and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. This includes support for resource mobilization for:

- coordinated management of land and water in shared river basins of Niger and Nigeria (West Africa SRAP);
- a strategic plan for sustainable management of the Fouta Djallon Highlands (West Africa SRAP);
- harmonization of public policies related to natural resources management and poverty alleviation (Latin America SRAP);
- the SRAP for West Asia;
- El Gran Chaco;
- the Transboundary Programme for the Island of Hispaniola;
- the Asian Thematic Network on Desertification Monitoring and Assessment;
- the Asian Thematic Network on Rangeland Management and Sand Dune Fixation; and
- the Asian Thematic Network on Agroforestry.

37. Facilitation grants have been provided to the subregional or intergovernmental organizations concerned for an aggregate of USD 600 000. Further information on the various programmes involved, including the scope of GM interventions, is summarized in Appendix II.

### **C. Enabling Activities in Selected Thematic Areas to Promote Capacity-Building and Knowledge Networking at the Grass-Roots and Institutional Levels**

38. Enabling activities are supported by the GM in recognition of the priority accorded to capacity building and legal frameworks under the Convention (Article 19) and the need to lay the ground for future investments. The purpose of enabling activities is thus to develop initiatives that address the need for capacity-building and the problem of desertification at the policy level. To date, the GM has undertaken to support the following enabling activities:

- an umbrella programme for community exchange and training, in collaboration with RIOD and technical and funding agencies such as IFAD and the World Bank; and
- a platform for cooperation on desertification monitoring and assessment as a basis for development and knowledge networking on appropriate indicators across regions, and as a tool for management decisions in respect of continued allocations of resources to combat desertification.

39. Facilitation grants totalling USD 575 000 have been approved for the above initiatives.

40. The above-mentioned activities are described in the Annex. The GM expects to launch additional enabling activities on the basis of demand, in line with the evolving operational strategy.



#### **D. Policy Dialogue in Relation to Strategic Opportunities for UNCCD Funding in the Short, Medium and Longer Term**

41. The rationale for engaging the GM in strategic initiatives is to explore the extent to which new and additional funding can be obtained through innovative approaches to financing the Convention. In this respect, Article 20 of the Convention draws attention to the GEF; Articles 4 and 20 to the debt burden of affected developing countries; and Article 8 to interaction with other Conventions. As part of its enabling activities, the GM is pursuing the following through the GEF Secretariat and in collaboration with its implementing agencies:

- cooperation with GEF;
- cooperation with the Integrated Land and Water Initiative (ILWI) launched by the GEF Secretariat, the World Bank and UNDP, in an effort to address serious problems pertaining to the management of land and water resources, particularly in Africa; and
- cooperation with the World Bank and FAO on the Soil Fertility Initiative, with the objective of harmonizing its implementation with that of action programmes, particularly at the national level and in Africa.

#### **E. Subregional Workshops on Partnerships and Resources for the UNCCD**

42. The GM was requested by COP.3 (paragraph 11, Decision 9/COP.3) “in coordination with the UNCCD Secretariat, to organize during the year 2000 regional and/or subregional workshops in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean on procedures to access existing financial mechanisms, with the aim of mobilizing and channelling financial resources for implementation, and the transfer of technologies.” The workshops covered the following geographical areas:

- Eastern and Southern Africa, under the aegis of the Southern African Development Community/Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (Kenya, 2-4 October 2000);
- West Africa, under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) (tentatively planned for early-December 2000);
- North Africa (Algiers, 24-26 October 2000), bringing together representatives of Egypt, countries of the Maghreb and frontline Sahelian countries. Discussions centred on transboundary ecosystems and prospects for cooperation with “Annex I” countries, i.e. those of the northern Mediterranean;
- Latin America and the Caribbean (El Salvador, 20-21 October 2000); and
- Asia (Bangkok, 9-10 November 2000).

#### **F. Efforts to Benefit from Trading in Carbon (Carbon Sequestration) as a Source of Additional Funding for UNCCD Implementation**

43. This initiative is based on the fact that trading in carbon is currently being pursued and that it is related to possibilities for seeking synergies with other Conventions. As previously reported, the GM is seeking to secure benefits for the UNCCD through the Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative (HIPC DI) launched by the G-7 Summit in 1999. The Government of Italy is supporting the initiative, in collaboration with the Interagency Working Group made up of representatives of the GM, FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) and IFAD, which is directed towards lower-middle-income and severely-indebted countries with a high incidence of poverty.



## **G. Policy Dialogue**

44. In cooperation with the World Bank, the GM is planning to hold a seminar for the Ministers of Planning, Finance, Agriculture and the Environment of countries of the Near East and North Africa region. The objective of the seminar is to draw attention to the importance – from a socio-economic, environmental and agricultural standpoint – of investing in dryland management. The seminar is intended to make an important contribution to streamlining the Convention, and that which it represents, into the basic development policies of governments of the region.

## **H. Collection and Dissemination of Information**

45. The GM is engaged in collecting and disseminating information on its activities and on UNCCD financing, with the support of two interlinked information systems: the GM website and FIELD. In line with the guiding principles governing all GM operations, these information systems were established with a view to building demand-driven tools for knowledge sharing and for disseminating data to support decision-making. Every effort has been made to capitalize on other institutions' knowledge, experience and expertise so as to avoid duplicating existing sources of information and to build highly flexible, cost-effective information systems.

46. The website is maintained by the GM and hosted by WAICENT/FAO, with which the GM has signed a collaboration agreement for the development, implementation and maintenance of information systems. The GM website can be accessed at the following Internet address: <http://www.gm-unccd.org>.

47. The design of FIELD was conceived by the GM in collaboration with its technical partners to respond to the following information needs:

- potential sources and channels of funding for UNCCD implementation, including priorities, eligibility criteria, amounts, terms and conditions, and contact information;
- financial needs of affected developing countries and groups of countries for the formulation and implementation of action programmes, expressed in the form of strategic frameworks, programmes or project proposals;
- past or ongoing projects implemented within the framework of NAPs, RAPs and SRAPs, including budgets, project financing, funding and implementing agencies, outputs and land degradation components; and
- other relevant information on UNCCD financing, including non-conventional sources of funding, innovative approaches to resource mobilization, multisource or multichannel funding arrangements, lessons learned and good practices.

48. The information contained in FIELD will be disseminated mainly via the Internet in the form of an on-line information service accessible from the GM home page and other partners' websites. Moreover, since ease of access to new information technologies differs from country to country, the GM will also use other communication tools such as CD-ROMs and written reports to ensure the widest possible distribution. Further information in this regard is provided in Appendix III.

## **VI. ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Guiding Principles and Areas of Action**

49. Preparation of the operational strategy document provided the GM with a valuable opportunity to better express its vision and improve understanding of its work within the broader group of stakeholders. An accompanying communications strategy and set of communications tools will further this process. As mentioned in the aforementioned document, three concepts define the GM:



partnership building; mainstreaming; and multiplier effect. Partnership building and mainstreaming are prerequisites for successfully mobilizing resources, and the multiplier effect is a measurement of the effectiveness of services provided by GM.

50. The further operational experience that the GM has acquired over the past year has resulted in a clearer definition of its intervention cycle. This should make it possible for the GM to become more expedient in future, to carry through its commitments in a more streamlined manner and thus be more effective in the support it provides. One shortcoming noted over the past year is that the full cycle of GM interventions was not planned at the initial stages, largely because of its limited human resources and its pioneering of the new approach to resource mobilization. While it should now be possible to rectify this shortcoming, further improvements are hoped for in the coming year.

### **B. Human and Financial Resources**

51. If the GM is to fulfil its functions in a timely and efficient manner, it is clear that its professional staff will have to be increased. It is recommended that two Programme Officer posts be added to the GM's core staff in recognition of the importance that UNCCD accords to Africa, and that a Communications Officer be recruited to assist in fulfilling GM's important role in this field of activity. As mentioned above, two Programme Officer were recruited during the course of 2000: one primarily responsible for Latin America and the Caribbean and the other for Asia and North Africa. These additional staff members have evidenced the demand for the GM's services and thus the need for additional human resources. This question is further discussed below in relation to GM's budget.

52. With regard to GM's financial resources, IFAD's contribution thereto has enabled the GM to fulfil its operational and catalytic interventions. It is very encouraging to note that, in addition to collaborating with the GM on substantial issues, the World Bank is now contributing to it financially. It is expected that the bilateral donors who have already contributed to the GM will be joined by others in the next few months. It should be noted that, in offering to house the GM and contribute to the SRCF Account, IFAD stipulated that any further contributions beyond the first instalment of USD 2.5 million would be contingent on other donors' contributions.

### **C. Cooperation with the Facilitation Committee**

53. Cooperation with the Facilitation Committee and its members has developed rapidly over the past year, especially with regard to developing a business plan for GM/Facilitation Committee cooperation in support of the planning and implementation of action programmes. It is gratifying to note that programmatic and financial cooperation has been initiated with AsDB. It is hoped that this will serve as a model for similar developments with the two other development banks in the year ahead. Cooperation with the GEF Secretariat and its implementing organizations is expanding. Interaction with the UNCCD Secretariat has developed further, both with regard to the number of initiatives in which the Secretariat has played a leading role (such as that in China) and others such as the regional and subregional workshops and support for action programmes in which the GM has played a more central role.

### **D. Cooperation with the Bilateral Donor Community**

54. As financial contributors to UNCCD implementation, bilateral donors are crucial to the success of the Convention. While the GM has developed country-level contacts for this purpose, it would be desirable to set up a mechanism along the lines of the Facilitation Committee for interaction with the bilateral donor community. However, since it is not yet clear how this mechanism could be organized, it will be the subject of discussion in the year to come.



### **E. Support to Action Programmes and Resource Mobilization**

55. Information on progress in supporting action programmes at the country, regional and subregional levels is annexed to this report. As an overall assessment it is recognized that progress has been slower than expected in some cases, often due to developments beyond the control of the GM. At other times, this has been due to shortcomings on the part of the GM – mainly because of limited staff resources.

56. In terms of resource mobilization, it is to be noted that the catalytic resources provided by the GM have triggered off additional contributions from other donors and organizations, as follows:

- Project Development Fund (PDF)-A grants provided by UNEP/GEF for two initiatives in West Africa, to be followed by PDF-B grants for the same initiatives;
- AsDB cofinancing of regional support for a number of Asian countries; and
- an FAO/Investment Centre contribution of 50% over and above that provided by the GM as planning grants.

57. The World Bank, UNDP and UNEP are important contributors to the activities of the GM. Planning grants, or catalytic resources provided by the GM and its partners, are to be followed by substantial investments in projects and programmes. Although final agreement is still to be reached, it is possible to foresee that such investments will be in the order of several million United States dollars. Therefore, the multiplier effect of GM interventions should be substantial, which is an important parameter for evaluating its effectiveness. As such, the GM intends to develop a system for monitoring its multiplier effect and reporting on it to the COP.

### **F. Knowledge Management System**

58. The GM is positioning its knowledge management system, FIELD, as the basis of its matching function between demand and supply of funding for UNCCD implementation. In this connection, substantial progress has been made in shaping the design of the system to meet the functional requirements of stakeholders and in building an effective tool in support of decision-making and action.

59. The FIELD system provides a common platform for the codification of financial data, knowledge-sharing and bridge-building. Implementation of FIELD is well under way and a working prototype is available from the GM website. It will be used at the Fourth Session of the COP to provide a preliminary inventory of available financial resources.

60. Decentralized thematic leadership, a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for data collection are key factors in ensuring sustainability, coverage and functional effectiveness of FIELD in the immediate future. For this purpose, the GM has undertaken a number of pilot activities involving various FIELD partner countries and institutions in testing the system and uploading relevant information collected at the source. These pilot activities will serve as models of collaboration to be replicated with as many owners of data as possible.

61. The next step is for all interested stakeholders to collaborate with the GM in fine-tuning FIELD, maintaining it and supporting its deployment at the country level. It is therefore recommended that the COP encourage all UNCCD Parties to collaborate with the GM in this process and to become FIELD Partners.



### **G. Issues for Follow-Up in the Institutional Development of the Global Mechanism and Proposed Budget Revisions**

62. In light of past experience and repeated calls from Country Parties for GM to play a more proactive role, there is a pressing need to strengthen the staff capacity of the GM (as foreseen in the original submission of the host institution). Such staff strengthening would allow the GM to respond more rapidly and efficiently to an ever-increasing number of requests for assistance and to add value, in timely fashion, to the work of Facilitation Committee members.

63. The current situation should also be seen in the light of GM's budget proposal for 2000–2001 submitted to COP.3. The amounts requested were USD 1.75 million and USD 2.50 million, respectively, compared with the USD 1.30 million and USD 1.35 million approved. The most significant consequence of this shortfall is that the recruitment of both professional and general service staff has been, and will continue to be, delayed. Compared with the original plans, the GM is short of one professional officer for 2000 and two for 2001, whereas in terms of general service staff, the office has one less than expected for 2000 and 2.5 less for 2001.

64. These budget figures should be compared with the proposals submitted by both IFAD and UNDP when applying to host the GM. Both organizations calculated that, to function efficiently the GM office would need an annual budget of approximately USD 3.00 million.

65. Even at this early stage, it is clear that if the GM is to cope with its ever-increasing workload in a timely and efficient manner, the budget amount originally requested for 2000 should be allocated for the year 2001. This would mean an increase of USD 400 000 over and above the budget as approved and make it possible to recruit another two programme officers and 2.5 general service staff. The shortage of staff has led to an excessive workload for the staff of GM, and it has only been possible to entrust a small part of that to consultants.





## ENABLING ACTIVITIES

### **Community Exchange and Training Programme: Global Mechanism/RIOD Enabling Activities for UNCCD**

1. While a number of donor-funded projects provide for community exchanges and training, the scope of such exchanges is usually limited to the individual donors' project portfolios. At the same time, there is no systematic mechanism for bringing communities "into the loop" – they have traditional knowledge to share, but are left out of the development programmes.
2. Given the priority accorded to capacity-building under the UNCCD and the need to lay the ground for future investments, the purpose of the proposed CETP is to encourage the establishment of systematic dialogue and exchange of experience between users of natural resources as a basis for building a partnership between local communities, government (central or local) and other partners, including donors and NGOs.
3. As a follow-up to consultations with the RIOD network, country-level UNCCD focal points and specialized institutions, the GM and its partners are supporting the CETP which was conceived as a grass-roots capacity-building initiative and is expected to enhance local absorptive capacity. The GM has contributed catalytic resources (in financial and conceptual terms) for the purpose of facilitating the development and implementation of the programme, which will lay the ground for further investments of domestic and donor resources in support of NAP objectives.
4. The programme will be implemented in a decentralized manner while providing an overall framework for cross-fertilization between projects and programmes executed by NGOs or governmental institutions. Provision will be made also for the inclusion of areas currently left out of development programmes. Finally, collaborative arrangements will be made for knowledge management and broad-based dissemination of best practices through partnership agreements among existing and future knowledge networks.
5. Following discussions with representatives of the RIOD network, national coordinating bodies and donors, a framework paper along the above-mentioned lines was drafted and discussed at COP.3. A number of governments and development partners, including World Bank (which is cofinancing a project with the GM), the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO), FAO, UNEP and the Free University of Amsterdam, have expressed interest in collaborating with the initiative. Under its NGO/Extended Cooperation Programme, IFAD has approved a cluster of grants for an aggregate of USD 420 000 in support of RIOD members in East, Southern and West Africa, the Maghreb countries, Asia and Latin America for exchanges and training activities related to IFAD-funded programmes in those regions. This amount is over and above the initial GM allocation of USD 500 000 for the programme, and will be supplemented by parallel contributions from the above-mentioned partners and others still to be identified.
6. The first project under this initiative, the Suid Bokkeveld Community Support Project in Northern Cape Province, South Africa, is under implementation. The aim of the project is to improve the lives of poor farming households in the community by promoting partnerships for sustained use of natural and cultural resources. The project is co-sponsored by the Knowledge and Learning Centre of the World Bank in an amount of USD 33 100.



7. Other NGO projects have been channelled through the RIOD network and, in a few cases, directly discussed with the GM. Several projects in other regions are ready for detailed discussion, as follows:

**India: Capacity-Building and Dissemination of Indigenous Technology Across Country Communities**

8. The overall goal of the project is to enhance local communities' coping strategies and resource management systems and strengthen their livelihood systems through exchanges of knowledge. The specific objectives of the project are to:

- promote learning and capacity-building among communities;
- enhance local knowledge of natural resources management and strengthen the capacity of communities to respond positively to further crises; and
- increase access to local technologies that may be replicable in/extended to communities across country borders.

9. Youth For Action (YFA), the requesting NGO, is a professional development organization that has been working with communities in the areas of human resources development and the conservation and management of natural resources, with particular emphasis on agricultural biodiversity. Most of YFA's programmes have been planned and implemented through the local network of institutions known as *Sanghams*.

**Pakistan: Project for Participatory Wildlife Conservation and for the Combating of Land Degradation in Tharparkar District**

10. The overall goal of this GEF/UNDP-initiated project is to ensure participatory biological diversity conservation and combat land degradation in Tharparkar District. The project aims to develop models for participatory management and sustainable use of resources in a highly fragile district ecosystem in Pakistan. These objectives will be achieved by addressing three inter-linked aspects: conserving biodiversity and restoring ecological balance; combating land degradation and drought; and providing sustainable development incentives for local development. The expected outcomes of the project are as follows :

- a collaborative and community-driven participatory wildlife management programme in Tharparkar and the provision of a model for replication elsewhere in the country;
- reduced illegal hunting and poaching through community-based management, advocacy, community mobilization and legal measures;
- applied strategies and methods for biodiversity conservation that secure ecosystem balance, promote rangeland conservation, reduce land degradation and help to meet socio-economic needs;
- sustainable re-vegetation, water harvesting, reforestation and natural product development for the conservation of biodiversity in the project area and for arresting land degradation; and
- long-term drought management programmes through community and infrastructural development.

11. The requesting NGO – the Society for Conservation and Protection of the Environment (SCOPE), based in Karachi – was established in 1988. Its mandate is to protect the environment at the local, national and global levels through networking, advocacy, capacity-building, research, community organization and legal action to achieve self-sustainability.



### **Peru: Exchanges of Experience and Prospects for Use of Botanical Grain Technology (Sexual) in Potato Production**

12. A request has been received from Peruvian Services Centre (CEPESER), within the framework of the GM/CETP, for the financing of a training workshop in botanical grain technology and its application by small farmers' associations to improve food security and alleviate rural poverty in the semi-arid areas in the Sierra de Piura in Peru.

### **Argentina: Proposals for Sustainable Development in Rural Communities**

13. GM support for a number of projects has been requested by Los Algarrobos (Civil Association for Sustainable Development) in Argentina. Three such proposals concern the Puna subregion of Argentina (Salta, Jujuy, Catamarca). The projects focus on environmental education and institutional capacity-building for members of RIOD; forestry initiatives in Mendoza Province; and initiatives with small indigenous producers in rural areas.

14. Other initiatives and activities are as follows:

### **Integrated Land and Water Initiative**

15. During the period under review, the GEF Secretariat, World Bank and UNDP launched ILWI in response to the serious situation prevailing in Africa, particularly with regard to land and water resources. Given the relevance of this initiative to the objectives of the UNCCD, the GM has engaged in discussions on its development. It has also been agreed that the regional workshops to be organized by the GM (see below) will provide an opportunity to discuss ILWI with African regional organizations and individual governments. Moreover, serious consideration is being given to the inclusion of water-related initiatives in the SRAP for West Africa as pilot sites for ILWI. Given the importance of ILWI to the Convention, the GM is working closely in this regard with the GEF Secretariat and implementing agencies.

### **Soil Fertility Initiative**

16. A further development related to the GM's portfolio of strategic initiatives relates to cooperation with World Bank and FAO on the Soil Fertility Initiative (SFI). In this case, too, the underlying rationale is to support UNCCD implementation by linking it to initiatives of relevance to combating desertification. On that basis, it was agreed with the World Bank that the SFI and action programmes should be harmonized; work has started on this in Burkina Faso and Senegal (see separate sections in Appendix I). The GM is also cooperating with the World Bank in setting up a special fund within the Bank that will allow for more active pursuit of the SFI, particularly in Africa. To that end, the GM is urging donors to support the initiative directly through the World Bank, the main manager of the initiative.

### **Regional Workshops**

17. These workshops, which are to be organized under the aegis of subregional organizations, will bring together UNCCD national and subregional focal points and representatives of development partners. In the form of presentations and/or brainstorming sessions, the agendas of such workshops will cover, *inter alia*, the following:

- NAP/SRAP priority areas and status of implementation;
- synergies between the UNCCD and other environmental conventions (Biodiversity, Climate Change, Conservation of Wetlands, etc.);



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- the interface between land degradation and GEF focal areas (Biodiversity, Climate Change, International Waters);
- identification of funding instruments and procedures, of possible benefit to the UNCCD, for resource mobilization under other environmental conventions;
- the intervention framework and strategic thrusts of respective interventions of development partners, including bilateral and multilateral organizations, international NGOs and private foundations;
- lessons learned of relevance to NAPs/SRAPs;
- identification of available funding instruments (loans, grants) and sources of TA related to the above-mentioned frameworks;
- the interface between NAP/SRAP and governments' sector strategies (agriculture, water, livestock, forestry, rural development, etc.) or national strategies (sustainable development, poverty reduction, etc.); implications for sectoral and national planning processes, budgeting for domestic resources and negotiated external assistance, including loans, grants and debt relief;
- linkages between NAPs/SRAPs and donors' frameworks and programmes of assistance, and opportunities for tapping related financial resources;
- the rationale, implications and examples of private-sector investment in environmental management with relevance to the UNCCD; prospective linkages between private-sector activities and NAP/SRAP financing and implementation; and
- implications of the above-mentioned considerations for the scope and modalities of GM's evolving communications strategy.

18. While these meetings are not conceived as fora for the pledging of financial resources, it is hoped that a specific "map" can be worked out on each occasion, including project ideas for further elaboration at the national or subregional levels; country level technical or policy consultations; statements of interest on the part of technical or financial cooperation agencies to provide assistance in specific action areas; and an indicative timetable for follow-up activities.

### **Debt Swap Initiative**

19. In its report to COP.3, the GM provided a review of the potential of the debt swap initiative for releasing additional resources to combat land degradation and promote sustainable resource use. Given the general support expressed for GM involvement, concrete steps have been taken during the course of 2000 by the setting up of a joint IFAD/FAO/WFP action group to analyse the prospects for debt swapping, approaching potential creditors, and establishing dialogue with eligible indebted countries. In view of ongoing efforts under the HIPC DI, this initiative is directed towards lower-middle-income and severely-indebted countries with a high incidence of poverty.

20. The Government of Italy was the first country to respond positively to the debt swap initiative. So far, four indebted countries – selected in agreement with the Government of Italy – have expressed strong interest in converting their non-commercial official development assistance debt to Italy into local resources to finance rural development projects in ecologically-fragile areas. The ultimate objective is to promote sustainable agriculture, combat resource degradation and enhance the food security of the rural poor. The estimated total debt stock involved is in excess of USD 0.5 billion, although the amount ultimately released will depend on various parameters, including:

- the portion of debt that it is agreed to swap;
- the net present value of such portion; and
- the capacity of the indebted country to mobilize local resources.



21. Within this context, negotiations have been initiated with two of the four indebted countries and agreement has been reached in principle on projects eligible for financing. The GM is participating actively in this process. If required, IFAD, FAO and WFP are also prepared to provide supplementary resources in terms of finance, TA and food aid, and the GM has agreed to facilitate access to additional financial resources through other donors. Initial contacts have been made with two other creditors in order to expand the scope of the initiative. This approach brings together the comparative advantages and institutional capacities of the GM, its host institution and two other Rome-based United Nations agencies, and constitutes a unique partnership to ensure greater impact from debt-swap operations.

### **Carbon Sequestration**

22. The GM's involvement in carbon sequestration relates to Decision 9/COP.3, by which it was urged to take account of "ongoing relevant intergovernmental negotiations with a view to identifying, at an early stage, potential opportunities for, and innovative sources of, financial assistance for implementation of the Convention". Carbon sequestration is currently under debate through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the FCCC as a way mitigating the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. However, it is also recognized that increased carbon in soil and vegetation has a positive effect with regard to meeting the objectives of the UNCCD and FCCC. Since it is often less costly for an industrialized country to pay for the sequestration of carbon into the soil and vegetation of a developing country than to reduce the level of emissions from its own industry, the trading of carbon has become an interesting alternative.

23. In anticipation of decisions expected to be taken under the CDM, carbon is already being traded, albeit on a limited scale and only in areas of relevance to the UNCCD. The GM is following up on developments, in close cooperation with IFAD and FAO, with a view to seeking benefits for the UNCCD. Following a seminar organized by IFAD and FAO in 1999, FAO has made a study of agricultural systems and their potential with regard to carbon sequestration. IFAD is incorporating the carbon sequestration dimension into some of its new programmes and is thus gaining experience in this area.

24. In September 2000, the GM was represented at a joint IFAD/World Meteorological Organization/FAO/United States Agency for International Development seminar on the measurement of carbon in soil. This initiative was based on the understanding that for large-scale carbon trading to become a reality under the auspices of the CDM, it would be necessary to establish an internationally-recognized system for measuring carbon levels in the soil before and after an intervention. While the seminar was mainly attended by scientists, also participating were a number of individuals with practical experience of carbon trading. In cooperation with IFAD and FAO, the GM intends to gain practical experience in the area of carbon trading and to put this experience to the benefit of the Convention. The amount of USD 100 000 has been allocated under the SRCF for the purpose of pursuing this initiative.



## SUPPORT TO NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

### A. West Africa

#### **Burkina Faso**

1. In recent years, the Government of Burkina Faso has developed its NAP with financial support from bilateral and multilateral donors including, *inter alia*, The Netherlands and IFAD. The next steps towards implementing the Burkina Faso NAP will involve a multi-track approach, including the formulation of local area development programmes (LADPs); identification of the interface between NAP activities and ongoing projects and programmes; arrangements for the identification and dissemination of best practices in land-degradation control and related support measures; rationalization of the policy framework in respect of direct and indirect incentive systems for land-degradation control; and establishment of the National Desertification Fund (NDF) with prospective contributions from the Government, bilateral/multilateral donors and the private sector.

2. In this context, and in agreement with the Government of Burkina Faso, the GM has undertaken to support the implementation of the NAP in various ways, including:

- assistance in harmonizing the NAP with the SFI supported by the World bank and FAO (in recognition of the interlinkages between soil fertility and land degradation);
- elaboration of LADPs and support to policy dialogue on incentive systems for natural resources management; and
- establishment of the NDF in close consultation with other interested development partners. This will involve, *inter alia*, provision for technical support to finalize the related operational modalities and a financial contribution towards the initial capitalization of the NDF.

3. An initial allocation of USD 130 000 has been earmarked from GM's SRCF Account as catalytic resources in support of the above-mentioned process. The need for additional allocations, and the size and timing of such allocations, will be determined in due course on the basis of disbursements made from initial allocations, implementation progress and availability of cofinancing opportunities.

#### **Mali**

4. A round table on environment financing was organized by the Government of Mali in May 1999 with the participation of representatives of the donor community, the UNCCD Secretariat and the GM. On this occasion, various donors made statements of interest with respect to the priority-action areas for UNCCD implementation in Mali. These covered, *inter alia*, the rational management and conservation of water resources, pasturelands, forest and fauna; and environmental information.

5. The next steps in mobilizing resources – for which the assistance of the GM as an “honest broker” was requested – will involve identification of the interface between the NAP priority-action areas on the one hand and, on the other hand, the ongoing or planned interventions of various donors and specialized agencies. To this end, Mali was selected as one of the pilot countries for the “business plan” approach adopted by the GM Facilitation Committee. The funding gaps and arrangements for mobilizing additional resources will be identified as a result of an iterative, participatory process, in the context of the Government's decentralization policies. Special attention will be also paid to establishing, at the national level, an information system which will interface with the GM's global database. The Mali database – managed by local institutions – will contain information on flows and sources of funding for national UNCCD implementation, as well as on best practices in land degradation control and support to community-level capacity-building. Emphasis will be placed also on assisting the Government, in consultation with development partners, to harmonize its policies on



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the management of natural resources. At the same time, in the interests of long-term sustainability, the Government will take steps to progressively remove inconsistencies in the terms and conditions of donors' field-level support.

6. A three-month workplan has been drawn up by the GM Facilitation Committee, bilateral partners (including GTZ) and the OECD Secretariat for implementation by the FAO/Investment Centre. The workplan will culminate with the organization of a Government of Mali/donor consultation at the end of 2000 with the objective of validating the approach taken and providing guidance for subsequent action, under the aegis of the *Commission Paritaire* as a joint consultative body bringing together government ministries and donor representatives.

7. An initial allocation of USD 130 000 has been allocated from the GM's SRCF Account in support of the above. The need for additional allocations, and the size and timing of them, will be determined on the basis of disbursements made from the initial allocations, implementation progress and availability of cofinancing opportunities. Meanwhile, the GM's contribution has been supplemented by TA from FAO equivalent to USD 50 000, in addition to parallel contributions from bilateral and multilateral partners.

### Senegal

8. Senegal was one of the first countries to ratify the UNCCD and to complete its NAP. In close collaboration with NGOs and farmer organizations, the Government recently drafted a medium-term priority programme that includes pilot activities to test innovative institutional approaches and cofinancing arrangements. Moreover, in an effort to attract external funding, the Government reiterated its commitment to earmarking counterpart funds for that programme.

9. An iterative, participatory process will be followed in defining the interface and establishing operational linkages between the NAP (including the medium-term priority programme) and other projects supported by multilateral and bilateral donors. This systematic approach will also encompass sectoral programmes and policy initiatives at the national and subregional levels, as indicated above for Burkina Faso and Mali, including harmonization of the NAP with the SFI and identification of the interface with the national poverty reduction strategy.

10. A set of pilot projects, with emphasis on the mobilization of women and youth, is to be launched by the Government in various agro-ecological zones in order to test a number of parameters that are critical for full-fledged implementation of the NAP, including:

- effectiveness of partnership agreements between departments and programmes with complementary mandates and activities;
- the implementation capacity of the Ministry of the Environment; and
- the coordinating and monitoring capacity of the national coordinating body.

11. In terms of NAP financing, the need for additional resources and the amount required will be determined in light of the above-mentioned process. However, as far as potential channels for NAP funding are concerned, the establishment of the NDF has been the subject of extensive discussion between the Government and civil-society organizations. For its part, the GM is prepared to provide technical and financial assistance to move this process forward. Another significant (but not exclusive) financing option might be the reconversion of external public debt to support implementation of the NAP as a broad-based, poverty-oriented framework encompassing both support to agricultural production and resource-conservation activities and socio-economic infrastructure and services as incentives for natural resources management. The Government has drafted a national framework for debt conversion, and the GM has undertaken to assist in establishing necessary linkages with NAP implementation.



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12. An initial allocation of USD 130 000 has been earmarked from GM's SRCF account (to be supplemented by TA from FAO and parallel contributions from bilateral partners) in support of the above-mentioned process. The need for additional allocations, and the size and timing of them, will be determined on the basis of disbursements made from the initial allocations, implementation progress and availability of cofinancing opportunities.

## B. North Africa

### Algeria

13. In response to a formal request from the Government of Algeria in January 2000, the GM allocated an amount of USD 50 000 to provide catalytic funds to launch the country's NAP process.

14. Having initiated anti-desertification programmes and projects in the 1970s, Algeria was one of the first countries to ratify the UNCCD, and all necessary institutional arrangements have been made to support the development and implementation of the NAP. To that end, in 1998 a national coordinating committee was created comprising stakeholders from diverse sectors, including civil-society representatives. The involvement of civil society in UNCCD implementation has been identified as a major element for consideration. Indeed, a national committee of NGOs created to combat desertification comprises more than 20 NGOs, both national and local. The committee is a member of the RIOD network. In Algeria, where 80% of the territory is affected by desertification, the main challenges are to bring about coordination among partners, ensure mainstreaming of the NAP into the national development strategy and mobilize resources for the purpose of combating desertification.

15. GM support will be provided in partnership with other United Nations agencies and discussions have been held on the subject with FAO/Investment Centre. Moreover, UNDP/UNSO has allocated USD 100 000 to Algeria to support the development of the NAP, and hence GM will take account of the approach and methodology developed during the UNDP/UNSO identification mission in March 2000. Finally, the UNCCD Secretariat is providing support and assisting in the organization of a joint reconnaissance mission with the Government of Italy as an important political partner.

16. The GM's approach to supporting the Algerian Government was defined during the Regional Meeting for Africa, held in Algeria on 22-24 October 2000, when meetings were held with all present and potential partners in the exercise.

### Tunisia

17. Tunisia was one of the first countries to ratify the UNCCD. It has already developed its NAP, established an NDF and created national and regional desertification control committees and an inter-sectoral coordination mechanism.

18. Tunisia sought GM support for internalizing NAP objectives within its national policy and development cooperation framework. A mission was therefore organized to map out the thrust and objectives of potential GM assistance and discuss modalities for launching the NAP. On that basis, it was decided to establish a framework for cooperation involving the following broad thrusts:

- development of a framework for localized development along the lines of the NAP;
- identification and exploitation of financing opportunities to pursue actions foreseen under the NAP;
- integrated treatment of transboundary ecosystems for managing resources shared among neighbouring countries;



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- capacity-building in terms of ability to assimilate funds during execution, including the identification of objectives;
- methodology to appraise projects and select investments for environmental impact assessment and beneficiary participation;
- categorization of problems, and exchanges of experience between decision-makers, technicians and communities; and
- identification of monitoring and evaluation indicators with regard to resource allocation, socio-economic and biophysical impact.

19. With a view to establishing such a cooperation framework, it has been decided to convene a National Workshop on Partners and Resource Mobilization with the support of GM, GTZ, IFAD and the UNCCD Secretariat. The objectives of the workshop, scheduled for March 2001, are to use the NAP as a framework within which to integrate both national and development policies and strategies; and as a reference point for planning and formulating the country's Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan.

20. The workshop is expected to result in:

- establishment of a mechanism for operational integration between national institutions and development partners, which will facilitate the negotiation of partnership agreements founded on the NAP;
- preparation and finalization of programmes developed according to the five priority themes identified during the GM mission and based on the NAP;
- sensitization/mobilization of national actors and development partners, and exchanges of views on interventions under way or planned; and
- identification of the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.

21. An initial allocation of USD 50 000 has been made by the GM in the form of a grant. Both GTZ and IFAD are expected to make contributions in support of the process.

### **Morocco**

22. The GM has been requested to support the implementation of Morocco's NAP and, in that connection, a reconnaissance mission is due to visit the country during the latter part of 2000. One potential partner in this exercise is GTZ, which has been supporting the development of the NAP. The approach to GM support and an outline of its scope will be identified during the mission, bearing in mind the ultimate objective of forging partnerships for resource mobilization. As a follow-up to the UNDP/UNSO-supported workshop for dryland management and UNCCD implementation, held in Beirut on 3-5 May 2000, UNDP/UNSO proposes to collaborate with the GM in furthering this process and has already earmarked USD 100 000 for the purpose.

## **C. Asia**

### **Kazakhstan**

23. The GM is already supporting individual countries of the Central Asia subregion. This has included participating in the World Bank-initiated and GEF-cofinanced Dryland Management Project (DMP) from its inception. It has also assisted in broadening partnership in the project, as illustrated by IFAD's decision to join in the formulation mission.

24. The overall development objective of the project is the conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable use of natural resources in marginal cereal-growing areas in the Shetsky Rayon of

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Karaganda Oblast in Kazakhstan. By involving the active participation of local communities, the project will assist the Government of Kazakhstan in:

- developing alternative land uses, rehabilitating ecosystems for conservation of improved plant and animal biodiversity and carbon sequestration;
- improving living standards through income generation and agricultural diversification; and
- promoting public awareness and a strategy for replicating project activities in similar areas of Kazakhstan and elsewhere in Central Asia.

25. The next step for GM involvement will consist in facilitating linkages between the DMP and relevant strategic thrusts under the NAP for Kazakhstan; the SRAP for Central Asia; and the Regional Technical Assistance Programme (RETA) initiative. It will also assist in mobilizing resources.

### **Kyrgyzstan**

26. Following consultations with the UNDP office in Bishkek, GM assistance was requested to support three pilot interventions as a basis for sustainable management of transboundary ecosystems shared with other Central Asian States, including Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and, in particular, Tajikistan. The pilot interventions involve the following:

- pasture management in transboundary areas;
- monitoring of the salinization and swamping of irrigated lands in valleys of Central Asia, based on the example of the Chui Valley in Kyrgyzstan; and
- measures to combat rural poverty, including support to agricultural production and marketing in Central Asian states.

27. The above request will be considered within the framework of RETA, initiated by AsDB and cofinanced by the GM.

### **China**

28. In early November 2000, the Government of China organized a national consultation on partnerships and resource mobilization for UNCCD implementation, particularly in the Western Region, with the assistance of the GM, the UNCCD Secretariat and other development partners.

29. The consultation brought together representatives of government departments concerned with natural resources management and planning and economic development in China; multilateral/bilateral financial and technical cooperation agencies; and interested intergovernmental and NGOs that are in a position to contribute financially or technically to the implementation of China's NAP.

30. Participants were invited to share lessons learned and best practices that bore relevance to NAP implementation in China in terms of natural resources management; alternative rural livelihoods; socio-economic infrastructure and services; policy harmonization; and institutional coordination. Particular attention was paid to:

- identifying and rendering operational the interface between the NAP/UNCCD and the Government of China's sectoral and national strategies and policies;
- mainstreaming NAP/UNCCD objectives and activities into the strategies and programmes of development partners; and
- reviewing various options and mechanisms for financing the NAP/UNCCD, including public and private sources and innovative funding mechanisms.



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31. A joint GM/UNCCD Secretariat mission visited China in early July 2000. This resulted in the drafting of a framework paper on the approach to matching supply with demand for UNCCD financing in China, together with a platform of investments containing project proposals from provincial authorities and a discussion on linkages with the Western Region Development Strategy while leaving opportunities open for new interventions as a result of continuing dialogue between the Government of China and its development partners.
32. In this connection, the GM and other partners will assist China in carrying out pilot activities for the establishment of an information system interfaced with the FIELD system. This will capitalize on existing databases, resources and technologies, and benefit from experience deriving from the establishment of the regional desertification information network.
33. The above experience is expected to substantially contribute to developing the GM's approach to partnership building around resource mobilization for NAP implementation in China.

### **D. Latin America and the Caribbean**

#### **Argentina**

34. At the present time, the UNCCD focal point, government agencies and NGOs are seeking GM financial support for specific activities under the NAP for Argentina. The GM is responding to requests that will consolidate UNCCD implementation at the local, provincial, national and transboundary levels. These requests provide the basis for the GM's taking a proactive role in defining investment opportunities for combating land degradation and desertification. The partners in this process include scientific institutions, national and provincial government agencies, NGOs and small producers and communities.
35. Collaboration between NGOs and government agencies for the purpose of combating land degradation is geared towards capacity-building in degraded areas and exchanges of knowledge. The latter fit into the enabling activities of the GM. Detailed proposals regarding the CETP and related activities have been submitted for GM consideration. Collaboration in areas of common interest has been initiated with GTZ in support of Argentina's NAP
36. The GM has allocated USD 50 000 to support the above process, which will include a workshop aimed at the selection of land degradation and desertification indicators in pilot communities for evaluation and validation, and preparation of a proposal on the use of such indicators by different communities in Argentina. This initiative will form the basis for an exchange of experience in the application of indicators for land degradation in the Gran Chaco SRAP.
37. The GM will build on partnerships so far established with the Government of Argentina, the Environmental Institutional Development Programme, the National Institute of Technology in Agriculture, GTZ's NAP Support Project and United Nations agencies such as FAO, UNEP and UNDP.
38. A joint mission with the FAO/Investment Centre is scheduled for the latter part of 2000 for the purpose of identifying priority needs and links with different requests received from Argentina.

#### **Cuba**

39. The GM has received a request from the Director of International Collaboration of the Cuban Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment for financial support to the NAP process in Cuba.
40. The Government of Cuba ratified the UNCCD in 1997. Given the importance of managing the natural resources of the Cauto River, a project – "Integrated Planning and Management of the Natural Resources of the Cauto River" – aimed at addressing land degradation problems in the river



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basin emerged as an effort towards the implementation of Cuba's NAP. The objective of the first phase of the project was to develop methodologies on land-use management. To this end, a participatory planning methodology was developed and put into practice in pilot areas, and is now being used in other areas.

41. In response to the Government of Cuba's request, the GM has made an initial allocation of USD 80 000 from its SRCF Account. These funds will contribute to further developing the aforementioned planning methodology in order that it can be used on a wider scale, thus contributing to combating desertification in Cuba. A reconnaissance mission is planned for the latter part of 2000.

42. In addition to the above, WAICENT is to provide technical resources and will work together with the GM in organizing a national workshop on the information system in support of the Cuban NAP. It is hoped that the workshop will lead to the sharing of information on common issues related to development and the use of natural resources, while at the same time strengthening national institutions.

43. The GM is in the process of creating synergy for this project by establishing contact with the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment. There is potential for cofinancing from IFAD, FAO, UNDP and IDB.

**Haiti**

44. The Ministry of Environment of Haiti has shown interest in launching the NAP. During the Fifth Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC V) held in Lima, Peru, in 1998, Haiti was identified as a priority country for the region. The GM has incorporated this priority into its workplan, with special emphasis on supporting the country's efforts in the identification of activities, partners and resources for the launching process.

45. In response to a formal request from the Haitian Ministry of the Environment and the UNCCD focal point, a workshop for the launching of the NAP in Haiti will be the starting point in the identification of stakeholders in the region. The GM has earmarked an amount of USD 80 000 to start up the process of consultations needed for effective implementation of the NAP.

46. The UNCCD focal point for Haiti was invited to visit the GM with the objective of organizing a workshop as the first activity in the launching of the NAP process.



## SUPPORT TO REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

### A. Africa

#### **The Subregional Action Programme for West Africa**

1. The SRAP for West and Central Africa was approved in May 1999, on the occasion of a meeting funded by IFAD and the GM, among others. Several themes were identified under the SRAP: management of shared water resources, sustainable agriculture and rangeland management, renewable energy, migratory pest control, early warning systems, subregional integration and infrastructure, and communications.

2. The organizations designated as thematic leaders included an NGO network, intergovernmental bodies, subregional economic integration organizations, and specialized regional technical agencies. The SRAP was adopted by the heads of state under the aegis of the subregional liaison centres, namely, ECOWAS and CILSS. Both liaison centres organized a follow-up seminar, with financial assistance from the GM, that brought together the eight thematic focal points to take stock of progress so far made and agree on a common approach to SRAP implementation. This was followed by a meeting on shared water resources with the participation of intergovernmental bodies involved in management of shared river basins and lakes in the West and Central Africa subregion. Representatives of intergovernmental bodies made presentations on their respective mandates and activities, prospects for creating synergies between their respective interventions and relevant initiatives at the national and subregional levels. The GM is currently supporting two initiatives related to the water resources component of the SRAP.

#### **Niger/Nigeria - Coordinated Management of Shared Natural Resources (Land and Water) in Shared River Basins.**

3. The case of the shared river valleys between Nigeria and Niger (i.e. the Maggia Lamido, the Goulbi Maradi and the El Fadama and the Komadougou Yobe) provides a typical illustration of the role that the GM could play in addressing the negative externalities that stem from uncoordinated use of common water resources.

4. Over the past two decades, the combined effects of the construction of dams, inefficient irrigation systems, land degradation, erratic rainfall and high evapo-transpiration have jeopardized the financial viability and environmental sustainability of investment projects sponsored by the private and public sectors. Previous attempts to implement the 1990 Maiduguri Agreement on equitable management and use of shared water resources have fallen short of their objectives for want of a comprehensive strategic framework and effective linkages with field operations. Against this backdrop, at the request of the World Bank and in collaboration with FAO, the GM recently took the lead in facilitating the elaboration of a strategic plan for implementation of the Maiduguri Agreement. This new initiative has good chances of success, as it takes place within the context of the SRAP of West and Central Africa under the UNCCD. It also takes into account that negative externalities are reciprocal and that the two governments are determined to find a solution acceptable for both parties. The FAO/Investment Centre has prepared an issues and options paper to this end.

5. A stakeholder workshop was held in July 2000 under the aegis of ECOWAS, CILSS and the Niger/Nigeria Joint Cooperation Commission (NNJCC) to review and endorse the strategic plan for implementation of the Maiduguri Agreement. The workshop was cofinanced by UNEP/GEF and the GM. As a result of the workshop, a proposal for a GEF planning grant is being processed. The strategic plan will include cross-border activities under the auspices of the NNJCC, as well as local-level activities that will be covered as part of ongoing or planned donor-funded field programmes. The GEF planning grant is expected to lead to a full GEF project to cofinance the implementation of a



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strategic plan for sustainable of natural resources (including shared water) in the transboundary areas. The strategic plan will also benefit from contributions from various donors, either directly or indirectly, i.e. through their respective national programmes. The World Bank will provide institutional support to the NNJC through the National 'Fadama' Development Programme currently under appraisal.

### **The Fouta-Djallon Highlands - A Strategic Action Plan for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources**

6. In mid-1999, a meeting in Bamako, Mali, brought together the Fouta Djallon regional stakeholders and resulted in important decisions including, *inter alia*:

- provision of an international legal status for the Fouta Djallon highlands;
- drafting of a strategic plan for the sustainable development of the Fouta Djallon highlands within the framework of the SRAP for West and Central Africa; and
- direct involvement of regional economic integration organizations and funding institutions (ECOWAS and AfDB) as a follow-up to previous political sponsorship of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

7. On the occasion of the first meeting of thematic leaders under the SRAP for West Africa (organized with GM funding), contacts were established with the International Coordination Office for the Fouta-Djallon Highlands Integrated Development Programme sponsored by the OAU. Subsequently, the GM was formally requested to assist in coordinating efforts to mobilize international assistance for the elaboration of terms of reference for a strategic plan for sustainable development. The highlands have been confronted, *inter alia*, with problems of land abuse, including overgrazing, deforestation, over-cultivation and bush fires (for fuel wood production). The strategic importance of such a plan is based on recognition that sustainable development of the Fouta-Djallon Highlands, also known as the "water tower of West Africa", will be a precondition for sustainable resource management on the six major river basins covering eight countries of the region.

8. GM collaboration with development partners resulted in the organization of a regional stakeholders' workshop (Labé, Guinea), with funding from UNEP/GEF, FAO and the GM, where the terms of reference for the strategic plan were elaborated. The formulation exercise will be funded by a GEF planning grant, with cofinancing mobilized by the GM. The GM is currently promoting the active role of other development partners in this process (including members of the GM Facilitation Committee, such as the World Bank, IFAD, AfDB, UNDP and other multilateral and bilateral donors), taking account, *inter alia*, of their current interest in the Senegal and the Niger river basins, as well as field investments and or/technical assistance in area-based projects funded by them at the country level.

### **Arab Maghreb Union**

9. A formal request from the Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) has been submitted to the GM for support in the implementation of the Information System on Desertification and Environment, developed in collaboration with the Sahara and Sahel Observatory. The request for support is linked to the SRAP for AMU, coordinated by a unit created within the AMU Secretariat for the purpose of facilitating implementation of the SRAP. In order to respond to this request, a mission is planned for the last quarter of 2000 to discuss GM support with regard to other ongoing activities and to develop the GM approach to supporting the SRAP in a holistic way that is not only limited to the information system. The Islamic Development Bank is interested in supporting AMU's SRAP.



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**B. Asia****Subregional Action Programme to Combat Desertification in Central Asia**

10. On the occasion of a consultation meeting bringing together countries of the Aral Sea Basin held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 18 July 2000, Ministers from Central Asian States agreed that, "The preparation and implementation of the SRAP/UNCCD should be considered as an integral part of the countries' national policies for sustainable development. The framework for subregional cooperation should embrace not only the NAPs but also other national plans of actions in the field of improving the ecological situation in the Aral Sea Basin." The SRAP will thus appear as a tool for harmonizing, complementing and increasing the efficiency of NAPs.

11. One example of how the GM fosters partnerships and linkages between NAPs and related initiatives at the country level, is to be seen in the ongoing process to harmonize the Kazakhstan NAP with the SRAP. The latter could be considered as a rolling programme of which the Drylands Ecosystem Management Project in Kazakhstan forms just one component. It should build on national projects that are designed to address critical issues of desertification on a country-by-country basis. This will provide opportunities for the countries concerned to share and learn from each other, thus enhancing capacity-building efforts among countries and establishing a dynamic network that can add value to each national activity and further complement it. This initiative will be supported through a joint initiative of the AsDB, as described below.

**Regional Technical Assistance Programme to Support Asian Countries (RETA): A Partnership Arrangement with the Asian Development Bank**

12. As a cofinancing contribution to an umbrella grant from the AsDB, the GM has earmarked USD 200 000 in support of action programming or NAP implementation in the Central Asian Republics, China, India, Mongolia and Pakistan. It is expected that other partner organizations such as NGOs, the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, GEF, IFAD and the UNCCD Secretariat also will be associated with this initiative, as well as interested bilateral partners yet to be identified. Positive dialogue has taken place with each of the above organizations, as well as with UNSO and the World Bank Drylands Programme.

13. The RETA planning grant will complement ongoing activities in support of UNCCD implementation through a set of regional activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of UNCCD national focal points to initiate and launch UNCCD national action programming; establishing stakeholder mechanisms to support national action programming processes; and promoting partnerships with developed country parties to the Convention and other donors that will finance one or more of the following:

- preparation of regional, subregional or national policy/strategy papers to address issues identified at the regional workshop and strengthen their national action programming;
- convening of national and/or subregional fora on UNCCD implementation, bringing together stakeholders including civil society and NGOs; and
- identification of investment, TA and capacity-building concepts for financing by developed country parties, multilateral donors, including the GEF and the CDM.

14. The main expected outputs include a national action programming process in participating countries, a policy dialogue agenda on dryland management, and a pipeline of investment and capacity-building concepts for consideration by GEF (under the AsDB/GEF partnership arrangement), AsDB and other donors.





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15. The RETA initiative will be launched at a regional workshop for UNCCD National Focal Points in Bangkok, Thailand. This will be followed by work with countries, both individually and collectively, to develop guidelines and strategies based on the priority issues identified at the workshop.

### **Subregional Action Programme for West Asia**

16. Efforts to address the effects of the challenges of combating desertification call for strong cooperation between countries of West Asia coupled with a coherent framework. The SRAP document presented by GM to member countries of the subregion at the Dubai meeting on 16 February 2000, was endorsed as the agreed framework for action and as a suitable instrument for channelling donor resources to supplement national efforts. The SRAP development process was jointly supported by the GM and the Islamic Development Bank in consultation with the UNCCD Secretariat. The SRAP is expected to add value to NAPs and promote regional cooperation to take advantage of the synergies between different institutional capacities in the region.

17. The GM is taking steps to put in place the institutional structures that will manage the programme, including finalization of arrangements to select the host institution to house the regional coordination unit (RCU), the constitution of the management committee for the SRAP and, thereafter, the formal handing over of full responsibility for the SRAP to the member countries.

18. Following several discussions with, and missions to, the various regional financing institutions, the GM was invited to present this programme, along with others, at the Arab Funding Institutions' Coordination Meeting at the headquarters of the OPEC Fund in Vienna, Austria on 13-15 September 2000.

19. IFAD's Near East and North Africa Division is considering the possibility of supporting this programme. In addition, the GM has allocated USD 150 000 to support the launching of the SRAP implementation phase.

### **Regional Thematic Networks**

20. The GM is committed to supporting the development of three Asia-wide networks on desertification monitoring, agroforestry and rangeland management, respectively, for which a global amount of USD 50 000 has been earmarked.

## **C. Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **Harmonization of Public Policies affecting Natural Resource Management**

21. At the Third Regional Meeting of the UNCCD, held at Havana, Cuba, in 1997, the Latin American and Caribbean country parties to the Convention identified the environment policy with regard to rural development, the environment, food security, land tenure, poverty alleviation, etc., as having a direct and indirect impact on land management and desertification.

22. To address these concerns, the Latin-American parties decided to develop a project proposal entitled "Harmonization of Public Policies". This proposal was drafted with support from the UNCCD Secretariat and approved by GRULAC V in 1998.

23. On the basis of this proposal, a number of international organizations, including IFAD, FAO, UNEP, UNDP/UNSO, IDB and the GM agreed to engage in a joint institutional effort to provide the technical and financial resources for the implementation of the project, and six country parties expressed political and technical commitment to supporting its development and implementation.



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24. To this end, a preliminary, national-level evaluation is being undertaken with GM financial support of USD 75 300 to cover coordination costs. The GM has played a decisive role in building the institutional partnership and in consolidating the financial partnership for cofinancing this intervention. The countries engaged in the process are Barbados, Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. The institutions that are providing financial support to the initiative are UNEP, the GM, FAO, IDB, IFAD, Regional Coordination Unit of UNCCD and UNDP. Formal requests from country parties to participate with case studies, and the political and institutional arrangements made to date, bear witness to the importance of this intervention.

**El Gran Chaco Subregional Action Programme**

25. The subregional approach to sustainable management of El Gran Chaco as a transboundary ecosystem was the result of a long consultation process involving the three countries concerned, i.e. Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. The SRAP for El Gran Chaco identified both the technical and socio-economic issues to be addressed in this international effort and the institutional arrangements needed for their implementation.

26. The GM was invited to be a key partner in this process by the Ministry of Social Development and Environment of Argentina, acting as focal point for the programme. The GM will support this subregional effort with an initial allocation of USD 50 000 from the its SRCF Account. As a follow up to the priority assessment resulting from the Santiago del Estero meeting in May 2000, the GM contribution will facilitate the formulation process; help identify the medium- and long-term funding gaps; and determine, in due course, the cofinancing opportunities available to support investment in identified priority areas including, *inter alia*, partnership with the GEF Secretariat through the interface between land degradation and biodiversity conversation.

27. The horizontal cooperation between regional and national institutions and NGOs, developed through this subregional programme, will also facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experiences through, *inter alia*, the GM- and RIOD-supported CEPT.

**Transboundary Programme for the Island of Hispaniola**

28. The problems of poverty, including inadequate access to infrastructure, services and land resources and the degradation of transboundary ecosystems between Haiti and Dominican Republic, are exacerbated by the intense process of migration in the border zone leading to depleted natural resources. The governments of both countries have therefore taken concrete measures to provide the basis for integrated and mutually beneficial collaboration on medium-and long-term issues of land degradation and desertification.

29. The GM has already responded by allocating approximately USD 50 000 for the formulation of a plan based on technical and socio-economic issues of a priority nature that could unfold new opportunities for the two countries. In collaboration with the Dominican Republic, this initiative will be linked to the launching of the Haiti NAP, for which the GM has allocated USD 80 000, and to the Harmonization of Public Policies work in the region.

30. GM support to this request represents an effort for substantial collaboration in combating desertification. The umbrella programme for supporting the formulation of the two governments' transboundary activities provides an opportunity for integrated identification of land-use practices to reduce the pressure on natural resources. It is expected that a common framework of action for the two countries will both improve current institutional arrangements and enhance technical capacities.



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31. Partnerships with a number of government institutions in both countries and with NGOs and concerned community-based organizations will enhance implementation, during which exchanges of information on traditional knowledge and basic technologies could be advantageous to all stakeholders. A plan of action will be the practical outcome of the project together with the consolidation of an institutional framework to guarantee its implementation, including linkages with GEF focal areas such as biodiversity conservation. The two governments have signed a cooperation agreement, and collaboration with different agencies is taking place along the frontier strip. Collaboration with IFAD with regard to ongoing activities in the vicinity of the frontier strip and FAO's work in both countries will improve prospects for forging partnerships.

### **Implementation of the FIELD/Desertification Information System for Latin America and the Caribbean (DESELAC) Network**

32. At the Third Regional Meeting of the UNCCD held at Havana, Cuba, in 1997, the UNCCD focal points for the Latin America and the Caribbean region expressed the need to develop an information system for use in support of the implementation of national, subregional and regional action programmes. A proposal for the establishment of a regional information network, known as DESELAC, was approved in April-May 1998 at the Fourth Regional Meeting of the UNCCD, held in Antigua and Barbuda.

33. The DESELAC programme consists of interlinking existing networks and databases available at the national, subregional and regional levels, and integrating them with global information sources. The objective here is to consolidate, analyse and exchange relevant data and ensure systematic monitoring of degraded land areas. The programme also foresees the distribution of statistical and graphical information, as well as good practices and success stories, that will facilitate the elaboration and implementation of sustainable development plans and programmes to preserve natural resources.

34. DESELAC was brought to the attention of the GM during the Working Meeting for the Elaboration of National Reports, held in Mexico in February 2000. The programme was in need of technical and financial support, although a number of activities had been performed, including:

- establishment of the central node of the DESELAC network within the UNCCD/RCU hosted by UNEP in Mexico;
- preparation and signature of memoranda of understanding between the RCU and 15 countries that had expressed interest in establishing of national nodes;
- preliminary evaluation of existing technical and institutional capacities of the countries; and
- publication of regional bulletins.

35. Given the complementary nature of the scope and objectives of the DESELAC programme and its similarity with the FIELD system, and in order to seize the opportunity to build on respective strengths and experiences, the GM invited the UNCCD/RCU for Latin America and the Caribbean to participate in the Workshop on the GM Information System, held at FAO Headquarters in Rome on 21 July 2000.

36. As a result, it was decided that the GM and WAICENT would assist RCU in the development of DESELAC, in line with the technology and architecture used for the FIELD system, and facilitate the deployment of the FIELD/DESELAC network in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. In addition, the RCU offered to collaborate with the GM in testing the design of the FIELD system, collecting and compiling relevant data (such as financial needs, national funding, projects, lessons learned, etc.) according to FIELD specifications, and promoting awareness and visibility of the joint initiative.



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37. As a follow-up to this initiative, FAO/WAICENT sent two information technology specialists to Mexico in August 2000 to assess existing technical capacities and data dissemination strategies, identify resource requirements, and suggest a phased implementation scenario to provide the RCU with a mirror FIELD platform for the region. The GM has taken the necessary steps to foster DESELAC implementation as a regional priority, and for this purpose hired a consultant to perform a capacity-needs assessment covering the whole region. The findings of these missions laid the groundwork for discussions with the Parties at the Regional Workshop on Resource Mobilization in El Salvador in October 2000.



### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIELD SYSTEM

1. From September 1999 to January 2000, the GM held consultations with the stakeholders to collect their requirements in terms of expected scope, objectives, and functionality of a database on financial resources available for the implementation of the Convention. The consolidated functional requirements resulting from this consultation phase reflected the need for a comprehensive information system whereby data owners could systematically exchange and share knowledge. These consultations also allowed for the definition of common terminology to be used to classify programme categories and components.
2. Technical implementation (phase 2) of this system started in February 2000, the first activity of which consisted in the definition of partnership arrangements between the GM, WAICENT and the Management Information Systems Division of IFAD, covering the designing and development of the system on a cost-sharing basis. Implementation is now well under way, and a first tangible result was the release of FIELD in July 2000. This prototype can be accessed through the GM website.
3. Another important activity is the establishment of pilot activities with institutions and organizations that are part of donor and recipient communities. The objectives of these pilot activities are to test the system, verify its functional efficacy, collect and upload relevant data, and define knowledge-sharing procedures. As part of these pilot activities, some tools might be developed to assist and/or automate the data extraction and compilation processes from existing databases. In March 2000, pilot activities were initiated with the European Union, the Belgian Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIC) and with the OECD/DAC. Collaboration with OECD/DAC covered the finalization of a pilot study on "Aid Targeting the Objectives of the Rio Conventions", which highlighted the ODA share, trend and sectoral focus of desertification-related aid.
4. On 21 July 2000, the GM held a Workshop on the GM Information System at FAO headquarters in Rome. This workshop convened FIELD-partner countries and institutions that were involved in pilot activities, with the objective of verifying the functional efficacy of the FIELD prototype, share experiences on data collection methodologies, identify opportunities for collaboration and plan future pilot activities. As a follow up to the workshop, expressions of interest in pursuing collaboration with the GM were submitted by the OECD/DAC, the European Union, IFAD, FAO, DGIC, the UNCCD/RCU for Latin America and the Caribbean, China and Mali.
5. Once the pilot projects are completed, the activities related to data collection and dissemination will be performed regularly, on the basis of the procedures established in phase 2. Other activities, such as those related to the technical maintenance of the system and the development of additional features or new releases, will be performed on a more specific or *ad hoc* basis. In particular, the future development of the system will be dictated by the feedback and requirements of its end users. This approach will allow work to progress through incremental developments that will gradually incorporate the stakeholders' demand into subsequent prototypes of the system.
6. The GM intends to concentrate on the identification of a preliminary inventory of relevant sources and channels of funding that are available to implement the Convention, as stipulated in Decision 9/COP.3. For this purpose, the GM will solicit inputs from Facilitation Committee members and bilateral and multilateral donors, extract relevant data from public domain databases, and compile donor profiles and case studies for presentation at the Subregional Workshops on Approaches to Resource Mobilization, organized by the GM and the UNCCD Secretariat in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.