

Desertification and Drought

THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD) IS THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL FORUM ADDRESSING THESE TOPICS. THE UNCCD ADDRESSES THESE TOPICS WITHIN THE WIDER FRAMEWORK OF LAND DEGRADATION IN DRYLANDS, WHICH MAKES IT RELEVANT TO MANY MORE AREAS THAN THE DESERT MARGINS. THE CONVENTION CONSEQUENTLY DEFINES AFFECTED COUNTRIES IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD AND 30% OF GLOBAL LAND AREA IS CONSIDERED AS DRYLANDS. THE EMPHASIS OF THE CONVENTION IS HOWEVER ON AFRICA. A NEW 10 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN IS A PROMISING WAY FORWARD FOR THE CONVENTION AND PROVIDES STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF UNCCD.

main operative messages

THE FOLLOWING PROPOSALS ARE BASED ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IS KEY TO SECURE FOOD SECURITY.

- **BUILD CAPACITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, PARTICULARLY IN VULNERABLE FARMER AND PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES, BASED ON PEOPLE-CENTRED ACTIVITIES THAT PROVIDE SIMPLE, COST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY AND INCREASE FOOD SECURITY**
- **ENSURE A RIGHTS BASED APPROACH, INCLUDING LAND TENURE RIGHTS, AND INVOLVE CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVELY IN DRYLANDS MANAGEMENT AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT**
- **INCREASE RESEARCH ON AND SCALE UP AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES, SUCH AS CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE AND APPROACHES BASED ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE, THAT CAN BE ADAPTED TO DRYLAND AREAS TO INCREASE FOOD SECURITY IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY. AN UNDERSTANDING OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES WILL BE IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP SUCH SUSTAINABLE TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES.**
- **PRIORITISE DRYLANDS ISSUES IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS OF AFFECTED COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO SECURE OWNERSHIP AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.**

Background

LAND DEGRADATION, DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS ON FOOD SECURITY, AND EVEN MORE SO AS 90% OF PEOPLE WHO DEPEND ON DRYLANDS RESOURCES LIVE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH NO OR LIMITED SOCIAL SAFETY NETS. THIS VULNERABILITY IS EXACERBATED IN CONFLICT AREAS LIKE IN SUDAN AND CHAD WHERE MAJOR HUMANITARIAN DISASTERS ARE HAPPENING. ANOTHER FACTOR EXACERBATING VULNERABILITY IN DRYLANDS AREAS IS CLIMATE CHANGE, WHICH CAN AMPLIFY LAND DEGRADATION PROCESSES AND DROUGHT.

NORWAY HAS ALWAYS SUPPORTED UNCCD IN WORKING TOWARDS ITS GOAL TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT IN COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA. THIS FOLLOWS FROM A TRADITIONAL FOCUS ON AFRICA IN OUR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND FROM REALISING THAT DRYLANDS POPULATIONS ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO DROUGHT AND HUNGER CAUSED BY ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE. IT IS CENTRAL TO US THAT IT IS THE AFFECTED COUNTRIES THEMSELVES WHO ARE BEST PLACED TO IDENTIFY MEASURES TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND MITIGATE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT. OUR FUNDING FOR SUCH MEASURES WILL THEREFORE ALWAYS BE BASED ON NATIONAL PRIORITIES, AS IN ALL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION.

SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY TO COMBATING DESERTIFICATION AND MITIGATING EFFECTS OF DROUGHT. SUCH MANAGEMENT WILL PROVIDE MORE RESILIENT DRYLANDS ECOSYSTEMS THAT WILL BE A BASIS FOR FOOD PRODUCTION AND WATER PROVISION THEREBY LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC, AS WELL AS ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND, DEVELOPMENT. THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IS CENTRAL, AS THEY ARE THE REAL RESOURCE MANAGERS. THEY MUST BE INVOLVED IN PROCESSES AND MEASURES TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND MITIGATE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT.