



## Declaration of Niamey

### The Drylands towards Rio +20: A Global Challenge and African focus

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#### Conference Africa - Brazil - France on the fight against desertification in Africa

(ICID + 19, Africa)

Niamey, Republic of Niger, 24-25 October 2011

*and in perspective of*

The 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum (Marseille, March 2012)

and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20, June 2012)



## Introduction

About hundred participants, scientists and policymakers coming from African countries, Brazil, Argentina and France, and international organizations, met in Niamey, Niger, on October 24 and 25, 2011, in a conference entitled *The Fight Against Desertification in Africa*, also known as ICID+19 Africa, a tripartite initiative lead by African Countries under the guardianship of *The African Union, The Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall*, in close collaboration with the *Institut de la Recherche pour le Développement - IRD (France)* and the *Centro de Gestão e Estudos Estratégicos - CGEE (Brazil)*. The purpose was to assess the situation of dryland regions (arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid lands), with a special focus on Africa, in order to foster sustainable development and the fight against land degradation and desertification in the Drylands. From this analysis, participants have reached conclusions and adopted action oriented recommendations addressed to policy makers and in particular to the Rio + 20 Summit in June 2012.

### **A global challenge**

More than 2 billion people live in the world's drylands and the majority of them live under the poverty line. Desertification and land degradation result from climate variability, unsustainable agriculture and animal husbandry and poor management of natural resources, including water, soils and biodiversity.

### **An African focus**

The Africa Region is recognized as the most vulnerable to desertification, land degradation and the effects of droughts (DLDD). According to estimates based on the World Bank data 40% of the Sahelian population live under the poverty line. The present situation is already very serious because of food insecurity, malnutrition, and human activities pressure on the natural resources. In addition to that, vulnerability may be even worse because of population dynamics and climate change effects.

### **Background**

The present declaration takes into account the 3 Rio conventions (UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD). The Participants endorse the Declaration of Fortaleza, A Drylands Call for Action, adopted at the ICID + 18 in Fortaleza, Brazil, in August 2010, and the Declaration of Mendoza, adopted at the ICID + 19 in Mendoza, Argentina, in September 2011. The

recommendations contained in the third part of the present declaration complement the above mentioned declarations, with a special focus on Africa.

## **Conference Outcomes (Round Table Sessions)**

While recognizing improvements in some development initiatives lead by national governments and regional and community based organizations that have occurred during the last decade, sustainable development continues to be threatened by various factors such as unsustainable land use, lack of environmental governance, and weakness in the dissemination of scientific knowledge, among others. The following four key areas have been discussed at the Niamey Conference, as follows: *Food Security, Social Policies and Climate Change; Water and Soil Management; Plants and Soils Microbial Communities; and Management of Drylands - The Regional Dimension*

## **Recommendations**

### **Towards sustainable development**

1. The sustainable development of the drylands and the combat to land degradation and desertification should be fostered, through the incorporation of the environmental, social and economic dimensions in development planning and implementation.
2. Priority measures and policies to be implemented should integrate, among others, water availability and management, soil conservation, food security and sustainable land use.
3. The path to sustainable development requires a greening of the economy of the drylands, as is the case in other regions. The green economy approach should fully incorporate needs for sustainable land management and not be used as trade barriers against exports coming from developing countries.
4. Renewable energy (solar, wind, biomass) should be enhanced in the Drylands. Developing countries are encouraged to take advantage of financial opportunities offered by existing or emerging mechanisms such as the ones deriving from the Rio Conventions process (carbon market, GEF enabling funds, etc.). Likewise, activities on

agroforestry and water resources, including underground aquifers, should be promoted and enhanced in the context of the cooperation for development policies.

### **Towards better governance**

Governance towards sustainable development in the drylands should be strengthened at various levels, by enforcing the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and supporting national and local policies, inter alia through:

5. taking into account traditional knowledge, cultural values, needs and aspirations of local inhabitants
6. Reinforcement of regional cooperation between States directly or by means of dedicated organizations such as APGMV and river basin organizations.
7. Use of different policy means, towards empowering local populations and facilitating their access to land. These measures must be consistent with cultural values and customary laws as appropriate.

### **International cooperation**

International cooperation should be encouraged since better coordination of development programs improves their efficiency. South-south cooperation and tripartite (South, North, South) cooperation should be especially fostered.

8. South–South cooperation, notably when it involves African countries and emerging countries, is critical given that some emerging countries (such as Brazil) have already experimented with success policies to fight poverty, land degradation and desertification.
9. Tripartite cooperation, which involves developing, emerging and developed countries, should also be encouraged. International donors and lenders – States, Financial Institutions, Green Funds, foundations, corporate philanthropists – should pay special attention to the needs expressed by regional organizations directly involved in the combat against desertification, bearing in mind the principles of aid effectiveness under the Paris Declaration.

### **Scientific cooperation, capacity building and transfer of technologies**

Efforts to improve scientific cooperation devoted to the drylands should be promoted at all levels.

10. This could be reached by the development of Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) initiatives located in dryland countries, by enhancing national and regional centers of excellence on topics concerning drought, land degradation and desertification.
11. This could also be reached in dryland regions through the activities of existing and new networks and observatories devoted to integrated approaches on climate change, land degradation and desertification, migration, health, sustainable development experiences, e.g.
12. Exchange and share of information and data related to the drylands should be facilitated among scientists and should be used by policy makers.
13. We should encourage interdisciplinary research programs (inputs from social sciences are particularly needed). Indeed they are well tailored to take into account the impacts – social, economic and environmental – of measures and policies to address desertification and promote sustainable development in drylands.
14. Research activities should help improve local expertise on sustainable land management in the drylands.
15. Moreover, scientific knowledge and technology transfer towards the private sector and civil society should be improved.
16. Information, models and policies related to drought and desertification in Africa should be enhanced.
17. Research activities should contribute to training and capacity building in the drylands regions.
18. Research activities should lead to usual outputs - such as scientific publications - but also to specific outputs that could be used directly by policy makers and other stakeholders.
19. Efforts should be made to assess the state of the art research on drylands. This should help identifying scientific findings, which are implemented and their impacts.

### **Foresight, strategy and goals**

20. Regular exchange including scientists, decision and policymakers, the business community and the civil society organizations dealing with the drylands should be encouraged.

21. Short, medium and long term strategies are necessary to better monitor the implementation of actions against land degradation/desertification and the mitigation of drought cycle. In this regard, a zero net land degradation target should be set as a complement to the UNCCD Ten-Year Strategy (2008-2018).
22. Beyond Rio + 20, the MDGs to be defined for the period following 2015 should pay special attention to the inhabitants of the Drylands.

Participants in the Niamey Seminar (ICID + 19 Africa) call on the World Leaders attending Rio + 20 to devote special attention and take resolute decisions towards enhancing efforts at various levels towards sustainable development and the fight against poverty, land degradation, desertification and mitigation of the effects of droughts (DLDD) in the Drylands, and invite policy makers from countries and institutions to use this Declaration and disseminate it as appropriate to other interested partners.

**Niamey October 25, 2011**