

## Conclusion

“The true measure of the success for the United Nations is not how much we promise, but how much we deliver for those who need us most”.

*United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon  
(Acceptance Speech to the General Assembly upon election, October 2006)*

The UN system has come together to highlight the importance of drylands to key emerging issues on the global agenda, including climate change, food security and human settlements. This report is the fruit of nearly two years of inter-agency cooperation in response to a challenge presented to the EMG. It focuses on the drylands of developing countries as they are most strongly associated with the objectives of UN dryland intervention.

The EMG's Issue Management Group on Land was requested to prepare this UN system-wide response report on drylands, highlighting the importance of drylands, together with options for follow-up action. The report takes the standpoint that the UN should approach the topic in a positive and proactive way. After all, dryland people have a long and successful history of coping with environmental variability and scarce resources and may be well-placed to lead the way for others.

The UN system is concerned about drylands on account of their interactions with global climatic, economic and geopolitical systems. As drylands are so extensive – covering some 40% of the world's land area – their biodiversity and the continuity of their ecosystems matter to the world as a whole. In addition to providing a large proportion of the world's food, drylands have contributed much to ecosystem services including pharmaceuticals and raw materials, and cultural and aesthetic benefits.

Traditionally neglected at the policy level, drylands are becoming more important – not only because of their physical extent, but on account of their interactions with global climatic, economic and geopolitical systems. It is also becoming more apparent that drylands have unique resources of high economic value. This has led to an unprecedented level of political interest in drylands, overlain with a growing volume of both public and private resources that could be tapped into in order to revitalise drylands areas.

There is political recognition that the world cannot achieve the MDGs without addressing the needs of people living in the drylands. Globally, the most important emerging issues are: climate change, food security, biodiversity and human security including water scarcity. Such forces are highlighting the value of healthy drylands to the world, and their role in a secure global future.

Drylands can be considered the 'canary in the coal mine' for how the world will cope with future change under scenarios that predict increasing dryness, temperatures and variability. The global community should be looking to current drylands and the people who live in them for lessons about how to manage the transition to drier environments in other places.

The drylands of Africa and Asia pose special challenges. Climatic fluctuations may be most pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, resulting in the poorest regions with the highest levels of chronic undernourishment being exposed to the greatest degree of instability. Within these regions, the most severe impacts are likely to be on the lives and livelihoods of people who are already highly vulnerable.

The overriding imperative for investing in drylands must be poverty reduction. Given the current global attention on land degradation, there is great potential for mobilising partnerships, and new studies could help in making the case to donors and others to invest in drylands.

Three objectives have been established and seven approaches agreed, together with proposed initiatives to be considered in more detail in 2011 and beyond. But the modality for collaborative action must take into account the high transaction cost. What form and priorities will be set for collaboration on the UN land agenda will be the important questions going forward.

The benefits of a common approach are many, and the foundation for a new and multi-sectoral paradigm of cooperation is sketched out in this report.

Landscape transformation is a long-term endeavour. Its sustained momentum is due to a positive social and economic evaluation of sustainable ecosystem management driving the development process.

The report is not the end of the process. Rather, it signifies a milestone in a unique effort by the UN system to join hands in supporting the implementation of UNCCD's 10-year strategic plan by 'delivering as one' – a multi-sectoral approach.



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The global community should learn from people in existing drylands about how to manage the transition to drier environments.

## Appendix 1: Acronyms and abbreviations

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>A/R</b>            | Afforestation/Reforestation   |
| <b>ACRIS</b>          | Collaborative Rangeland Information System                                      |
| <b>ACSAD</b>          | Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands                         |
| <b>AOAD</b>           | Arab Organization for Agricultural Development                                  |
| <b>BRIC</b>           | Brazil, Russia, India, China  |
| <b>CBD</b>            | Convention on Biological Diversity  |
| <b>CBNRM</b>          | Community-based Natural Resource Management                                     |
| <b>CBO</b>            | Community Based Organization  |
| <b>CDM</b>            | Clean Development Mechanism   |
| <b>CEDARE</b>         | Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe           |
| <b>CO<sub>2</sub></b> | Carbon dioxide  |
| <b>COP</b>            | Conference of the Parties   |
| <b>DDC</b>            | Drylands Development Centre (UNDP)  |
| <b>DDP</b>            | Drylands Development Paradigm   |
| <b>DFID</b>           | Department for International Development  |
| <b>ECA</b>            | Economic Commission for Africa  |
| <b>ECOWAS</b>         | Economic Community of West African States                                       |
| <b>EMG</b>            | Environment Management Group  |
| <b>ERPA</b>           | Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement  |
| <b>EWS</b>            | Early Warning System  |
| <b>FAO</b>            | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations                         |
| <b>FEWS</b>           | Famine Early Warning System   |
| <b>FTF</b>            | Feed the Future   |
| <b>GCARD</b>          | Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development                      |
| <b>GDI</b>            | Global Drylands Imperative  |
| <b>GDP</b>            | Gross Domestic Product  |
| <b>GEF</b>            | Global Environment Facility   |
| <b>GFRP</b>           | Global Food Crisis Response Program of the World Bank                           |
| <b>GLASOD</b>         | Global Assessment of Human-Induced Soil Degradation                             |
| <b>GLCN</b>           | Global Land Cover Network   |
| <b>IAASTD</b>         | International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development |
| <b>ICARDA</b>         | International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas                 |
| <b>ICIMOD</b>         | International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development                        |
| <b>ICRAF</b>          | International Council for Research on Agroforestry                              |
| <b>ICRISAT</b>        | International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics                |
| <b>ICT</b>            | Information and communication technologies                                      |
| <b>IEA</b>            | International Energy Agency   |
| <b>IEPF</b>           | Institut de l'Énergie et de l'Environnement de la Francophonie                  |
| <b>IFAD</b>           | International Fund for Agricultural Development                                 |
| <b>IIED</b>           | International Institute for Environment and Development                         |
| <b>IISD</b>           | International Institute for Sustainable Development                             |
| <b>ILO</b>            | International Labour Organization   |
| <b>ILRI</b>           | International Livestock Research Institute                                      |
| <b>IMG</b>            | Issue Management Group  |
| <b>IPBES</b>          | Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services               |
| <b>IPCC</b>           | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change                                       |
| <b>ISDR</b>           | Strategy for Disaster Reduction   |
| <b>ISRIC</b>          | International Soil Reference and Information Centre                             |

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>ITU</b>      | International Telecommunications Union  |
| <b>IUCN</b>     | International Union for the Conservation of Nature  |
| <b>LADA</b>     | Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands   |
| <b>LDC</b>      | Least Developed Country   |
| <b>LGP</b>      | Length of the growing period  |
| <b>MA</b>       | Millennium Ecosystem Assessment   |
| <b>MDG</b>      | Millennium Development Goal   |
| <b>MEA</b>      | Multilateral Environmental Agreement  |
| <b>MERET</b>    | Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transition to Sustainable Livelihoods (Ethiopia) |
| <b>NAP</b>      | National Action Programme   |
| <b>NAPA</b>     | National <i>Adaptation</i> Programme of Action on Climate Change                            |
| <b>NASA</b>     | National Aeronautics and Space Administration   |
| <b>NDVI</b>     | Normalised Difference Vegetation Index  |
| <b>NGO</b>      | Non-governmental organization   |
| <b>NICT</b>     | New Information and Communication Technologies  |
| <b>NPP</b>      | Net primary productivity  |
| <b>NTFP</b>     | Non-timber forest product   |
| <b>OECD</b>     | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development                                      |
| <b>OSS</b>      | Observatoire du Sahara et du <i>Sahel</i>   |
| <b>PACD</b>     | Plan of Action to Combat Desertification  |
| <b>PCPR</b>     | Projeto de Combate a Pobreza Rural (Brazil)   |
| <b>PES</b>      | Payment for Environmental Services  |
| <b>PSNP</b>     | Productive Safety Net Programme (Ethiopia)  |
| <b>PV</b>       | Photovoltaic  |
| <b>ROSELTLa</b> | <i>Surveillance environnementale à long terme en réseau circum-saharien</i>                 |
| <b>SLM</b>      | Sustainable land management   |
| <b>STAP</b>     | Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (of the Global Environment Facility)                |
| <b>t/ha</b>     | Tonnes per hectare  |
| <b>TEEB</b>     | The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity study  |
| <b>UN</b>       | United Nations  |
| <b>UNCCD</b>    | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification   |
| <b>UNCTAD</b>   | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  |
| <b>UNDESA</b>   | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs                                    |
| <b>UNDP</b>     | United Nations Development Programme  |
| <b>UNDP DDC</b> | United National Development Drylands Development Centre                                     |
| <b>UNEP</b>     | United Nations Environment Programme  |
| <b>UNESCO</b>   | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization                            |
| <b>UNFCCC</b>   | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change                                       |
| <b>UNHCR</b>    | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees   |
| <b>UNHCR</b>    | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees   |
| <b>UNOPS</b>    | United Nations Office for Project Services  |
| <b>UNU</b>      | UN University   |
| <b>UNW-IATF</b> | United Nations-Water Inter-Agency Trust Fund  |
| <b>US\$</b>     | United States dollar  |
| <b>WCMC</b>     | World Conservation Monitoring Centre  |
| <b>WIPO</b>     | World Intellectual Property Organization  |
| <b>WISP</b>     | World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism  |
| <b>WOCAT</b>    | World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies                                  |
| <b>WRI</b>      | World Resources Institute   |
| <b>WTO</b>      | World Trade Organization  |

## Appendix 2: References

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## Appendix 3: List of tables

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Table 1. | Global figures for the four types of drylands  |
| Table 2. | Key dryland ecosystem services   |
| Table 3. | Figures for nationally protected areas in drylands   |
| Table 4. | The impact of improved crop husbandry and agronomic practices on output and productivity in semi-arid areas. |
| Table 5. | Food grain yield (t/ha), from research station, field trials and farmers' fields                             |
| Table 6. | Overview of investments in drylands  |
| Table 7. | Comparison of total and drylands carbon stocks in some regions of the world                                  |
| Table 8. | Building Synergies between the UNCCD and other MEAs  |
| Table 9. | Initiatives proposed by the EMG's Issue Management Group (IMG)   |

## Appendix 4: List of figures

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Figure 1.  | Population prospects in drylands for 2025  |
| Figure 2.  | The 'greening' of the Sahel, 1982 to 2006  |
| Figure 3.  | Protected areas in drylands  |
| Figure 4.  | Hunger map 2010  |
| Figure 5.  | Impact of climate change on potential agricultural yields by 2050                  |
| Figure 6.  | A framework for investing in drylands  |
| Figure 7.  | Poverty map  |
| Figure 8.  | Renewable energy   |
| Figure 9.  | Map of carbon mass per hectare throughout the drylands                             |
| Figure 10. | UN collaboration on drylands in the context of the 10-Year Strategic Plan of UNCCD |
| Figure 11. | Carbon mass per hectare throughout the drylands                                    |

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# Membership of the Environment Management Group

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>CBD</b>        | Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity  |
| <b>CITES</b>      | Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora |
| <b>CMS</b>        | Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species   |
| <b>DFS</b>        | UN Department of Field Support   |
| <b>ECA</b>        | Economic and Social Commission for Africa  |
| <b>ECE</b>        | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  |
| <b>ECLAC</b>      | Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean                                 |
| <b>ESCAP</b>      | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  |
| <b>ESCWA</b>      | Economic and Social Commission for West Asia   |
| <b>FAO</b>        | Food and Agriculture Organization  |
| <b>GEF</b>        | Global Environment Facility  |
| <b>IAEA</b>       | International Atomic Energy Agency   |
| <b>ICAO</b>       | International Civil Aviation Organization  |
| <b>IFAD</b>       | International Fund for Agricultural Development  |
| <b>ILO</b>        | International Labour Organization  |
| <b>IMF</b>        | International Monetary Fund  |
| <b>IMO</b>        | International Maritime Organization  |
| <b>UN/ISDR</b>    | United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat                           |
| <b>ITC</b>        | International Trade Centre   |
| <b>ITU</b>        | International Telecommunications Union   |
| <b>OCHA</b>       | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  |
| -                 | Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat  |
| <b>SCB</b>        | Secretariat of the Basel Convention  |
| -                 | The World Bank Group   |
| <b>UNCCD</b>      | Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification   |
| <b>UNCTAD</b>     | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development   |
| <b>UNDESA/DSD</b> | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development     |
| <b>UNDP</b>       | United Nations Development Programme   |
| <b>UNEP*</b>      | United Nations Environment Programme   |
| <b>UNESCO</b>     | United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization                                    |
| <b>UNFCCC</b>     | Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change                                       |
| <b>UNFPA</b>      | United Nations Population Fund   |
| <b>UN-HABITAT</b> | United Nations Human Settlements Programme   |
| <b>UNHCR</b>      | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  |
| <b>UNICEF</b>     | United Nations Children's Fund   |
| <b>UNITAR</b>     | United Nations Institute for Training and Research   |
| <b>UNU</b>        | United Nations University  |
| <b>UPU</b>        | Universal Postal Union   |
| <b>WFP</b>        | World Food Program   |
| <b>WHO</b>        | World Health Organization  |
| <b>WIPO</b>       | World Intellectual Property Organization   |
| <b>WMO</b>        | World Meteorological Organization  |
| <b>WTO</b>        | World Trade Organization   |
| <b>WTO</b>        | World Tourism Organization   |

\* provides the secretariat for the EMG