



REPORT ON OUTCOMES OF THE IUCN-UNCCD ACTION PLAN, 2011-2015

1. BACKGROUND

The Secretariats of IUCN and UNCCD, in partnership with representatives of three IUCN Commissions, organised a retreat in Gland, Switzerland, from 13-14th July 2011 which led to a Joint Action Plan that has been implemented during the intervening 4 years. The Action Plan catalysed a large number of activities which are reported in detail in annual reports. Consistent with the Action Plan, the report is organised as follows:

- Overview of the IUCN-UNCCD Partnership
- Emerging Opportunities in Global Policy
- Strategic Synergies
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Recommendations

2. OVERVIEW OF THE IUCN-UNCCD PARTNERSHIP

During the 4 year period IUCN has actively engaged in all major UNCCD events and has increased the coordination of inputs from the IUCN Secretariat and Commissions. IUCN has influenced dialogue around implementing the Rio 2012 Outcome Statement in relation to Land Degradation Neutrality, particularly through dialogue between the Commission on Ecosystem Management and the World Commission on Environmental Law and organisation of a Special Session at the Second Science Conference in 2013, at which a number of State Members participated. In 2014 IUCN was appointed as Institutional Observer to the UNCCD Science Policy Interface. As reported below, this has strengthened inclusion of Land Degradation in IUCN internal and external dialogue.

UNCCD has actively engaged in the two major Global Events organised by IUCN in this period: The World Conservation Congress (Jeju, 2012) and the World Parks Congress (Sydney, 2014). Engagement included participating in World Leaders Dialogues which has strengthened awareness of Land Degradation issues in relation to current Conservation discourse. As a result of this engagement IUCN has been able to convene dialogue with a number of the major international conservation organisations over the importance of desertification in relation to conservation discourse.

On July 10th 2013, in Caux, Switzerland, IUCN and UNCCD Secretariats signed a Memorandum of Understanding under which the current Joint Action Plan, and any future action plans, should be implemented.

3. ADDRESSING EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES IN GLOBAL POLICY

RIO+20 (JUNE 2012)

IUCN's input to the Rio+20 process was led by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas through a workshop on "Protected Areas and Dryland Resilience" in the Rio Conventions Pavilion. The publication "Natural Solutions: Protected areas helping people cope with desertification and drought" was shared at these events and contributed to the eventual Commitment towards "Sustainable Land Management" and a "Land Degradation Neutral World" in the Rio Outcome Document.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE POST 2015 AGENDA

IUCN actively participated in the discussions on the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Open Working Group on the SDGs of the United Nations General Assembly. Throughout the process IUCN reiterated the need for three main characteristics to make the SDGs framework truly sustainable. The SDGs framework should be formulated in such a ways as to:

- Emphasize the interconnectedness between the different dimensions of sustainable development;
- Include at least a stand-alone goal recognizing the importance of safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services as essential solutions from nature (nature-based solutions) in addressing some of the global development challenges; and
- Build on relevant existing commitments made by the international community.

In 2013 IUCN prepared an internal position paper on Land Degradation Neutrality and the SDGs, which contributed to IUCN's overall SDG engagement strategy. IUCN published various position documents during 2014, calling for a stronger integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the framework and suggesting targets to accomplish this. In this context the need for inclusion of land-degradation neutrality and restoration of deforested and degraded lands as targets was underlined.

Additionally IUCN gave input to UNEP's SDG influencing strategy through two actions.: joint publication of a report on "Pastoralism and the Green Economy: a natural nexus?" which will be formally launched at the UNCCD Science Conference in March, 2015; and publication of the "Kiserian Statement", made by pastoralist leaders from 50 countries at a gathering in 2013 and which was presented to UN members in preparation for the UNEP Assembly in June 2014.

LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY (LDN)

IUCN has collaborated with UNCCD in translating the Rio Outcome Statement on a "Land Degradation World" into action, through dialogue at UNCCD events and through dialogue between IUCN members and Commissions. IUCN co-facilitated sessions at an Experts consultation in Seoul, in June 2013.

IUCN has strengthened its internal coordination around LDN, through a joint UNCCD-IUCN workshop entitled "Proposal for a Global Soil Convention" which took place during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju (September 2012). This workshop was organized by the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law's Specialist Group on Sustainable Use of Soil and Desertification and the UNCCD was represented by the former ES, Mr Luc Gnacadja. In addition at the Second Scientific Conference

IUCN and UNCCD organised a “Special Event” on Zero Net Land Degradation, which has helped to steer dialogue around ZNLD and LDN towards appropriate target setting at the national and sub-national level in order to mitigate potential risks associated with trade-offs and offsets. Building on these events in 2013 IUCN prepared an Internal Position Paper on Land Degradation Neutrality and the SDGs.

In November 2014 the ES of the UNCCD and the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands made a joint statement at the IUCN World Parks Congress on “Restoring wetlands and drylands: achieving Land Degradation Neutrality”.

In December 2014 IUCN WCEL Commission members participated in an international seminar on LDN and Soil Legislation in Berlin, Germany. Various cases studies reviewed the capability of national legislation to implement the concept of LDN. A group from Germany presented various options at the international level to implement the concept of LDN. IUCN is currently exploring options to engage further in national voluntary target setting for LDN.

ECONOMICS OF LAND DEGRADATION

Economic Valuation of Drylands has been a central pillar of IUCN’s Drylands Programme for the past decade and became a UNCCD priority through the Second Scientific Conference in 2013. IUCN chaired the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Conference through the Global Drylands Initiative and a number of IUCN Secretariat Staff and Commission Members contributed to the White Papers that fed into the Conference, including the Global Economics Programme, the World Commission on Environmental Law (working group on soil), and the Commission on Ecosystem Management. Further work on the Economics of LD are reported below.

WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS (SEPTEMBER 2012)

The IUCN and UNCCD joint publication “Conserving Dryland Biodiversity”, authored by staff, members, and commission members from IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, WCPA, CEESP-TILCEPA and CEM, was launched at the WCC. This publication has contributed to IUCN’s dialogue at the UNCCD in raising the profile of Biodiversity and also raising the profile of IUCN’s Programme of Work on Drylands within IUCN, particularly in relation to the IUCN Natural Resource Governance Framework that is under development. The specificities of drylands are increasingly being reflected in this developing Framework and it will in turn contribute to dialogue at UNCCD fora around the centrality of natural resource governance in the fight against DLDD (Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought).

The joint “Knowledge Café” at the WCC brought 18 IUCN members together to discuss how IUCN could strengthen its work on drylands and biodiversity, leading to a strong call for greater support at country level to convene and coordinate dialogue on dryland issues in relation to the three Rio Conventions. This event has strengthened IUCN’s internal coordination through establishment of an IUCN Core Group on Drylands.

NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

IUCN has argued for several years that solutions to DLDD must be grounded in effective local governance arrangements and simplistically promoting “good practices” without effective governance will be ineffective. Through events organised at UNCCD COPs and CRICs IUCN has strengthened dialogue around Governance and Land Degradation. This position will be strengthened by IUCN’s input to the SDG process and by the adoption in the SDGs of targets around Land Rights and Governance.

IUCN has published numerous reports on governance in drylands and rangelands and this has led to IUCN leading the publication of an FAO technical Guide to implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on responsible Governance of Tenure in Pastoral lands. This will also strengthen future dialogue at UNCCD Fora since many parties to the convention have also signed up to the Voluntary Guidelines.

EU – LAND DEGRADATION AND BIOFUELS

In 2012-13 IUCN supported the European Union to define degraded lands in the context of “low-risk” biofuel production. IUCN developed a framework of considerations designed by a cross-sectoral group of experts to help decision makers realise the potential role of intensive agriculture in landscape restoration. The publication “Biofuels and degraded land: the potential role of intensive agriculture in landscape restoration” details the outcomes of an interactive expert workshop that was held in early 2013 and followed by an extensive review process. This process built on existing experiences both within the agricultural and biofuel sectors, as well as with landscape restoration. The publication presents a framework of considerations to help decision makers realise the benefits of investing in biofuel production or other intensive agriculture activities in degraded lands, without the pitfalls of contributing to even greater ecosystem simplification and further marginalising already vulnerable farming communities. The expert group findings feed into on-going work on the Bonn Challenge and other projects related to degradation and restoration in IUCN, as well as implementation of CBD targets 14 and 15. It also contributes to on-going discussions in the European Commission on the Renewable Energy Directive and associated sustainable land-use management implications.

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/2013_bbp_annual_report_5_degraded_land.pdf

UN DECADE FOR DESERTS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST DESERTIFICATION (UNDDD)

IUCN is represented on the Interagency Task Force (IATF) through the IUCN Global Drylands Initiative (IUCN GDI) and contributes regularly to communications on UNDDD. IUCN and UNCCD collaborated in the joint publication of the Land for Life book at COP11, with a follow-up publication planned for launch at COP12.

4. ADDRESSING STRATEGIC SYNERGIES

DRYLAND BIODIVERSITY

IUCN and UNCCD have raised the profile of Biodiversity within UNCCD dialogue through publication of the book “Conserving Dryland Biodiversity” in 2012. This book was presented at a side event at the CRIC and discussions were held over how to strengthen consideration of biodiversity within UNCCD reporting and desertification monitoring procedures

(https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/conserving_dryland_biodiversity_unccd_side_event_report.pdf).

This publication has contributed to raising awareness of the neglect of dryland biodiversity and during 2013-14 IUCN has made a more concerted effort to redress this through the following red-listing exercises:

- Assessment has been completed of all cactus species (covering New World drylands) in 2013, with a paper submitted for review. There are plans to follow up with an assessment of the Agave species.
- Prioritising assessment of Aloe and related species assessed, with parts already done for East Africa, NE Africa and others currently under review for South Africa. Also working on Aloes in Madagascar

with plans to extend this to other succulent groups in Madagascar which should cover the dry forests.

- Global Reptile Assessment is underway with almost half of the world's described species, focusing on South America with large parts of Asia and Africa (including Madagascar) also completed, but gaps and on-going projects in Central Asia, southern Africa and in Australia. It would be possible to conduct a dryland analysis of the completed assessment to look at drylands specifically.
- A global update on mammals is underway that could also lead to a review of the current dryland situation.

IUCN has made significant gains in the past 4 years in Redlisting of Ecosystems (RLE) and there are concerns that dryland regions will be left out due to data deficiencies. In addition to comprehensive RLE exercises in the Americas and Europe, where dryland regions have been included, specific attempts have been made to include additional dryland countries including Senegal and Morocco. The Morocco assessment appears promising for arid lands degradation assessment (not applicable for hyper-arid), and clearly bridges UNCCD goals and Ecosystem assessment. The RLE exercise in Senegal was explicitly carried out to address a data deficient country and it is hoped to roll out the experience in further Sahelian countries in future.

IUCN's Global Drylands Initiative is in parallel implementing work to expand dry-rangeland assessments at global, national and local levels which will strengthen participation in indicator selection, improve integration of scaleable approaches in national data sets, and ultimately will provide data that could enable RLE to be expanded to more dryland regions.

CC ADAPTATION

IUCN's Environmental Law Centre has completed Part 1 of a study on opportunities for integration of the Rio Conventions, focusing on adaptation to climate change, including joint work programmes and projects, particularly in African Least Developed Countries. Part 2 will present instruments that might usefully help national legislators design legal frameworks for adaptation, drawing on the objectives, activities and decisions of each MEA and the links between them. Additionally IUCN has strengthened understanding and actions on Ecosystem Based Adaptation in a number of dryland ecosystems although explicit links to UNCCD have not yet been made.

GENDER

The UNCCD Gender Policy Framework, developed in collaboration with IUCN, has been approved by the UNCCD COP10 and Parties requested the Secretariat in decision 9/COP10 to work on the implementation of the same by undertaking advocacy. IUCN has supported the publication of guides and tools on Gender Mainstreaming and organised public events at the UNGA to strengthen interest in the process of harmonisation between conventions. The UNCCD emerged as the Rio Convention with the highest percentage of countries including gender in their most recent national reports. It also emerged as the Rio Convention with the lowest level of women's participation in government delegations to COPs. The ES of UNCCD was a featured speaker at the launch of the Gender Index at UNFCCC COP19 in Warsaw in November 2013. The full EGI report is available at:

<http://environmentgenderindex.org/get-the-data/>

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

REVISION OF NATIONAL/REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

In 2013 IUCN initiated dialogue with Member States of the Southern Africa Development Community to embark on a revision of the SADC Sub Regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification. This work is on-going under the GEF-funded “Kalahari Namib” initiative.

In 2014 IUCN was invited to revise the Jordan National Action Programme to Combat Desertification as well as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Through this partnership IUCN was able to generate widespread consultation to transform the NAP into more effective national strategy document, with consultation of multiple stakeholder groups. The intention is to generate a critical mass of actors making a concerted effort to address the key determinants of SLM at different scales.

In 2015 discussions are underway with Saudi Arabia and other countries over launching similar NAP revision exercises.

ENGAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE GREAT GREEN WALL

Since 2011 IUCN has engaged in dialogue around the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel, which is a sub-regional initiative that has major consequences for the UNCCD objectives. In 2013 IUCN organised an e-consultation with Civil Society to examine the extent of their engagement in this process and their recommendations to strengthen GGW implementation. This dialogue has led IUCN’s participation in the 16-country BRICKS initiative (WB-GEF) and to the development of a GEF-funded project entitled “Closing the Gaps in the Great Green Wall”. This initiative will strengthen dialogue for concerted actions to address desertification, will link grassroots interventions with national efforts and reporting, and will integrate biodiversity and climate change considerations into SLM dialogue.

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL ECONOMIC VALUATION OF SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Economic Valuation of dryland ecosystem services has been a mainstay of the IUCN Drylands Initiative for a number of years. During this 4 year period global interest in the subject has grown and IUCN has taken advantage of this to conduct a number of increasingly rigorous assessments at country level. This work has been carried out in partnership with national governments and local NGOs in order to raise awareness of the value of drylands and the cost-benefit of sustainable land management.

Economic valuations in Jordan have contributed to revision of the National Rangelands Strategy and to revision of the NAP. Economic valuations in Sudan influenced revision of the National Forest Policy which enables greater attention to community based participatory forest management and reforestation. Economic valuation is on-going in Mali, Burkina Faso and Kenya where they should contribute to awareness of low-cost opportunities to strengthen natural resource governance through existing laws of decentralisation.

IUCN has worked with Rio Tinto Iron Ore on valuing the ecosystem impacts of dewatering in mining operations, through the programmes on Environmental Economics and Business and Biodiversity.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY ON RANGELANDS MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE PASTORALISM

IUCN has continued to work through the World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism to strengthen support for pastoralism globally and nationally. In partnership with IFAD IUCN has conducted 10

National Learning Forums on Sustainable Pastoralism which have targeted representatives from Government and Civil Society. This approach increasingly focuses on identifying existing policy opportunities for SLM and Sustainable Pastoralism to raise awareness of opportunities for policy implementation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

IUCN-UNCCD PARTNERSHIP

1. Convene a meeting between key IUCN and UNCCD Secretariat staff to revise this action plan for the next 4 year period

ADDRESSING EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES IN GLOBAL POLICY

2. Mobilise IUCN Members and Commissions for progress towards Land Degradation Neutral target setting at country level and to incorporate appropriate safe-guards in relation to potential risks of trade-off and off-setting
 - a. Examine the role of the Red List of Ecosystems and Red List of Endangered Species as tools and products for use in LDN prioritisation exercises
3. Strengthen pressure to include Land Degradation targets within the SDGs
 - a. For example, develop initiatives for monitoring of SDG progress at sub-national level in order to track performance towards Land Degradation Neutrality

ADDRESSING STRATEGIC SYNERGIES

4. Demonstrate synergies between conventions through landscape restoration activities and strengthen capacity to manage divergent definitions of degradation and restoration.
5. Strengthen data on dryland ecosystem services through stronger and better-institutionalised methodologies for assessment and monitoring.
6. Strengthen reporting on conservation approaches in relation to SLM targets, including Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and “Other area based conservation measures” as referred to in the Aichi targets.
7. Work with Parties to the Convention to establish a Policy Harmonisation process in relation to Natural Resource Governance.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

1. Strengthen the concerted input of IUCN Members into UNCCD dialogue at national and international level.
2. Increase investment in Economic Valuation of SLM and restoration approaches.
3. Develop stakeholder consultation exercises in relation to LDN target setting and NAP revision processes.
4. Collaborate on the Dryland Panel studies due for implementation until 2020.