

Speaking notes by

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Talking Notes: Climate Change and Desertification convergences:

- Climate change is now seen as having a profound impact on ecosystems and societies, challenging some basic assumptions concerning the reliability of the production and consumption patterns of our emerging global civilisation. As world leaders take note and the scientists scramble to advocate measures to mitigate and to adapt to climate change, the present findings vindicate some aspects of the debate launched under this Convention a decade ago.
- 1.8 billion people live in drylands (semi-arid and dry sub humid climates), and large scale growing environmental scarcity in these endangered ecosystems can have wide ranging geo political consequences.
- Yet these areas also offer opportunities: space is drylands' great luxury. The vast expanse of drylands, where most rural poverty occurs, present also untapped opportunities for carbon sequestration in soils and revegetation.
- At the same time, as local populations have no choice but to scratch a living from increasingly scarce natural resources, the challenge there is also to meet their requirements for sustainable livelihoods while combating desertification in a manner that is adaptive to climate change. Such key areas as science and education, agriculture, forestry, range management, energy and water supply, represent platforms for synergistic effort to meet this challenge.
- From the perspective of this Convention, it has been recognized that desertification is caused by climate change as well as by human factors. What needs more research though is how desertification impacts on climate change?
- As ample evidence suggests, climate and desertification interact at a variety of scales through a complex series of feedback loops. Indeed, the inclusion of the emissions from deforestation, a form of land degradation, in the climate change equations, is a manifestation of this.
- The existence of linkages between climate change and desertification processes suggests that mitigation and adaptation strategies should be designed and coordinated to address aspects of both climate change and desertification through local areas participatory and synergistic programmes.

- Adaptation to climate change, for most of developing countries, involves the protection of land against further degradation which in turn strengthens the resilience of ecosystems.
- We can address climate change through an effective implementation of the UNCCD in a way that ensures land cover through forestry/agro-forestry activities and water and soil conservation. In this regard, adaptation and mitigation activities, in many instances, must include investing in combating land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought.
- Hence, the GEF should take a much clearer cut policy in promoting a synergistic implementation of action programmes to combat desertification and national adaptation programmes to climate change.