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Final report of the Group of Experts

**Report of the fifth meeting of the Group of Experts of the
Committee on Science and Technology**

Note by the secretariat*

Addendum

Integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation

Summary

The outcome of the work of the Group of Experts on developing an integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation is reported in two ways. One is by addressing a methodology to assess the links between poverty and land degradation across a range of activities. One such activity is reported here – the analysis of case studies to test a proposed methodology of filling the gap based on an interaction process between different stakeholders and decision makers. The structure of the approach and an example of an application is given as a test case. The other way is looking into the land degradation issue specifically within the framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification – addressing land degradation factors in a sustainable way to combat desertification. It presents the factors in such a way that the capacity of affected stakeholders to deal with the issue comes into focus rather than just the bio-geo-physical qualities.

* The submission of this document was delayed due to the short time available between the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties.

A methodology for carrying out assessments of relevant projects on a large scale is outlined in the document. It applies a screening approach by using very few indicators of the successful application of the goals to land degradation. The proposed methodology is summarized by indicators from the areas of development, ecology, the economy and social aspects. Both descriptive and process indicator approaches are recommended.

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I. Introduction

1. By its decision 15/COP.7, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the Group of Experts (GoE) of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to continue its work on developing a methodology for assessing land degradation and poverty and to report to the CST during COP 8. The GoE was requested to produce a document that makes it possible to learn from experience gained at the interface between poverty reduction and land degradation in a consistent way. The GoE had submitted an interim report on the subject at COP 7.

2. The purpose of this document is to provide an integrated methodology for establishing how the links between poverty and land degradation can be assessed by combining different views on poverty and land degradation. There are a great number of activities relating to desertification. The goal of the current report is to pilot screening techniques which allow case studies to be ranked according to their significance in further understanding the (partial) causality between poverty and land degradation. This is carried out in chapter II by nation and chapter III by project. These two chapters indicate methodologies to specify situations of poverty and land degradation by applying a tailor-made method for the fight against desertification. Chapter IV outlines a strategy for assessing case studies by looking at how they relate to both poverty and land degradation. This is achieved by first addressing the various degrees of land degradation to identify the key issues and then specifying what is “do-able” in terms of a possible response along socio-political lines.

3. An approach to the links between poverty and land degradation is presented. When it is fully applied, as recommended by the COP, it will offer a way of ranking the most important cases by screening activities at a national and case study level. It will also offer rapid assessment techniques for each selected case or project. Depending on the needs of the stakeholders i.e. the people affected or institutions carrying out the policy, who request the screening, the connection between poverty and land degradation can be looked into. Two approaches are proposed: looking at poverty and the question of rights and responsibilities; and looking at land degradation and the socio-political capacity to deal with food security. Both involve stakeholder interaction and both suggest ways to identify matters that are specific to a site or project and yet are related to the integrated assessment using the methodology proposed. Both approaches target stakeholder interaction in workshops, so that the focus on poverty and on land degradation become integrated through action. The GoE considers that carrying this out on a regular basis leads to a learning process.

4. The GoE has been requested to develop an integrated assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation. This is presented here and should be developed further and applied later on a full-scale. The GoE is ready to carry out this work and it could start if the matter is addressed by the CST and approved by the COP 8. This procedure is within the bounds of the scientific and technical concepts derived from the CST and in the context of the Convention.

5. The recommended first step is to evaluate country profiles on the status of the poverty/land degradation interface. Following that is a request to national focal points to prepare five sets of information on poverty and land degradation issues in the form of recommended projects for future national action programmes (NAPs). Once this information has been assessed, a further step will be taken to establish both the design and content of a comprehensive database

for the requested integrated assessment. Then this data formation will be integrated into the project design and implementation, so that stakeholders in each project will build on and assess the same issues. At this point, the process indicators become united. These project level data will then form the basis for a continuous assessment process that can be carried out at national level and form part of the NAP reporting process. This then takes the form of interactive learning.

II. Screening national action programmes for combined poverty and land degradation at national levels

6. The purpose of this initial step is to come up with a very simple methodology to sort and prioritize activities to identify the most relevant ones when considering the specific issue of linkages between poverty and land degradation. Poverty and land degradation are initially looked at from national viewpoints through an overview of how countries ascribe weight to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) key issues as expressed in the latest NAPs. The current section shows how the linkages between poverty and land degradation can be expressed (see the annex).

7. The following assessment of key concepts is in the form of a simple content analysis and was carried out on 13 trial countries. Countries from different regions were selected. In Asia the 2006 NAPs from Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam were chosen. In East Africa the 2004 NAPs from Ethiopia, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania were used. For North Africa Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia were assessed. And for Latin America and the Caribbean, the 2006 NAPs came from Argentina, Chile and Cuba.

8. There are 12 key concepts in the NAPs. There are reasons for the preliminary selection process. It should be carried out with stakeholders at national, or preferably regional levels. One comment may be why poverty is one of the selected concepts, whereas livelihood is not? It must be borne in mind that the information is obtained from project documents. In the case of livelihoods, the concept is complex. The data vary so much from text to text that it becomes meaningless to treat it as indicating a similar issue. The synopsis of selected concepts should reflect livelihoods to a sufficient degree. As for poverty, the same reservation could be made, but there is a better understanding of what it means to be poor in terms of vulnerability and starvation. And principally for the current reporting, the concept is part of the mandate from the COP. Efforts are, of course, being made to create a universal, economy-based, definition of poverty.

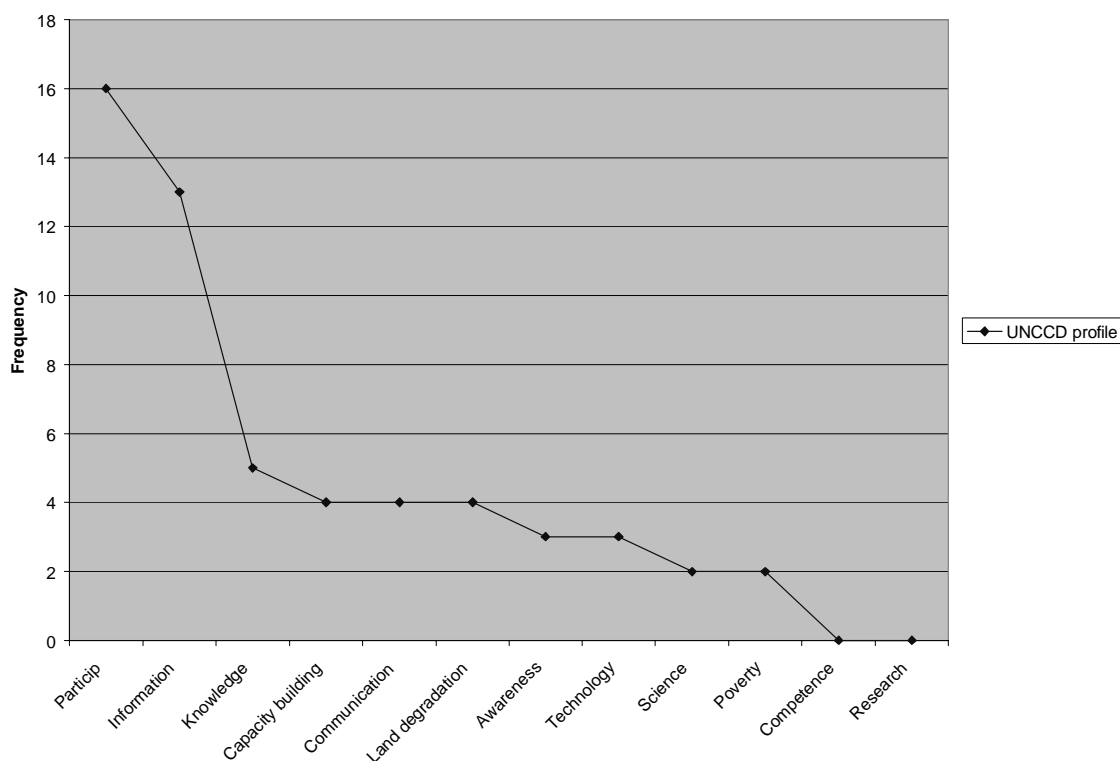
9. The working group prefers to see poverty as a subject with many factors; the important ones are social, political and environmental. Such factors should be taken into account for a flexible and integral multi-institutional and multidisciplinary treatment of poverty reduction. In the current assessment technique, however, this is not done comprehensively. Instead, a dozen key concepts are listed. The frequency with which they occur has been calculated so that they can be presented in graphical form. The concepts selected are participation, information, knowledge, capacity-building, communication, land degradation, awareness, technology, science, poverty, competence and research.

10. These concepts are arranged in an order that reflects how frequently the topics appeared in the UNCCD advice to the NAP authors. Initially, gender was also included, but it occurred so infrequently in the country reports that it was dropped.

11. The frequency with which a concept appears is based on the number of pages, so that countries within each group can be directly compared. The comparison between groups is limited to the frequency in the country profiles. For instance, capacity-building demands are more frequent Latin America, than in Southeast Asia.

12. Thus the graphs that follow in figures 2–5 provide a rough picture of the relative importance ascribed to each concept in the country reports. Figure 1 shows the emphasis placed on each of the topics.

Figure 1. Emphasis on key issues
(Y-axis = number of times mentioned)



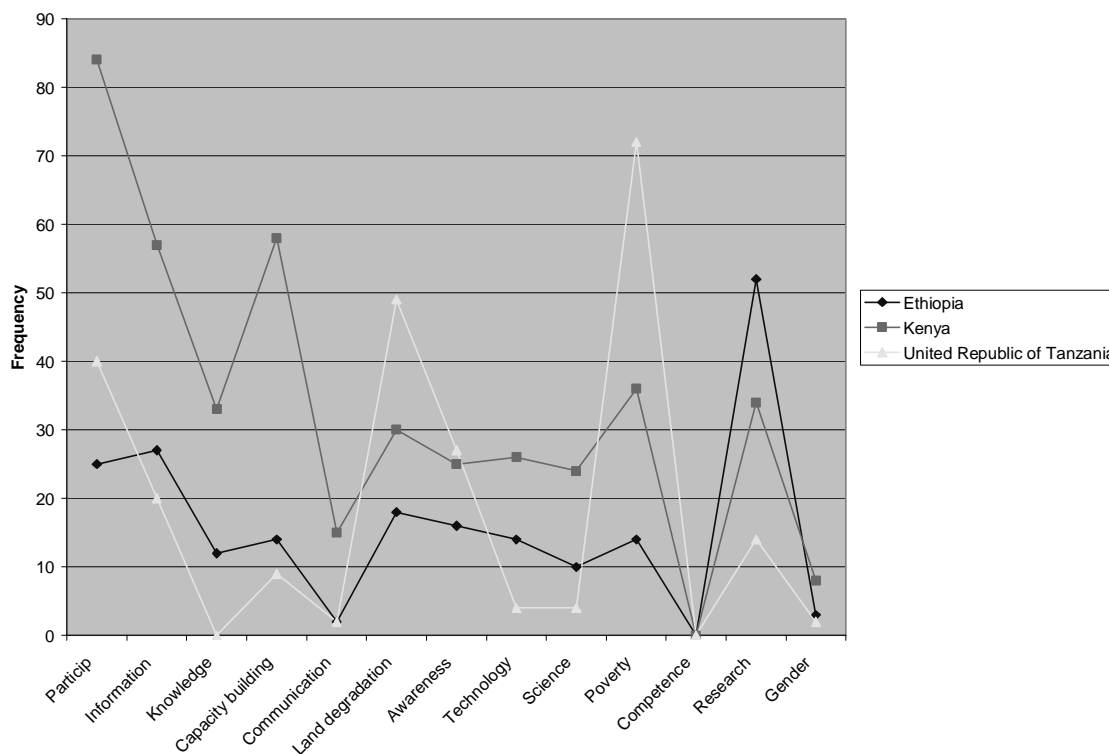
13. Land degradation and poverty are key topics in the country reports, but appear with low frequency in the table of contents as heavy emphasis seems to be placed on participation. The country reports signal that research is important. Significantly, technology and science appear infrequently, given that the CST is a key actor for assessments. There is very little mention of gender. Two small countries, Cambodia and Laos, generally make use of “catch words” more frequently than do Thailand and Viet Nam.

14. The 2004 reports of three countries in East Africa were used: Ethiopia, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania (figure 2). As reporting on Tanzania is considerably less

comprehensive than on the other two countries, the profile is less reliable. Considering the report size, the profiles derived can be compared between these East African countries.

Figure 2. Emphasis on key issues; East Africa profiles

(Y-axis = relative number of times mentioned; weighted with number of pages)



15. A similar pattern emerges for Southeast Asia (figure 3). All agree that participation is very important. Land degradation and poverty are also key issues. Also the significance of research for the implementation of the Convention is stressed. Science and technology are not high scorers. Capacity-building is very important, more so for East Africa than for Southeast Asia.

16. For North Africa the 2006 NAPs from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, give a different profile (figure 4). There is a heavy emphasis on participation and research, followed by information and capacity-building and then land degradation and poverty.

17. In the country NAPs from Argentina, Chile and Cuba (figure 5) there is the same heavy emphasis on participation and on research (except for research in Chile). Information is also important. Land degradation is stressed, but not poverty. Of much more important is technology, and to great extent also awareness.

18. Combining these brief assessments, there is a good case for the CST demand through the secretariat for the GoE to consider poverty and land degradation as priority themes where there is need for scientific support for country efforts. In fact, these issues seem to have the highest priority for the implementers of the Convention, around the globe.

Figure 3. Emphasis on key issues; Southeast Asia profiles

(Y-axis = relative number of times mentioned; weighted with number of pages)

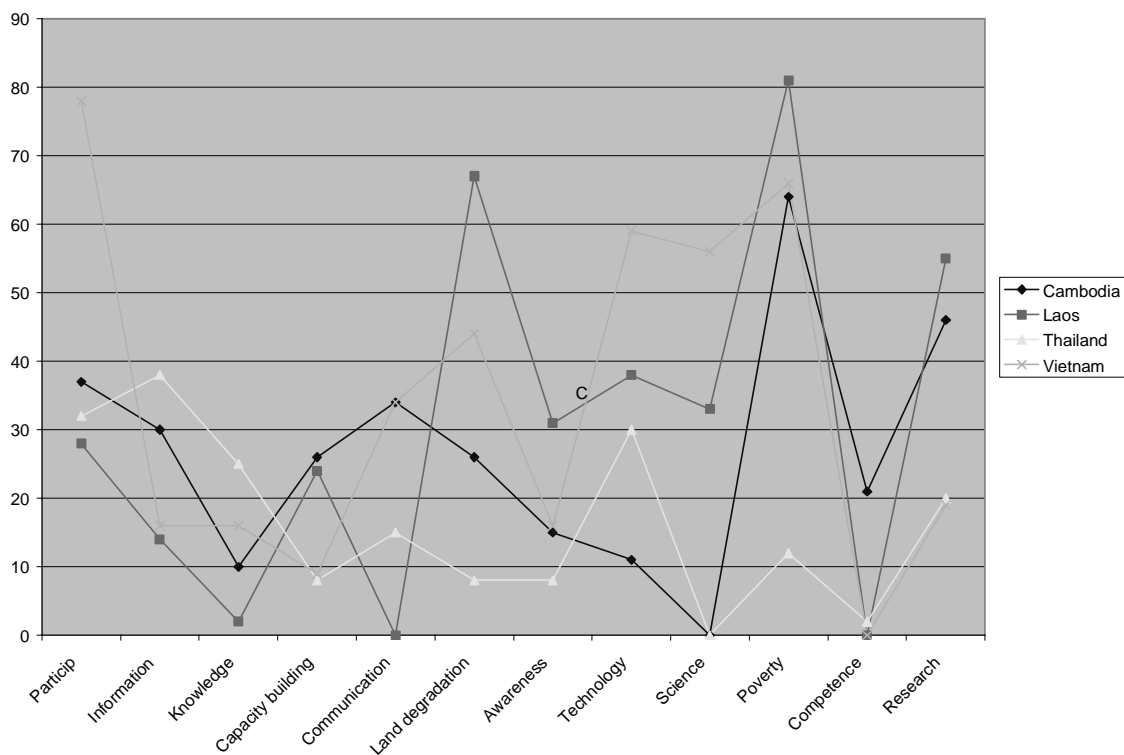


Figure 4. Emphasis on key issues - North Africa profiles

(Y-axis = relative number of times mentioned; weighted with number of pages)

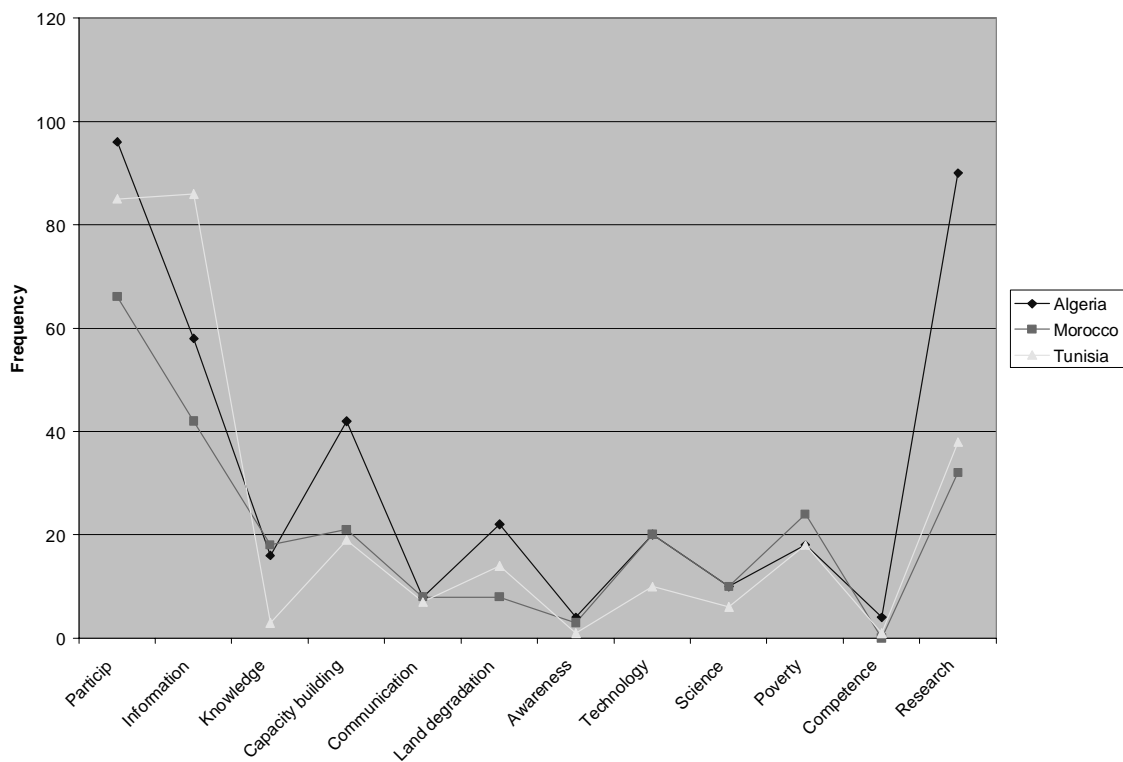
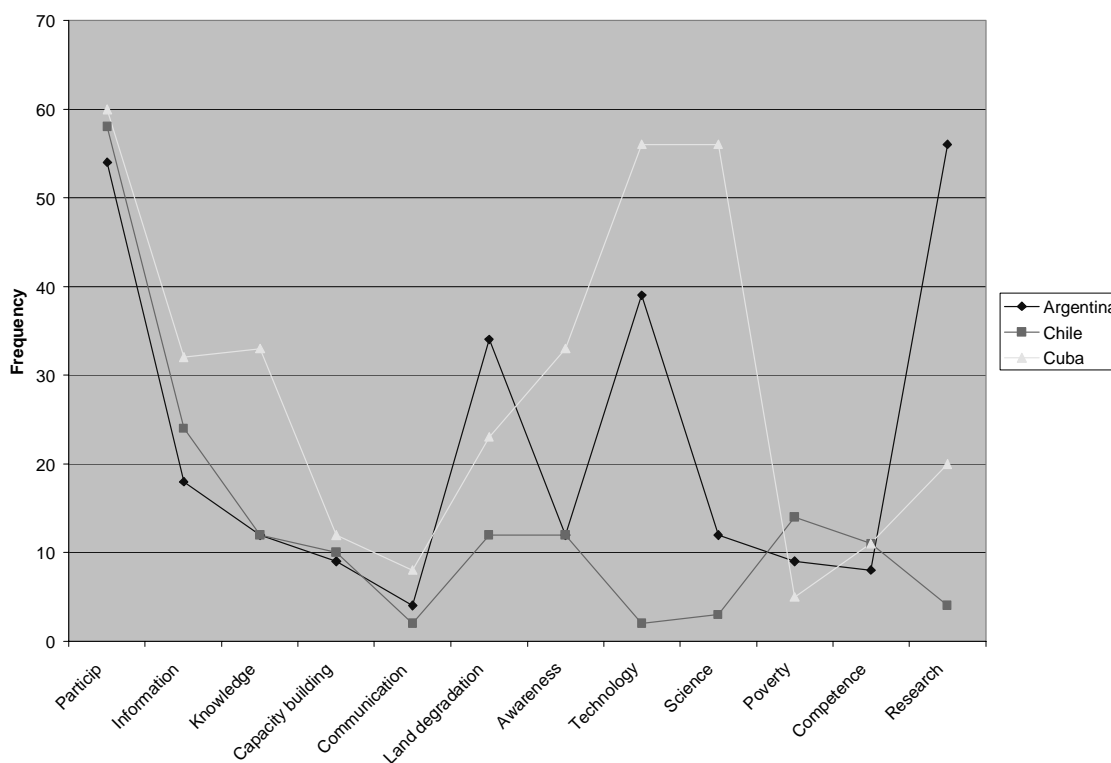


Figure 5. Emphasis on key issues - Latin America and the Caribbean profiles
 (Y-axis = relative number of times mentioned; weighted with number of pages)



19. These conclusions are preliminary and intended to raise the question of policy and implementation issues that are important for the assessment of specific projects, as proposed in the following sections. The findings from such assessments could in turn feed back to national level through inclusion of relevant research issues in future revised NAPs.

III. Poverty and a rights approach to land degradation attention at project/case study levels

20. The purpose here is to go into further detail and to establish a way of ranking projects within a national framework. A rough survey technique is proposed to establish profiles for projects in selected countries. In this way, key projects can be quickly identified from the lessons learned about relationships between poverty and land degradation (see the annex).

21. For this purpose a simple survey has been developed to collect information on how the interface between poverty and land degradation is addressed in projects. To allow for rapid appraisals of a large volume of selected projects, it is initially based on only five indicators. These are derived from a wider range of indicators to be as independent as possible and to follow the intentions of global conventions as well as donor and national strategies. The special reference of the indicators is the link between poverty situations and discourses on land degradation. This implies a strong stakeholder involvement both in generating information and in the assessment of cases/ projects. The rights and responsibilities of affected peoples should form a point of departure.

22. Nowadays, there is generally a strong emphasis on poverty reduction in the implementation of projects. The participatory approach is also stressed in the NAPs. They all seek to integrate the implementation of the UNCCD with their development goals. This coincides at higher level also with the ambition to achieve synergy among Conventions. From the project-level perspective the capacity to respond to land degradation situations needs to be considered. This leads to the socio-political context for desertification. This chapter approaches the subject from the other perspective. Starting with poverty and the needs of affected populations and then linking them to land degradation issues.

23. The point of departure comes from the following key issues for sustainable development:

(a) Sufficient **integration of sectoral policies** needs to be present in poverty reduction/land degradation projects. The Viet Nam Development Report 2007:146, for instance, points out that "...key steps to move the agenda /poverty alleviation/ forward are scattered across different ministries and agencies. Insufficient policy integration leads to missed opportunities, if not to serious inefficiencies".

(b) **Post-project sustainable development capacity** is evaluated so that projects relating to land degradation are treated as being specific depending on given circumstances – where development actors assume responsibility, morally if not legally, for the impact their assistance has on people's ability to realize their rights. All selected projects are analysed for how they strategize long-term planning, beyond donor based resources.

(c) **Rights-based approaches** are prominent, for instance through attention to poor and marginalized people who need to be helped to take control of their own lives and fulfil their rights, responsibilities and aspirations. The multidimensional concept of poverty is based on an understanding of poverty as lack of power, security, safety and opportunity. A democracy and rights perspective based on an analysis of actors, responsibility, resources and power structures is therefore of utmost importance. Without careful attention throughout the design and implementation of agricultural reforms, important stakeholder groups will be left out. These will tend to be poor people. This third indicator is based on how poor people are seen and treated in the projects: as "victims", functions of existing land degradation situations, or as citizens who exercise, or should exercise, their rights and duties.

(d) The fourth issue is **cutting across poverty related issues**. An example is the legal issues present in land-degradation projects where access to justice strategies, particularly with regard to supporting the legal capacities of the poor, can be 'integrated' into different programmes (for example, environment). Land rights are in most instances the key legal concern in drylands. The projects will be categorized according to how the legal issues of affected peoples are dealt with.

(e) The fifth issue is involvement in projects of all relevant stakeholder categories: an example is the initiative of the Nam Puoi villagers who initiated resettlement and got involved in decision making at all stages: design, implementation, monitoring and management. They met responses to their viewpoints by adjusting their plans. Administrators saw their role as providing service and advice on specific technical, financial and administrative issues. Through the evolving interaction, all administrative levels became partners with the villagers in the joint

acquisition of knowledge. Many make reference to participatory rural appraisal (PRA), or similar open-ended approaches. The experience is that project planners consider PRA as one activity item for a project checklist instead of an approach. The indicator is first if PRA or a similar approach would be mentioned, and second if interaction is cross-sectional among several stakeholder categories.

A. Survey design

24. So far the study is in its inception phase. The next step should cover 10 projects each in Chile, Cuba, Kenya, Morocco and Viet Nam before going full scale with member countries. This step has not yet been taken. Resources should now be requested if the COP decides to go ahead with this initiative. This paper offers an integrated approach that should be practical for learning from earlier experiences across the globe. Projects could be selected either in a random way among those addressing the topic poverty/land degradation, or from the top 10 projects from the NAPs. When the next up-scaled survey is carried out, a long list of projects should be drawn up as the target for applying the indicators. The result should be a ranked list of projects where top priorities are held by the projects that address relevant key issues and seek their solutions.

25. The resulting project assessments can be in the form of assessments of a map that can be used for two purposes: to assess quality with reference to existing policy goals and as a search instrument for project examples in a planning situation. The latter is what the COP requested when noting how fragmented the set of current projects is. The former, the assessment, is applied briefly in the current report, so that a proper proposal can be developed in the near future.

B. Transforming the task from the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties into a suitable screening survey

26. The COP has requested the GoE to develop an integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation. The GoE has structured the task into eight activities and selected one of them for the current report: "Analyse case studies to test proposed methodology of filling the gap based on an interaction process (different stakeholders and decision-makers)". The full list of activities is given in the annex. Each of them addresses:

- (a) How the linkages between poverty and land degradation are expressed (focus on linkage);
- (b) Empirical examples when applicable;
- (c) Methods used;
- (d) Lessons learned for the assessment of poverty and land degradation: focus on the interrelation between these two concepts.

27. This plan will be returned to in the analysis of survey findings. This will not take place before COP 8 due to the current lack of funding. But the questionnaire for the data formation has been drafted. It has been designed to generate a profile for each project. The output thus includes

a crude evaluation of the selected projects in terms of how basic rights for dryland inhabitants are respected.

28. In the light of the request from the COP, the following indicators are being addressed, reflecting the issues under the “rights approach” above:

- (a) How the links between poverty and land degradation are expressed in different stakeholders’ situations;
- (b) The projects’ contexts seen through the formulation of the issues;
- (c) Lessons learned about how land degradation and poverty relate through a rights approach;
- (d) Methods used to build the necessary knowledge base on poverty reduction and land degradation;
- (e) Stakeholder involvement.

29. This design aims to “keep indicators simple and stupid”. It will allow a systematic update of a database on how planners deal with poverty issues in a land-degradation situation. This database will enable an analysis of knowledge bases and gaps to be made, but it will not allow for detailed project assessments. It is planned initially to use the five indicators in a survey of selected projects. Results will be included in the next national report and assessed during the following cycle of reporting. The quantified indicators below are applied. These are very simple and based on the observation of five processes. In the second step of applying the integrative assessment, the method is applied directly in the relevant projects. This is achieved by setting up a stakeholder interaction process focusing on the process indicators directly. The output reports can be fed into the NAP report.

C. The indicators

30. The five indicators are:

1. How are poverty issues addressed in land-degradation-related projects? The way poverty issues are incorporated in a project is interpreted by noting the presence of relevant ministries at national government and domestic levels. The presence of several ministries gives higher scores. This indicator targets links between poverty and land degradation.
2. How is the long-term planning dealt with? The assessment considers whether the project design includes post-project effects. This indicator targets planning methods for the links between poverty and land degradation.
3. How are the poor described in project documents? Scoring reflects degree of involvement. This indicator targets methods of including a poverty perspective in projects on land degradation.

4. What are the legal issues relating to land degradation and the poor in the project? Greater attention to legal rights of the poor gives a higher score. This indicator targets a rights perspective on dryland management.
5. What is the stakeholder involvement in projects? This indicator targets the interaction between different stakeholder categories.

D. Project profiles and analyses

31. The five indicators mentioned above are the process indicators that should be used. They are represented by five concrete questions per project. A questionnaire has been developed for this purpose. "Scores" from 1 to 5 can be given on the answers. The questionnaire can be applied to each of the selected projects and reported in the NAP, under a special section on poverty and land degradation. Design and implementation is a separate project yet to be proposed. The collected information is entered in a database aimed at screening cases/projects with regard to the relevance of poverty and land degradation with the following basic structure for which two projects are used as illustrations.

Project	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Q5	
	nation	region	nation	region	nation	region	nation	region	nation	region
2RRBSP	3	3	1	1	5	5	3	5	5	5
Kenyan	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	1	5

(a) Using this design, searches can be made for projects with different profiles; for instance those where a strong rights profile combined with sustainability and effective legal systems.

(b) Projects can be grouped into classes, based for instance on how much impact recent global environmental conventions have had as shown in figure 6.

(c) The database can be used for an analysis of the whole set of projects in terms of the different aspects mentioned in the above list of indicators.

32. The task given by the COP concerns indicator 1. The instrument that has been designed is useful for project planning if certain policy goals are to be given high attention. By searching through profiles the relevant projects become easily accessible. Lessons learned can be directly accessed. As mentioned, this indicator approach is only for rapid screening. The five process indicators can be used directly for short-listed projects and applied by setting up an interactive stakeholder process. This second step would generate continuous reports from people targeted by the project, which can be brought to the NAPs and further assessed from there.

Figure 6. Project profiles and analyses

<i>Cluster of projects</i>	<i>Profile</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
Project title, such as 2RRBSP /for example those with score 15-18/		/Space for summary analysis; this class of projects have the common features.../
Project title, such as KENYAN /for example those with score 10-15/		/Space for summary analysis; this class of projects have the common features.../

IV. Desertification-related indicators of land degradation

33. This chapter emphasizes the social process where stakeholder involvement in identifying and addressing poverty and land-degradation reduction issues is central. It looks at the same task from the land degradation point of view; i.e. how sustainable development aspects impact on the formulation of measures against land degradation. The poverty reduction here depends on the success in combating land degradation. The organization of all the elements mentioned below is the basis of the proposed methodology. All are closely related and depending on the multidisciplinary and multi-institutional teams, workshops may need to be created for this purpose. This chapter contributes to the lessons learned on the assessment of land degradation as set out in the annex. It will be paralleled with an approach to the poverty aspect by linking it with water supply and sanitation.

34. It has been previously stated that the nature of the biophysical, chemical, socio-economic changes leading to land degradation and desertification are the causes and consequences of food

insecurity and poverty in the areas of the world affected. The main land degradation processes could be summarised as erosion, salination, physical degradation, chemical degradation, hydric degradation and biological degradation.

35. Information will be given on the indicators that must be selected according to particular situations: social, economic, cultural, political and environmental. This is based on the demonstrated principle that poverty must be considered to be the result of a group of causes, land degradation being one of them. The state of the combination of land degradation and poverty will here be assessed in the form of the response capacity of a given community and measured by indicators. The first step will be to measure the degree of vulnerability to food insecurity. Food security is defined as a situation where all members of a family or the population of a territory or of a society, independent of their age and sex, have regular access to food. Shortages paralyse the regular access to the food necessary for the development of an active and healthy life. This definition arranges the factors of access to foods hierarchically. The availability of sufficient food is linked to, among other things, the condition of the natural environment, how it is exploited, and thus its protection and improvement with time. The ability to buy these foods depends on the strength of the prevailing social model with respect to conditions of life and wealth of the population and the society respectively.

A. Vulnerability, risk and stakeholders

36. The degree of vulnerability will be obtained from the “participatory reasoning” model as an essential element, between specialists and technicians. The degree of risk is considered to be the negative or harmful processes, with varying intensity, that occur mainly as a result of natural phenomena or as the reaction of the environment to inadequate human management.

37. Finally, by combining these factors, the response capacity may be interpreted using the resource level of the territory and the ability of the population to face up to factors that work against food security and aggravate the state of degradation. That is:

$$\textit{Vulnerability} = \textit{risk intensity} + \textit{response capacity}$$

38. Using this part of the methodology, the territories most sensitive to the effects of drought can be identified from the viewpoint of food insecurity and from the strategies within the range of values obtained for the local territories using a relative risk scale: very high, high, medium, low.

B. Proposed indicators for sustainable development

39. Three sustainable-development factors of land degradation need to be looked at: ecological, economic and social. The first of these concerns physical, chemical and biological aspects. The proposed indicators, including a political viewpoint, are designed and follow criteria normally used for erosion and physical degradation (physical dimension indicators established), for salination and chemical degradation (chemical dimension indicators established) and for biological degradation (biological-aspect indicators established). These are combined with indicators for the social dimension (the general indices on the structure and dynamics of populations), the economic factor (the general indices on economically active population and on

land use), the political aspect (the general indices on development policies) and the environmental viewpoint (the general indices on changes in the temperature and precipitation patterns and on anthropogenic activity). In all this leads to 64 specific indicators.

40. In a system for the assessment of degradation, the list of indicators could be long. Apart from responding to different assessment information, it facilitates the taking of decisions. Below there is a proposal to measure the elements and the degree of intensity, mainly of land degradation, in its three aspects.

1. Response capacity

41. Social, economic and political order indicators must be added to the above. Using the “participatory reasoning” method, they can together accomplish an integral assessment of land degradation and poverty. Response capacity deals, as a whole, with a group of indicators referring to the main natural resources, their use with the current food production capacity, certain basic service structures and other socio-economic factors. Some indicators could be selected from those previously mentioned and linked to land degradation. They could be validated according to the particular conditions in the spatial/temporal level proposed. This could help to reverse the negative interaction found and its degree of intensity.

42. In some cases there has been a tendency to use the same indicators, due to a close relationship between poverty and land degradation. The response capacity is critical for any measure against land degradation. This calls for the establishment of indicators for response capacity. Thirteen quantitative indicators have been developed. The design is also open to qualitative assessments.

43. Now the complete process – the vulnerability or the intensity of the vulnerable risk to land degradation and poverty in a given temporal/spatial level – can be assessed. Undoubtedly the impossibility of using only one model includes in its conception all the integrative elements. Thus, both risk and response capacity will be separately analysed and the results will be linked to the vulnerability intensity. Different methods could be used. However, the GoE is of the view that the real situation must be defined through workshops or working sessions integrated by different specialists of diverse scientific institutions, policy makers, users, owners and stakeholders as well as important figures of the civil society.

44. This methodology will establish that where there are risk levels with low capacity of response, vulnerability levels are highest, and vice versa. And when the risk and the response capacity are either high, or medium, or when the capacity of response is higher than the risk, they are not considered to be very vulnerable. When the risk and the response capacity are both low, as well as the response capacity lower than the risk then vulnerability is high. The response capacity is seen as of a higher importance, because the development attained by a territory is considered as a decisive factor in determining vulnerability.

2. Population concentration

45. At this level, the contents and dynamism of the national action programmes start to play a decisive and important role. The incorporation of a strategy that must be developed to reverse

negative scenarios must now be considered in this element, which is the core of the Convention to combat desertification.

46. The experience acquired in the application of this methodology, that is a greater knowledge of the territories and an assessment of the analytical results of each study phase, are of vital importance. Thus, the multidisciplinary teams develop and sustain the idea that beyond the combination of occurrence, intensity and spatial extension of the varying risk intensity observed, local vulnerability is determined, especially when the natural and human resources available and their level of use are low, in general, by the development attained in all types of territorial structures. The only way of decreasing not only the impact of the possible natural risks, but also the permanent consequences and the increase in latent and potential risk caused by a low response capacity, rests on the formulation, development and application, particularly, at each spatial and temporal level, of an integral and special policy of producing and living in balance with nature.

47. The development, at the proposed local level, with later progressive expansion, is based on the knowledge of the causes and effects of the potentially destructive phenomena. It also concerns the techniques and procedures capable of reducing the impacts of the dangers and risks to the economy, as well as the population and the environment. These are the basic aspects which must receive marked attention in the country by involving all the driving forces of the society and particularly by political decisions at national level.

48. The essential way of increasing the response capacity and turning “hot points” to “bright points” also embraces the following key issues:

(a) The timely prevention of drought and flood risks, the training for emergencies, recovery and reconstruction translated into measures to be incorporated into the development planning processes;

(b) The prevention of forest fires that destroy the ecological balance;

(c) The prevention of all types of invasive alien species and biological destructive pests and diseases including the human component.

49. In considering an increase in the response capacity, the following issues need to be addressed:

(a) It is too simple just to mention the vulnerability component indicators, and their modification as solutions to the delicate and varied capacities that can arise. It is much more complex but also more realistic to deal with some more integral aspects (contained in the specific indicators) that, if applied in a sustainable and stable form, even if it is not so direct, can positively influence on the results search for and required;

(b) The environmental situation demands special attention if some of the existing conflicts and unbalances need to be reversed.

3. Soil preservation and recuperation

50. Various measures in soil preservation and recuperation, due to their combined effects on land degradation and poverty, are recommended or discouraged depending on specific situations:

(a) To protect territories with soils of greater fertility from new construction and facilities that prevent or limit their agricultural use. The priority will be to establish them in the places where the soil is of poor for agriculture;

(b) To apply adequate techniques of soil management in hilly areas to stop erosion;

(c) To give priority to the execution of programmes of plot draining in those sites with poorly draining soils;

(d) To apply adequate techniques for soil recuperation in territories of high salinity to reduce its level;

(e) To avoid the use of water with high salt content for irrigation, especially in very flat regions with bad soil drainage, in order to avoid increasing soil salinity;

(f) To continue the construction of reservoirs and microreservoirs especially in regions which irrigate areas with high drought risks. They can also contribute to the regulation of floods or the swelling of rivers;

(g) To give priority to the construction of tunnels, conductive materials and channels allowing the transfer of hydraulic potential to agricultural areas. Special attention should be given to construction work permitting the irrigation of areas with great drought risks, or of high agricultural value soils;

(h) To increase the agricultural irrigation systems, especially to some crop and vegetable cultivation, giving priority to the regions of high drought risks or high soil fertility;

(i) To relocate existing pastures in high and mountain regions to flat territories with silvipastoral systems and cattle raising soil to develop a higher yielding intensive livestock production;

(j) To reforest territories currently used for agricultural and livestock production, the soil of which is suitable for forest development, in order to increase the wooded area and to attain a more balanced territorial distribution to improve the climate and the environment. This also applies to regions of mining development.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

51. By developing a synergy between the work of the GoE and the NAP, with the UNCCD national focal points, it is feasible to establish an integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation as a permanent feature of work under the Convention. The current

document provides the design. In this concluding chapter recommendations are made on how that can be achieved.

52. The GoE herewith proposes a systematic methodology in accordance with the request from the COP. It also suggests that it be given a mandate to move into next level of preparations – applying the methodology at full scale. This calls for country support, primarily from the national focal points, but also from institutions inside the Convention and related to it, where activities of particular relevance to the poverty/land degradation interface take place. Not only these stakeholders, but also the directly affected citizens, local non-governmental organizations and the full range of stakeholders, as specified in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (1992) need to be involved.

53. Emphasis should be placed on stakeholders' involvement, and on the rights approach. The purpose should be to apply the combined methodology outlined above, both as a search mechanism for best practice with regard to combining poverty reduction with land degradation counter-measures, and as a way of setting up a process of learning which is driven jointly by stakeholders (from the person affected, to policy implementers and formulators, to researchers, etc.). Before implementation, the project needs harmonization with many existing training activities. The intention is that, parallel to the local learning process, it will become an instrument for the COP both to monitor activities, and to take quick initiatives.

54. With this background, the following specific recommendations are made:

(a) A small task team, comprising two people, should be set up within the GoE to implement a targeted database in cooperation with national focal points in all member countries and in some cases even districts. This working group should initially assess all NAPs in the way illustrated in the current report. It should also group countries into those with centralized and with decentralized approaches to policy implementation. This developed, integrated assessment methodology is the first step. For instance, it will allow members implementing new projects to decide to which countries they should go to find experience of a particularly suited character.

(b) A comprehensive list of relevant projects should be established by the team through interacting with countries' focal points. It can be based on the recommended projects in the respective NAPs (10 per country).

(c) The team should apply the simple survey, interacting with the countries' focal points, so that a first rough profile is established per project. These profiles can be reported in the NAPs. At this stage, the NAPs should include a separate section on poverty and land degradation.

(d) The integrative assessment result allows for the ranking of projects. The proposed team should carry out ranking in cooperation with the national focal points for each participating member country. The result will be a layered database that is a source for rapid assessment for upcoming project design and implementation.

(e) A short-list of projects with key experience should be established. The process indicators for the survey will be used in these projects, so that stakeholders are invited to carry

out the assessments themselves. An interaction process can be established through a series of regular workshops aiming to build consensus around the reporting. Results will be fed into the NAPs.

(f) With this stepwise approach to poverty and land degradation, a capacity opens up to deal with the huge volumes of information found in the various implementations of the Convention. Since its desertification concern falls within a realm of land degradation, special attention should be paid to the assessment of land degradation at project level.

(g) Therefore, an integrated assessment methodology is proposed for all land degradation assessments, so that socio-political considerations, respecting poverty reduction needs, are built into the design of the indicator. The outlined approach is proposed for application in the short-listed projects by the stakeholders in those projects. The proposed team will take the lead for the indicator design and has the responsibility of reporting to stakeholders of the projects for evaluation and application if suitable.

55. In order to carry out proposed activities the recommended two-person team should be set up, preferably within the GoE, should be set up with terms of reference based on the above recommendations. At the first stage, lasting six months, the country profiles and the interaction with national focal points could be established and the project level questionnaire could be tested. In the following year a questionnaire could be designed, and there would be broad application and reporting, including a short-list of projects, and also the setting up of the stakeholder process at those project levels. With a 1.5 year project, budgeted at EUR 170,000 per half-year, the requested integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation would be both developed and applied through synergy within the Convention between the work of the GoE and the national focal points in the NAP design and reporting processes.

Annex**Matrix on linkages**

Outputs and Activity	How is the link between poverty and land degradation expressed? (Focus on the linkage)	Empirical example(s) when applicable; few cases aimed at illustrating key phenomena	Methods used	Lessons learned for the assessment of poverty and land degradation; focus on the interrelation between these two concepts
<i>1 Review literature which addresses social, economic and natural driving forces and pressures on land and the impacts of land degradation on poverty</i>	Survey projects/actions, etc., sorted according to findings: failure/ success, poverty/land degradation, small/large scale	Two illustrations: one project oriented on reducing land degradation with poverty reduction as a side effect, and one vice versa	Inventory methods used in empirical approaches	Determine gaps/biases in the inventory (what has not been achieved in terms of linking poverty and land degradation)
<i>2 Carry out a review of the scientific and technical tools that have been used for poverty assessment</i>	Assessment of the scientific and technical efforts; account for trends over time	Select relevant past and ongoing case studies, to assess effects on poverty	Based on the cases, examine long-term development at the community level after project support has ended	Summary of key deviations from initial objectives with regard to poverty reduction effects and assessment methodologies
<i>3 Assess the knowledge gaps and systematize existing research on stakeholders at different levels and connecting their activities with land use</i>	Focus on science- and experience-based systems to identify the information used for decision-making and for the implementation of activities	Examples from five scales – local, national, subregional, regional and global – on how the linkage poverty/land degradation is dealt with. Explain how the linkages at different scales differ	Analysis of how links between poverty and land degradation are described by stakeholders and the scientific community at different scales	How science is taken to the community ; assessment of the methods practised; efficiency, contradictions, complementarity

Outputs and Activity	How is the link between poverty and land degradation expressed? (Focus on the linkage)	Empirical example(s) when applicable; few cases aimed at illustrating key phenomena	Methods used	Lessons learned for the assessment of poverty and land degradation; focus on the interrelation between these two concepts
<i>4 Analyse case studies to test proposed methodology of filling the gap based on an interaction process (different stakeholders and decision makers)</i>	Analyse case studies to identify reasons why gaps exist (e.g. institutional, technical, scientific, etc.)	Combine the inventory into listing all projects with Global Mechanism involvement (whether operational or not)	Compile different methodologies at different scales	Refer to the GoE and roster of experts to determine what methodologies fill in gaps
<i>5 Develop assessment criteria for stakeholders at community level listing priorities regarding desertification and poverty issues</i>	Use consensus building tools (such as workshops, and meetings with stakeholders) aimed at identifying problems and solutions for both poverty and land degradation	Set up and attend workshops with consensus approach	Formulate local community level approaches to integrated sustainable land management that combines poverty and land degradation reduction	Take stock on the consensus to engage stakeholders at different stages of project implementation
<i>6 Suggest ways of reaching community level stakeholders and local decision makers, and strategies for building consensus, understanding vulnerability and risk, and defining priorities and solutions</i>	An inventory of projects oriented towards poverty and land degradation with regards to awareness raising and capacity-building	Select relevant long-term projects with strong emphasis on both awareness raising and capacity-building and seek trends for decentralized decision-making	Focus group interactions with community leaders and decision makers. Enquire, for example, about pre-project facilitating actions	Design a compendium of experiences

Outputs and Activity	How is the link between poverty and land degradation expressed? (Focus on the linkage)	Empirical example(s) when applicable; few cases aimed at illustrating key phenomena	Methods used	Lessons learned for the assessment of poverty and land degradation; focus on the interrelation between these two concepts
<i>7 Analyse the inter-relationships links between poverty and land degradation</i>	Select United Nations and other related institutions that deal with poverty and land degradation	Scan global conventions as providers of case situations	Relate the global analysis with regional, subregional, national and local level analyses as a means to interpret degree of influence from Convention to project levels	Identify policymaking patterns addressing the combination of poverty reduction and land rehabilitation
<i>8 Develop a training manual/handbook on lessons learned which addresses -links between poverty and land degradation</i>	Building from the above activities, design a handbook presenting methods on how to link measures against poverty and land degradation at all levels between project and policy implementation	Review manuals/handbooks	Summarize how handbooks are prepared with regard to workshops, pilot experiences, recommended actions	A manual is a dynamic tool that integrates learning process made available through systems such as THEMANET
