



Guideline on Effective Measures for Combating Desertification for Achieving Sustainable Development in the Horn of Africa



AI-CD

African Initiative for Combating Desertification
to Strengthen Resilience to Climate Change
in the Sahel and Horn of Africa

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Preamble

The African continent is highly dependent on land for its socio-economic other livelihood needs. Therefore, the ability to conserve, utilize and manage land as well as other natural resources sustainably is necessary for provision of goods and services, and for sustainable development in the continent. However, the rapid increase in human population and adverse impacts of climate change is creating great pressure on land, leading to resource degradation. In many parts of Africa, such degradation is exemplified by: formation of deep gullies created by soil erosion; sand dunes; degraded forests, woodlands and grasslands; changes in biodiversity; desertified areas; and low land productivity. If Africa is to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goals No. 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture, No. 6 on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation, and No. 15 on sustainable management of forests, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation, halting biodiversity loss, governments in African must identify and act on knowledge gaps that prioritize environmental conservation. The respective governments must also deliberately demonstrate political will to formulate, implement and embrace the interdependent legal and policy instruments that govern natural resource management in a sustainable manner. Since land degradation, desertification, effects of climate change and drought transcend geographical boundaries, countries in Africa require a common approach to guide restoration and rehabilitation of degraded landscapes. This guideline therefore, provides practical advice to policy makers, technical personnel, and end-users of information on measures for addressing land degradation and desertification. This publication also serves as complementary link to the book on “Measures for Combating Desertification: Case Studies from Horn of Africa”, which is a compendium of actions undertaken by countries in Horn of Africa towards combating desertification.

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1. Introduction

Desertification is the process of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from natural and human activities, as influenced by climatic variations. Human activities are the major causes of desertification and include; overgrazing, over-cultivation, increased fire incidences, deforestation, and over-exploitation of groundwater. The major impact of desertification is loss of biodiversity and land productivity. Drylands of Africa cover about 42% of the continent. These dryland regions have a high degree of vulnerability to desertification. Effects of desertification contributes to; food insecurity, poverty, and conflicts, which undermine socio-economic development. Combating desertification is complex and difficult to achieve without a multi-dimensional approach to restore degraded land to its original status. Therefore, for land restoration to be effective there is need to implement relevant initiatives whose approach could be global, regional or local initiatives. One such approach that has been initiated in the Sub-Sahara region is the “African Initiative for Combating Desertification to Strengthen Resilience to Climate Change in the Sahel and Horn of Africa (**AI-CD**)”.

AI-CD is a framework of African countries in collaboration with development partners to fight desertification. AI-CD was formed following the recognition that the Sub-Saharan Africa is faced with environmental deterioration, and suffers from frequent and severe droughts that may lead to desertification. It was also recognized that climate change is likely to accelerate desertification in this region. Thus, AI-CD aims to contribute to making nations and communities resilient to climate change by promoting measures for combating desertification in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

■ **AI-CD Vision**

A global leader in combating desertification in Africa for sustainable development

■ **AI-CD Mission**

To mainstream effective measures for combating desertification and making nations and communities resilient to climate change

The AI-CD vision and mission will be achieved through three outputs, namely: Building networks, Knowledge sharing and Improving access to finance.

- **Building networks** entails building a robust network among participating countries and their development partners to combat desertification in the region, and raising awareness of the international community on desertification.
- **Knowledge sharing** involves exchanging knowledge and experiences on combating desertification to improve effectiveness of development efforts in the region.
- **Improving access to finance** will require that access to available international development finance is improved to promote measures for combating desertification in the region.

The three outputs can be strengthened through mainstreaming activities on combating desertification through three pillars, namely; Policies and Strategies, Institutional Building and Implementation at the local level (Figure 1). These pillars are interlinked and interdependent to give synergies in delivery of effective measures for combating desertification.



Figure 1: AI-CD pillars and expected effects on combating desertification

A common approach to address desertification and strengthen resilience to climate change in Horn of Africa (HoA) was realized, and developed into a Guideline. This Guideline was developed using experiences in implementation of AI-CD in the HoA participating countries namely; Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. This Guideline can be used to enable African countries apply effective and efficient measures for combating desertification to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Approaches to Achieving AI-CD Pillars

This guideline is an enabler to achieving effective measures to combating desertification in each of the three AI-CD pillars within participating countries.

2.1 Policies and Strategies

Policies and strategies pillar ensures; high-level political commitment, mainstreaming of combating desertification into policies, country ownership and capacity development, and resource mobilization for combating desertification.

2.1.1. High-level political commitment

High-level political commitment is actualized by domesticating relevant international obligations and conventions on desertification, land degradation and drought; biological diversity; and climate change, which contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The political commitment can be achieved through national development plans in each country in line with the related SDGs and targets. The plans should be prepared and implemented in close collaboration with development partners and relevant stakeholders through dialogue and consultations.

The commitment can also be realized through enactment of relevant and specific country laws and legislations, executive pronouncements and orders, and formulation of appropriate policies and strategies.

2.1.2. Mainstreaming of combating desertification into policies

The impacts of any initiative to fight against land degradation, desertification and drought will only be felt if implementation of activities is mainstreamed

into relevant country specific policies and strategies, which are in line with global agenda such as SDGs target 15.3. The activities should also be implemented in accordance with appropriately formulated integrated development plans at country level. Relevant governing and functional institutions or bodies should be established and empowered to drive the process and engage with development agencies.

2.1.3. Country ownership and capacity development

Initiatives to fight against land degradation, desertification and drought should be anchored within relevant country ministries, departments and agencies at national, regional and local level. The officers implementing the initiatives should be empowered through relevant skill improvement programmes, while the end users of information should have their capacity built to enable them apply information, knowledge and technologies on the ground.

2.1.4. Resource mobilization

Access to finance is a catalyst for translating policies and strategies into actions. The positive impacts of initiatives to combat desertification are strongly felt if implementation of activities is financed. Resources for implementation activities on measures to combat desertification are available from different sources. However, accessing the resources should be prioritized and necessary efforts made to engage with development agencies on identification of potential funding mechanisms. These agencies include; development partners, private sector, non-governmental and international organizations, as well as communities. Countries should build adequate capacity to source for resources from various funding agencies. Financial resources can also be sourced internally from governments.

2.2 Institutional Building

Institutional building entails cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach as well as awareness and education measures that would enhance activities on combating desertification.

2.2.1. Cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholders approach

Measures to combat desertification require cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholders approach. This involves government ministries, departments and agencies as well as coordinating and engaging with relevant organizations and stakeholders to combat desertification.

2.2.2. Awareness and Education

Deliberate community empowerment, awareness creation and environmental education are important approaches to promote a wider stakeholder engagement in the fight against desertification.

2.3. Implementation at the Local Level

Implementation on the ground entails initiatives and activities undertaken to combat desertification. The measures include addressing challenges on: land use planning; land degradation, deterioration, destruction and pollution; vegetation degradation and deforestation; overgrazing; biomass energy; narrow genetic base; soil degradation; drought or water shortage; poverty and poor livelihood practices; weak community participation in natural resource management; poor dissemination of good practices; inadequate information on good practices; and indigenous knowledge and conflict management. The practices and activities under each challenge include the following;

2.3.1. Land use planning

- Coordinated and integrated land use planning

2.3.2. Land degradation, deterioration, destruction and pollution

- Land rehabilitation and restoration through; reforestation, afforestation, and land protection techniques
- Climate smart agriculture

2.3.3. Vegetation degradation and deforestation

- Growing drought tolerant tree species
- Re-seeding techniques
- Species enrichment planting

2.3.4. Overgrazing

- Natural pasture improvement
- Transhumance
- Herd management planning

2.3.5. Shortage of biomass energy

- Establishment of woodlots
- Efficient woody biomass conversion and use techniques

2.3.6. Narrow genetic base

- Participatory crop selection and improvement
- Crop diversification

2.3.7. Soil degradation

- Soil conservation techniques
- Soil fertility improvement techniques
- Sand dune stabilization techniques
- River bank stabilization techniques
- Reclamation of saline soils

2.3.8. Drought or water shortage

- Water harvesting and water conservation techniques
- Water purification techniques
- Ground water usage
- Enhanced drought preparedness

2.3.9. Poverty and poor livelihood practices

- Income Generating Activities (IGAs)
- Provision of loans and credit

2.3.10. Weak community participation in natural resource management

- Promote Participatory Natural Resource Management (PNRM)

2.3.11. Poor dissemination of good practices

- Appropriate dissemination approaches of the good practices

2.3.12. Information on good practices

- Package and repackage information on good practices

2.3.13 Indigenous Technical Knowledge

- Document Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK) as good practices

2.3.14 Conflict management

- Document good practices on conflict resolution

**AI-CD Participating countries, co-organizers,
partners and HoA secretariat.**



Co-organizers



Partners



**Horn of Africa
Secretariat**

