



Unofficial translation of the original French version

Cotonou Declaration

African Ministerial Conference preparatory to the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP.6) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

CCD

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We, Ministers and heads of delegations of African countries Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat desertification in countries seriously affected by drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, gathered in Cotonou from July 3rd to 4th, 2003 upon the invitation from the Government of Republic of Benin and the UNCCD Secretariat;

- Considering that the sixth session of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the UNCCD to be held in Havana, Cuba from August 25th to September 5th, 2003 is of paramount importance in view of the key issues which will be discussed so as to strengthen the implementation of the Convention;
- Considering that desertification remains a major hindering factor of Africa's development and contributes largely to the impoverishment of our populations;
- Considering that despite the tremendous efforts made by African countries since the adoption of the Convention in 1994, the lack of predictable and adequate financing continues to be a handicap towards the efficient and effective implementation of action programmes to combat desertification;
- Considering the objectives of sustainable development adopted by the international community during the United Nations Summit on the Millennium (September 2000), as well as the conclusions of the World Organisation and Trade, which took place in Doha, Qatar and the consensus of Monterrey (International Conference on Financing for Development);
- Considering the objectives adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (August-September 2002) which recognizes UNCCD as one of the relevant tools for poverty eradication;
- Considering the decision taken by the second assembly of the Global Environment Facility (October 2002) to make land degradation (desertification and deforestation) a focal area of the Facility.

Reiterate:

1. Our commitment to strengthen actions aimed at integrating our action programmes to combat desertification in policies and strategies for sustainable development in Africa, particularly in the poverty reduction strategies;



2. Our commitment to finalise the elaboration of national, sub-regional as well as the regional action programme to combat desertification before the end of 2005;
3. Our will to engage and pursue with our main development partners the necessary consultative processes conducive to the establishment of partnership agreements as part of the fight against desertification;
4. Our commitment to meet our obligations in contributing to the core budget of the Convention and to pay our arrears before the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties;
5. Our will to promote the fight against desertification in line with major African initiatives such as actions planned in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Call upon the Parties to the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to:

1. Take necessary proactive measures to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in Africa;
2. Accept the availability of the Global Environment Facility to serve as a funding mechanism of the Convention and make sure that adequate and predictable financial resources meant to support efforts of eligible countries are mobilized subsequent to the agreements between COP and GEF;
3. Encourage the Global Mechanism to strengthen its activities in assisting African countries in mobilizing resources including those for the co-financing of GEF projects;
4. Encourage the main development partners (bilateral and multilateral), to duly take into account the UNCCD goals and objectives in the framework of their cooperation with African countries;
5. Take appropriate measures aimed at strengthening access to the world market for agricultural products from arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas of Africa;



6. Take appropriate measures with a view to strengthening linkages and synergies with other relevant multilateral treaties by laying emphasis on activities to be undertaken at the local and national levels;
7. Take necessary measures to strengthen capacity building at local, national and sub-regional levels;
8. Promote the participation of non-governmental organisations and community based organisations in the elaboration and implementation of the Convention.

Give mandate to the Chairman of the African Ministerial Conference preparatory to COP.6 of UNCCD to present this declaration on the occasion of the High level segment of the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD to be held in Havana, Cuba from September 1st to 2nd, 2003.

Adopted in Cotonou on July 4th, 2003