

Land Day 2011

Statement by UNFCCC secretariat Daniele Violetti, Chief of Staff

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Last year, Land Day was a very successful event. And so I appreciate the opportunity to address you today on behalf of Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary to the UNFCCC. She regrets not being here in person, but has asked me to brief her carefully on the discussions here.

As is well known, there are important areas of common interest and synergies between climate change action, both for adaptation and mitigation, and action on desertification. These include land management and use, with a specific focus on forestry and agriculture.

Mitigation and adaptation actions in the forestry and agriculture sectors hold huge benefits, not only for climate but also to combat desertification. This is particularly true for developing countries.

Additionally, both in agriculture and forests, mitigation and adaptation can successfully go hand-in-hand. There are synergies between mitigation in agriculture, adaptation, sustainable development, food security and poverty alleviation. There is no doubt that these can be maximised with integrated strategies at the national level.

UNCCD and UNFCCC are addressing these areas of common concern to facilitate increased action by both countries and organisations. Specifically, our secretariats collaborate including through information sharing and outreach to Governments, international organisations and civil society.

A recurrent question is: how can real action be boosted at the national level? And how can it be boosted in a way in which the opportunities that the synergies present are increasingly utilised?

Both adaptation and mitigation measures under the UNFCCC will be designed and implemented at the national level, taking into account local circumstances. The same holds true for desertification measures under the UNCCD.

Progress is being made in the context of the UNFCCC, where Parties realize the importance of well designed national strategies for REDD plus. Parties are increasingly cognizant that REDD plus national strategies are more likely to succeed if broader co-benefits are aimed at, and if broader issues related to land, its use and management are addressed.

While developing their REDD plus national strategies, Parties are now more closely seeking for careful planning and coordination between relevant Ministries, in line with national development priorities. This could be extremely beneficial, not only for maximizing their contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation, but also to provide good

grounds for effectively combating desertification and promoting sustainable land use through enhanced cooperation, both at the national and international levels.

Yet next to careful coordination at the national level, it is clear that developing countries need assistance to allow them to fully exploit the opportunities that synergies present. The Cancun outcome on REDD plus, particularly in the area of promoting and supporting readiness activities, provides a great opportunity to materialize this assistance.

For the past few years, REDD plus has been mobilizing significant amounts of funding both in the long and in the short-term. Many multilateral and bilateral cooperation initiatives are ongoing or planned, with an increasing number of Parties engaged.

Yet clearly, funding is required beyond REDD plus in order to seize all opportunities that Cancun presents.

Other mitigation and adaptation activities in developing countries will benefit from Fast-Start Finance, which industrialised countries pledged at the climate change conference in Copenhagen, and which currently totals some USD 28 billion. These funds are to be equally disbursed for both mitigation and adaptation activities in the short-term.

Long-term funding will be managed through the newly created Green Climate Fund, which is set to house USD 100 billion per annum by 2020.

However, fully rising to the financing challenge and implementing climate change solutions on a large-scale will be impossible without private sector involvement.

In this context, it is important to note that the private sector is increasingly realising that green business makes business sense. And needless to say, embarking on green economic activities can make significant contributions to mitigation - and the private sector is increasingly implementing such activities.

But what about business involvement in adaptation, and what about its involvement in sectors of the economy, in which adaptation and mitigation go hand-in-hand, such as agriculture?

Compared to the more classical activities such as increasing energy efficiency of business operations, adaptation and sectors such as agriculture are only starting to benefit from private sector interest. But to move fully into the era of green economic growth, it is essential that adaptation and sectors where adaptation and mitigation go together are fully included in the transformation.

For one, sooner or later, all businesses will have to climate-proof their operations, from supply-chain to point of sale, from place of production to place of investment. And secondly, adaptation will be imperative if businesses want to avoid climate change impacts driving them out of business.

- In partnerships with governments, such adaptation action could include mitigation elements and have invaluable benefits for communities.

- There are examples already of initiatives to climate-proof agricultural operations that are part of its supply chain.

This is very encouraging, and certainly something we need more of.

Getting back to the negotiations, one way of increasing such activities is by finding innovative ways in which public and private finance can complement each other to the greatest benefit for all involved. This is one of the key questions that the negotiations are in the process of addressing.

Overall, more opportunities will emerge as the negotiations progress.

Cancun clarified that developing countries will undertake nationally appropriate mitigation actions - called NAMAs - with international support, provided that such actions and support can be measured, reported and verified.

Importantly in this context, it is becoming increasingly clear that actions addressing land management, agriculture and forestry, including through reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, will be essential parts of developing countries' mitigation actions.

Beyond NAMAs and the Green Climate Fund, Cancun created a number of new institutions, which include:

- the adaptation committee, which will boost adaptation in developing countries a coordinated way.
- and the technology mechanism, which is set to accelerate the commercial wide-scale use of climate-sound technologies for both adaptation and mitigation in developing countries.
- Parties are currently in the design phase for these. The adaptation committee is set to be operationalised at the upcoming climate change conference in Durban, whereas the technology mechanism is set to be operationalised in 2012.

Cancun also advanced on National Adaptation Plans. Another important outcome from Durban, will be the launch of modalities and guidelines to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans.

From NAMAs to National Adaptation Plans, these items present new additional opportunities for both synergies, as well as stakeholder engagement, including on land-related issues.

I urge all of us to increasingly utilise these opportunities and hope that we can do this in a creative way and to the greatest benefits for desertification, land resources and the climate.

Thank you.
