

Conclusions and Recommendations

SECOND WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES Geneva, Switzerland, 9 July 2003

The second workshop on regional cooperation activities for the Northern Mediterranean affected country Parties was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 9 July 2003 with representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and Israel as observer country.

Mr. Gregoire de Kalbermatten, Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNCCD secretariat, opened the meeting. In his statement, he highlighted the strategic importance of the Annex IV cooperation to the Convention process, deriving from the ecological as well as socio-economical characteristics of the region, as well as from the dual role of many Annex IV countries as donors and affected countries.

Following the presentation of participants, Ms. Teresa Mendizábal, Spain, the Chair of the workshop, made an introductory statement. She provided an overview on the action taken in the field of regional cooperation under Annex IV so far, and presented the possible way forward in further enhancing the cooperation. She congratulated Italy for its Presidency of the European Union, as well as Ms. David, the Coordinator of the Europe Unit of the UNCCD secretariat, for the successful organization of the workshop. Referring to Ms. David's absence due to illness, the participants sent her their wishes for quick recovery. The participants then adopted the provisional agenda as proposed by the secretariat.

Consideration of the thematic areas

The first Annex IV workshop on regional cooperation activities, held in Bonn in April 2003, agreed to adopt the use of the recently developed Annex IV tools, the "Activity Master" and the "Regional Cooperation Kit", in further regional meetings for identifying ideas of cooperation based on possible offers and needs. The activities could involve two, three or more countries in joint activities or all Annex IV countries together. The pre-identified areas, selected on the basis of the Activity Master, were brought up in the Bonn workshop as potential cooperation areas, and the Geneva workshop began the detailed discussion on two of these areas, namely "Development of good practice codes for farming in arid and semi-arid lands" and "Water erosion control / preventive measures". Two more priority areas were planned to be presented in Geneva, however these presentations have been postponed.

a) Development of good practice codes for farming in arid and semi-arid lands

Italy presented a project proposal on the implementation of a database on existing good practices in Northern Mediterranean region to prevent and mitigate the effects of drought and to combat desertification and promote sustainable development. Through this scientific collaboration project aimed at identifying, collecting and disseminating successful practices, the involved countries of Annex IV are expected to draw advantage on the experience achieved, optimise efforts and identify opportunities in the context of the

implementation of the UNCCD. The first step of the project would include discussion on criteria concerning the practices to be selected and collection and elaboration of success stories. Among the potential funding sources could be the 6th EU framework programme for research and technological development.

Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed a project on "Karst" Agroforestry development. The primary goal of this project is to revitalize the mountainous Karst region through four sub-projects focusing on: water supply and sustainable water management; grazing system for sheep; karst forest and erosion control and animal health and breeding. Although the presented project concept is set for the karst area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it could be implemented in other countries of the region with the same problem.

b) Water erosion control / preventive measures

Spain made a presentation elaborated in collaboration with Albania on water erosion control / preventive measures. In the context of erosion control needs, the presentation suggested specific actions related to the following areas: erosion evaluation and control; analysis and exploitation of results obtained from research programs and development research, and restoration of lands affected by erosion.

Spain also presented a project proposal on drawing up, implementation and enforcement of regulations, acts and laws to fight desertification in the framework of agricultural and environmental policies in the Northern Mediterranean region. The proposed project aims at identifying, by each country, the needs and potential of regulatory and institutional development to fight desertification; selecting the areas affected by desertification and different methods of regulatory ways to be applied in these areas; drawing up the laws by several national institutions; and implementation of the laws.

Conclusions and recommendations

The participants discussed the project proposals presented and agreed that the countries that presented them, namely Italy, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Spain and Albania, consult among each other's with the aim to come up with a harmonised format. It was further agreed that they would circulate, through the secretariat, the revised proposals to the members of the Annex IV group for comments. The other countries that were committed to prepare presentation for the Geneva workshop were asked to send their presentation through the secretariat for consideration and comments to the Annex IV countries. The remaining seven areas, identified by the first workshop, were agreed to be discussed later.

The Annex IV group recognised the merit of integrating the proposed projects and programmes into a systemic approach, benefiting all members of the group through, inter alia, facilitating the replication of successful pilot activities, exchange of information and lessons learned. In this context, the participants agreed to further explore modalities for enhanced regional cooperation, such as thematic networks in areas of priority interests. One such area could be for instance the development and dissemination of best practices, taking as reference, as feasible, the sectors and areas listed in the Activity Master. The secretariat is requested to present a paper on the methodology of thematic networking.