

Speaking Points Switzerland

Responses to the questions raised by the Chair:

1. What are the main constraints at the national level in pursuing an integrated approach in developing and adopting sustainable development strategies ensuring synergies among climate change, loss of biodiversity and desertification?

The main constraints are the missing coherence among the thematic policies and the insufficient communication among the various ministries which are involved. Example: If a new agriculture policy is elaborated, the existing policies in other areas like rural development are often not adequately taken into account. Furthermore, there is also the problem of an inadequate level of financial and human resources which are available in the relevant ministries in pursuing an integrated approach.

2. How to increase the level and the diversity of available funding for combating desertification and drought?

It is important to increase the interest of the different industries in the production (agriculture, ...). If more actors know better the costs of inaction (as said also by the representatives from Spain and Slovenia on behalf of the EU), they would probably be stronger engaged in funding for combating desertification measures.

3. How to ensure the effective implementation of the 10-Year Strategic Plan adopted in September 2007 by the Conference of Parties to the UNCCD and how to promote drought and desertification agenda to be one of the political priorities?

An effective implementation of the 10-Year Strategic Plan will only be possible if the policy makers at the highest level in a Government are convinced of the necessity to combat desertification. And here again, these crucial policy makers can be convince if they see the enormous costs of inaction. Therefore, we very much encourage the Governments in our partner countries in the South to conduct reports which show – in economic terms – the impact of desertification if nothing is done and to compare these costs with the ones of actions against desertification. Such comparisons make clear that investments to combat desertification are highly profitable. They will be aware also that such costs of inaction contain huge indirect costs, e.g. all the social costs related with migration from rural to urban areas.

6. Do you consider designation of the afforestation projects to combat land degradation and desertification under the Clean Development Mechanism as a right way forward ? How could it be achieved?

Yes, it is important that afforestation projects are eligible in the Clean Development Mechanism. In the CDM, energy projects should be supported which do no harm to forests, e.g. such which give access to modern energy.

7. How to deal with socio-economic impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought, including migration, which might lead to political instability and create disputes between migrants and local communities?

More investments in rural development would reduce the negative impacts. Such investments can be given in favour of diversification of production. If the people in a rural area can offer a variety of different products, the risk decreases that they migrate and cause political instability. Investments in rural development strengthen the capacity of citizens, increase the standard of living of the local population, and natural resources are often better used this way.