



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

High Level Event at COFO 23

Great Green Wall

Africa's Response to Climate Change and Zero Hunger

FAO HQ, Sheikh Zayed Centre, 18 July, 18.00-19.30

Context and Justification

The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) is a Pan African Initiative, established in 2007. It is Africa's flagship initiative to combat the effects of climate change, desertification, food insecurity and poverty. It brings together more than 20 African countries around the Sahara (North, East and West), international organizations, research institutes, civil society and grassroots organizations.

The Great Green Wall initiative is not a line or a wall of trees across the desert. The "Wall" is metaphor to express solidarity between countries and partners. The Great Green Wall is **a mosaic of sustainable land management interventions**, promoting:

- Long-term solutions to the pressing challenges of desertification, land degradation, drought and climate change
- Integrated interventions tackling the multiple challenges affecting the lives of people in the Sahel and Sahara including restoration of production systems, development of rural production and sustainable development hubs
- An urgent call to development actors and policy makers to invest more in the sustainable development of drylands in the Sahel and Sahara, in a coherent and integrated manner.

FAO's support so far:

FAO is a key partner of the African Union and of its member states in implementing this initiative. Indeed, for FAO, the GGWSSI is a game changer in addressing poverty eradication, ending hunger and boosting food and nutrition security in the Continent.

From 2010 to 2013, FAO focused on supporting the African Union Commission and 13 member countries¹ to put in place an enabling environment for the implementation of the GGWSSI. With funding from the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme and the European Union, FAO developed and implemented successfully two complementary projects which led to:

- The preparation and validation of national action plans and strategies for the implementation of the GGWSSI in 13 countries;
- The development and validation of Regional Harmonized Strategy, ensuring that all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the GGWSSI work towards a common and shared vision, objectives and results.
- To put in place a community of practice for the effective implementation of Africa's Great Green Wall.

Since July 2014 and with the support of EU and ACP Secretariat, FAO is implementing with partners a project called "Action Against Desertification²" in support of the implementation of the Great Green Wall in 6 countries³ and South-South Cooperation in ACP countries. Specific areas of intervention include:

- Capacity Development (Technical and Functional)
- Upscaling effective use of sustainable land Management and Restoration practices
- Promotion and diversification of income generation activities for Women and Youth
- Knowledge management and dissemination
- Partnerships and global coalition building for Land restoration.

Objectives of the High Level Event

COFO 23 offers an opportunity for high level representatives of participating countries to share their achievements, challenges and expected developments and to identify how best FAO could contribute to the achievement of the GW objectives and expected results, building up on its past and ongoing support and taking advantage of the conclusions and recommendations of the recently concluded International Great Green Wall Conference, held in Dakar, Senegal, in May 2016 as well as of the forthcoming Conference on Climate Change.

¹ Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan.

² www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification

³ Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal

Confirmed Speakers

- Mr José Graziano Da Silva, Director-General, FAO
- Mr René Castro, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, FAO
- His Excellency Ahmat Mahamat Bachir, Minister for Environment, Water, & Fisheries, Chad (will speak on behalf of the Chair of the African Union)
- His Excellency Batio Bassière, Ministre de l'environnement, de l'économie verte et du changement climatique, Burkina Faso
- *His Excellency H.E Kebede Yimam, State Minister, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Federal Republic of Ethiopia*
- Her Excellency Amina J. Mohammed, Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigeria
- His Excellency Hassan Abdel Gadir Hilal, Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Physical Development, Sudan
- *Mr Mady M'Heidy Taleb, Secretary General, Ministry for Environment and Sustainable Development, Mauritania*
- Mr Papa Waly Gueye, Director General, National Agency of the Great Green Wall, on behalf of the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development in Senegal
- Ms Maria-Helena Semedo, Deputy Director General, Coordinator Natural Resources