

Partnerships WIRE



PARTNERSHIPS
for **SUSTAINABLE**
DEVELOPMENT

6 May 2008

CSD-16 Partnerships Fair

UNHQ, New York

WHY PARTNERSHIPS ARE CRITICAL IN ADDRESSING DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT?

CSD-16 Partnerships Fair discussing why partnerships are critical in addressing desertification and drought. (L-R) Marc Paquin, IEPF and Médiaterre; Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, UNCCD; Dirk Pilari (Chair) DSD/ UNDESA; Friederike Knabe, Unisféra; Michael Madjera, COMPETE.



Dirk Pilari of the Division for Sustainable Development opened the thematic session on why partnerships are critical in addressing desertification and drought. Speaking to the audience, Mr. Pilari outlined that partnerships should be viewed as a development tool, and as opportunities to share experience and best practices among different stakeholders.

Commencing proceedings, **Marc Pacquin**, representing Médiaterre, a CSD registered Partnership for Sustainable Development, and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, and the Institut de l'Énergie et de l'Environnement de la Francophonie (IEPF) stressed that his presentation would focus on the Francophonie's Sustainable Land Management and Desertification Partnership initiatives.

Following a brief account of the organization, **Mr. Pacquin** outlined the 10 year Strategic Plan of the organization, which is based on four main objectives:

- ◆ Promote the French language, linguistic, and cultural diversity;
- ◆ Promote peace, democracy, and human rights;
- ◆ Support education, training, and research;
- ◆ Support a development that is sustainable.

Mr. Pacquin noted that Médiaterre, a French language web portal that hosts information on sustainable development is built on both informal and formal partnerships, and permits partners to exchange information and showcase best

Inside Partnerships WIRE

THEMATIC DISCUSSION 1
Why partnership are critical in addressing desertification and drought?

What's on tomorrow? 1
THEMATIC DISCUSSION
- 7 May 2008

Partnership Presentations 5

Information Desks 7

Key points highlighted during the session 8

Wednesday, 7 May 2008
3pm - 5.30pm

Partnership solutions to Africa's development challenges: what types of partnerships and partners may Africa need?

- ◆ Cosmas Gitta, UNDP
- ◆ Kaddu K. Sebunya, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)
- ◆ Dr. Abdallah Rattal, Government of Morocco



practices to the burgeoning French-speaking web audience. He continued by stressing the importance of having a dedicated web portal focusing on development issues in French, advancing that it is critical for the Francophonie to keep abreast with new developments in sustainable development policy and practice. To underscore this point, **Mr. Pacquin** presented a Google results page from the previous day, which highlighted the primacy of Médiaterre on sustainable development issues in French. In a similar Google search test for desertification issues in French, Médiaterre also led the results. **Mr. Pacquin** emphasized that the website had become a central element of the partnership, and in order to bridge the digital divide, the web portal was programmed with a low speed production, which is critical, given



Marc Pacquin (left), representing Médiaterre and the IEPF, presents the Francophonie's Sustainable Land Management and Desertification Partnership Initiatives.

Médiaterre is an important website for the Francophonie to keep abreast with new developments in sustainable development

Marc Pacquin

that many of the Francophonie are based in economically disadvantaged African countries. Commenting on how the success of the website is measured, **Mr. Pacquin** opined that the basic premise was for the website to provide accurate and current information on sustainable development issues. He noted that on average, over 1,000 web pages are read daily on the Médiaterre website. Briefly turning to the Francophonie Networks on Sustainable Land and Forest Management, Land Degradation and Desertification, Mr. Pacquin highlighted that partners included a network of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification francophone country Focal Points, and other francophone stakeholders. Similarly to Médiaterre's objective, the aim of this partnership is to share information and develop capacity-building through partnerships to a francophonie audience. **Mr. Pacquin** outlined that tools had grown to include a website, list-serv and events held in conjunction with international meetings. In concluding his presentation, **Mr. Pacquin** identified five key lessons learned, which are highlighted in Table 1.



Participants at the thematic session on partnerships and desertification and drought.

Table 1: Francophonie's Partnership Initiatives - Key Lessons Learned, Marc Pacquin

- ◆ Importance of breaking the isolation of Southern partners through their involvement in networks and partnerships;
- ◆ Importance of bridging the electronic divide;
- ◆ Importance of bridging the language divide;
- ◆ Importance of South-South partnerships;
- ◆ Importance of linking policy makers, academics/scientists and actors on the ground.



Michael Madjera (left), presenting the work of the COMPETE partnership.

Representing the Competence Platform on Energy and Agroforestry Systems for Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems Africa (COMPETE) partnership, **Michael Madjera** opened his presentation by stating that partnerships thrive on common interests and the inter-exchange of bringing different interests and experiences together. Following a brief explanation of the partnership's aims, and an outline of the 44 partners that are drawn from Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia, in addition to international organisations, such as the Food and Agricultural Organization, **Mr. Madjera** introduced the project and in particular his work, which focuses on studying renewable energy and policy structures for the production of energy crops and biofuels in Sub Saharan Africa.

Mr. Madjera's work is at the heart of COMPETE's mandate, which aims to establish a platform for policy dialogue and capacity building, and to identify pathways for a sustainable provision of bio-energy, in a quest to stimulate economic development. Outlining the approach of the partnership, **Mr. Madjera** stressed the importance of establishing a good understanding between all partners, based on all partners being transparent, and expressing clear expectations of each partner's contribution. In addition, all partners should agree to the partnership's aims. **Mr. Madjera** also noted that it was critical for the partnership to identify each actor's interests. By way of illustration, he noted that in desertification and drought situations, the interests of affected countries' may be the improved living conditions of rural people. In contrast, a development actor's interest may be a desire to reduce troubled hot spots.

In drafting a partnership's policy, the initial deficit should be analyzed and considered, in addition to the positive and negative side effects

Michael Madjera

Emphasizing the lessons learned from the Partnership, **Mr. Madjera** remarked that it was vital for all partnerships to be based on sound policy. In drafting such a policy, he stressed that it should follow a certain process:

1. Complete initial analysis to ascertain the deficit;
2. Any deficit identified should be considered in the final outcome;
3. Anticipate both positive and negative side effects.

Mr. Madjera concluded that addressing desertification and drought issues through production of energy crops would require close and strong partnerships between industrial and developing countries. He remarked that the partnership would need to be flexible to accommodate the diverging interests of the partners, especially in light of differing economic positions, technological standards and cultural backgrounds. In summing up, **Mr. Madjera** highlighted that partnerships should be based on common respect amongst partners.



Mrs. **Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist** of The Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification opened her presentation by highlighting the mandate of The Global Mechanism. She drew special attention to the Mechanism’s partnership-building work, which helps the Mechanism structure in their dialogue and learning, identify potential sources of funding, and facilitate agreements to finance.

Drawing briefly on the Development Cooperation architecture that places importance on partnerships, in particular, the Paris Declaration, Monterey Consensus and the One UN reform, **Mrs. Barsk-Rundquist** outlined that partnerships are crucial in addressing desertification and drought issues, as well as the MDGs. She noted the importance of bringing diverse actors together and informed participants that the Mechanism has successfully worked in partnership with the BBC to produce a documentary to mark the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.



Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist gives her presentation on “Partnerships for Financing: The experience of the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD”.

Partnerships should remember to seek non-traditional partner involvement

Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist

Commenting on the different types of partnerships the Global Mechanism pursues, namely; regional partnerships; public-private partnerships; and partnerships based on financing, she stressed the various challenges faced by partnerships, for example: the need to measure effectiveness and the impact of the partnership; and issues concerning, management, governance, coordination, replication, up-scaling, and ensuring the sustainability of a partnership. Drawing on the experience of the Mechanism’s partnerships, she put forth various lessons learned, which can be found in Table 2.

Responding to questions from the floor, **Mrs. Barsk-Rundquist** highlighted that the Global Mechanism has found it challenging to engage the private sector in relation to drought issues. She closed by noting that the private sector was increasingly turning to the UN and other development actors for policy recommendations concerning biofuels, and its sustainability implications.

Table 2: Lessons Learned by the Global Mechanism, Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist

- ◆ Partnership building and mainstreaming is lengthy, but essential components for resource mobilization and increasing investments;
- ◆ Patience and perseverance is required when dealing with “land” issues; land issues are not usually “quick win” or “low hanging fruit”;
- ◆ Partnerships require strong advocacy, political will, and country ownership and commitment;
- ◆ Institutional actors should be proactively involved with the partnership;
- ◆ Partnerships require strong communication and coordination mechanisms;
- ◆ Partnerships should remember to seek non-traditional partner involvement.



Ms. **Friederike Knabe** began her presentation by highlighting how the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) works in partnership. In short, the UNCCD pursues partnerships as an implementation tool, and fosters partnerships across all levels, namely; local, national, regional and cross-regional. Civil Society actors are integral to the UNCCD partnerships and are active in all three types of partnership pursued by the UNCCD:

1. Partnerships with NGOs , e.g. with farmers in dryland regions of Africa;
2. Partnerships with networks, e.g. Réseau International des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental Sur Désertification;
3. Multistakeholder partnerships, e.g. Unisféra.

While the work on partnerships requires many common elements, each type of partnership requires a special approach. Using several case studies from Canada, **Ms. Knabe** noted the main elements that stimulate successful multistakeholder partnerships, which can be viewed in Table 3.



Friederike Knabe of UNISFÉRA makes her presentation on why partnerships are critical in addressing desertification and drought.

Civil Society actors are integral to the UNCCD partnerships

Friederike Knabe

Table 3: Common elements required for Multistakeholder Partnerships, Friederike Knabe

- ◆ Common vision;
- ◆ Equitable partners;
- ◆ Capacity strengthening, and sharing of expertise;
- ◆ Local adaptation of approaches.

Ms. Knabe noted that considerable effort at the beginning of the partnership formulation was needed to establish the objectives of the partnership. She stressed that it was important for partnerships to be aware of both the challenges and opportunities facing their work, in order to be effective. Highlighting the challenges faced by partnerships, she emphasized that establishing trust and equal participation of all partners are important factors to overcome. Similarly, partnerships based on networks need to ensure that there is intuitional buy-in of the common vision from each actor, and that there are accountability structures imposed. In addition, it is necessary for network partnerships to secure financial independence, and agreement of the transitional path.

Ms. Knabe expressed that there are many benefits and opportunities emanating from partnerships, especially partnerships that deal with cross-cutting developmental issues. **Ms. Knabe** noted that it was crucial for partnerships to think about their sustainability and set a common strategy that considers the capacity and interests of all partners. This is of primary concern for multistakeholder partnerships. In conclusion, **Ms. Knabe** remarked that partnerships should adopt a holistic approach, and endeavour to be led from the bottom-up. Partnerships would also benefit from considering the gender dimensions in their processes, and ensure that all affected stakeholders are given opportunities to voice their interests and concerns.



The first CSD-registered partnership presentation was opened by Douglas McGuire, Coordinator of the **International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (Mountain Partnership)** who provided a brief history of the partnership and its evolution. Following, Rosalaura Romeo, Programme Officer of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat explained the Mountain Products Programme, which essentially promotes high-quality mountain products, such as saffron and slow food products, whose production does not harm, but rather protects the local biodiversity. Importantly, production of such products provides an important economic base, which is commonly lacking in these areas. The Mountain Partnership also works with the private sector, namely, Dean's Beans Organic Coffee Company.



L-R: Presenters representing the Mountain Partnership - Pier Carlo Sandei (UNEP), Douglas McGuire (Mountain Partnership), Rosalaura Romeo (Mountain Partnership), Carlos Cattaneo (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Argentina).

Providing a UNEP perspective, Pier Carlo Sandei explained UNEP's role, which analyses the environmental aspects of activities in mountain regions, as well as carrying out work on the Alpine and Carpathian conventions. In answering why regional conventions are important and why additional activities are necessary for mountain regions, Mr Sandei opined that such regulatory frameworks can establish concrete implementation processes. Moving on to tourism issues, he noted that there had been a study carried out by the OECD on the consequences of climate change on tourism in the Alpine region. In short, the study suggested that economic activities in the region may have to change and diversify, owing to significant changes in the local temperature. Lastly, Carlos Cattaneo, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Argentina, briefed the audience on a regional mountain project in the Andes called the Andean Initiative, which advocates for a more strategic approach to mountain development in the region. Wrapping up the Mountain Partnership's presentation, Douglas McGuire stressed that a cohesive 'mountain approach', with a strong civil society presence is required for addressing mountain issues.

Economic activities in Alpine regions may have to change and diversify, owing to changes in the local temperature

International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (Mountain Partnership)

Ms. Ana Maria Arumi from the M. A. Math, a U.N. affiliated NGO began her presentation by outlining the **Farmer's Relief Project**, a recently registered CSD Partnership for Sustainable Development. She noted the growing number of suicides within the farming population, both in the global North and South, and highlighted that some of the reasons behind this increase were increasing costs of pesticides and fertilizers along with, until recently, decreasing food prices. Emphasizing the speed at which a farmer could go from self-sustainability to significant debt due to the lack of control over weather, disease, government policies, she followed by referring to UN studies which have suggested that the handling of pesticides by farmers could increase the risk of depression, as reports have indicated that pesticides often contain neurotoxins.



Ms. Ana Maria Arumi (left) from the Farmer's Relief Project, a recent CSD-registered partnership.

A lack of training on the proper handling of pesticides was also put forth as a factor further exacerbating such risk.

In response to the issue, the partnership has given stipends to the children of farmer widows, which has enabled them to continue their education. Specific training, tapping into the needs of the local population, in addition to provision of start-up capital, such as sowing machines, have also been offered to widows, in an attempt to help them develop a skill and income. Ms. Arumi stressed the crucial relationship between the government and NGOs in tackling this problem, expressing that it was a politically sensitive issue for the government to tackle alone.

The interaction with NGOs has offered a way for the government to approach the issue, and the partnership arrangement, bringing together diverse partners. This has assisted in fostering awareness among a wide population. Ms. Arumi concluded by expressing her hope that the issue would benefit from greater public awareness during the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, noting that this issue was not a problem for India alone.

The vulnerability of farmers in the global North and South requires international attention

Farmer's Relief Project



Thomas Gillespie of the University of Illinois, USA, presenting the work of the Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Agriculture (EHSA) partnership.

The Baltic 21 delegation, on behalf of the **Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Agriculture (EHSA)** partnership offered a lively presentation on the situation of the Baltic Sea, highlighting both the environmental achievements made in the region, as well as the problems that are still to be tackled, such as eutrophication. The Baltic University Programme is a network of 220 universities and institutes of higher learning, comprising of 14 countries in the Baltic Sea Basin; 14 regional centres with activities in the fields of education; and research, information and outreach activities. The main aim of the Baltic 21 Agriculture Sector is education and training, and a new educational course at the university level on sustainable development, agriculture and ecosystem health is presently being developed.

Partnerships WIRE



PARTNERSHIPS
for **SUSTAINABLE**
DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Christine Jakobsson, Director of the Baltic University Programme in Uppsala University, Sweden, noted that many of these problems are shared with the Great Lakes region of the USA. This became the primary reason for cooperation and knowledge exchange between the two regions.

During the presentation, presenters stressed the importance of the partnership taking an ecosystem approach to tackling the challenges of the Baltic Sea, which is based on maintaining the functions of the ecosystem in its entirety. Given the current rise in food prices, and the increasing tracts of land that are being farmed, the problem of eutrophication may be exacerbated. Mr. Leif Norrgren of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala and both Val Beasley and Thomas Gillespie of the University of Illinois, USA, provided an overview of some important historical and current animal health problems, which reports have identified as originating from man-made environmental pollution, such as DDT and some pharmaceuticals. The presenters noted that climate change and increased water temperatures could incidentally lead to a rise in invasive species.

Concluding the presentation, the presenters remarked that they anticipated that the university course being prepared would assist in raising awareness and knowledge in this area.

The following partnerships had an Information Desk at the Partnerships Fair, CSD-16

- ◆ *International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions*
- ◆ *Farmer's Relief Project*

Participation up-date:
50 participants attended today's
thematic discussion

Partnerships WIRE

was published by the CSD Partnerships
Team for the Partnerships Fair, CSD-16

Editors:

- Patricia Chaves, Senior Sustainable
Development Officer, DSD
- Désirée Abrahams, Associate Sustainable
Development Officer, DSD

Contributors:

- Yolanda Salazar, DSD
- Antonia Hjort, DSD

Tel: +1 917 367 2089/ 4254

Fax: +1 917 367 2341

E-mail: beyondwssd@un.org

Web: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships

Key points highlighted during the session

- ◆ Linguistic, language, and cultural diversity on sustainable development issues should be maintained and promoted;
- ◆ Partnerships should be based on sound policy; such policies should identify each partner's expectations, and contribution to the partnership's aims;
- ◆ Partnerships should define clear and concrete objectives and mandates, and ensure that these are agreed with all partners and stakeholders;
- ◆ All stakeholders should have an equal voice;
- ◆ Partnerships should be mindful and consider the gender dimension;
- ◆ Partnerships require resource mobilization and increased investments;
- ◆ Patience and perseverance is required when working on land issues;
- ◆ Partners forming partnerships should explore working with non-traditional partners.