

**3rd Meeting of the Board
for**

the Nairobi Global Policy Centre Programme for 2015-2020:

“Advancing global thinking and knowledge sharing on inclusive and sustainable development in drylands and other fragile ecosystems”

Wednesday, 21 February 2018, 14:30-16:30

Venue: UNCCD Secretariat, Bonn, Germany

Meeting Summary

I. BACKGROUND

The Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification (GC-RED) was constituted in October 2014, building on the achievements of the former Drylands Development Center. GC-RED's substantive focus covers the following areas of work: a) Sustainable management of renewable natural capital for optimal livelihoods and jobs creation, with a focus on the poorest communities; and b) Ensuring social and ecological resilience in drylands and other fragile ecosystems. The GC-RED Programme for 2015-2020 is structured into 2 components:

1. The GC-RED core component which integrates activities on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and resilience building; and
2. The BES-NET component, or the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Network, which covers activities on biodiversity and ecosystems management.

The objectives of the 3rd Meeting of the Board were to:

- Review GC-RED Programme activities completed in 2017 and provide feedback on achievements and challenges encountered;
- Approve the GC-RED Programme workplan and budget for 2018;
- Guide GC-RED's partnership building and resource mobilization efforts; and
- Provide overall guidance and strategic direction to the GC-RED Programme.

The following agenda was established for the meeting:

14:30 Overview of the Centre Programme and Presentation of Annual Report

- Overview of the Centre Programme 2015-2020
- Presentation of the 2017 Annual Report
- Discussion with Board Members

15:15 Presentation of 2018 Work Plan & Discussion

- Presentation of Annual Work Plan for 2018
- Feedback from and Endorsement by Board Members

15:45 Strategic Guidance from the Board on the Way forward

- Substantive Focus
- Partnerships and Resource Mobilization

16:15 Conclusions

II. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

The following decisions (D) and recommendations (R) were shared by the Board:

D1: The 2017 Annual Report was endorsed (See Annex I).

D2: The 2018 Work Plan was approved (See Annex II).

R1: Continue investing in the strong partnerships established by GC-RED to maintain/enhance the effective delivery of the Programme (e.g. UNCCD, IPBES and GIZ outside UNDP as well as Regional Service Centers and Country Offices within UNDP).

R2: Ensure a better synergy between the different activities of GC-RED, for example:

- Connect the ELD network to the work of the Poverty-Environment Initiative on the valuation of ecosystem services, including cost/benefit analysis of land restoration;
- Leverage GC-RED's expertise on the UNCCD and LDN to support BES-NET activities regarding the IPBES Thematic Assessment on Land Degradation and Restoration.

R3: Better align GC-RED's resource mobilization efforts with the workplans and priorities of its key partners, for example:

- With the UNCCD, IPBES and GIZ on sustainable land management and restoration;
- With the UNCCD and UN Women on gender mainstreaming.

III. SUMMARY OF THE MEETING

Participants

Board Members

- Mr. Tim Scott, Senior Policy Advisor, Natural Capital, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP (Chair)
- Mr. Mansour Ndiaye, Team Leader, Sustainable Development, Regional Service Center for Africa, UNDP (could not attend, submitted written comments)
- Mr. Richard Mwendandu, Director, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya (could not attend, submitted written comments)

Partners

- Mr. Rajeb Boulharouf, Chief of Staff, UNCCD Secretariat, Bonn, Germany
- Mr. Mark Schaeur, Manager, Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative, and representing the Government of Germany
- Ms. Barbara Bendandi, Policy Specialist, UNCCD Secretariat, Bonn, Germany

Secretary

- Ms. Anne Juepner, Director, GC-RED, UNDP

Rapporteur

- Mr. Elie Kodji, Senior Technical Advisor, GC-RED, UNDP

Unable to participate

- Ms. Amanda Serumaga, Country Director, UNDP Kenya

2017 Annual Report Highlights

The GC-RED Director briefed on the background of GC-RED, its current programme and key results achieved during this reporting period. In 2017, the Centre implemented a total portfolio of USD 8.25 million delivered under three separate projects (i.e. GC-RED; PEI; IDDP). Over USD 7.2 million in non-core resources were received during this year to support the implementation of these projects. GC-RED expects to implement a portfolio of more than USD 23 million over the next 3 years. While this financial outlook may look impressive, GC-RED is affected by a continuously challenging international aid environment and reduced core funding. This means that it should continue to be vigorous in its resource mobilization efforts to be able to sustain the work of the Centre.

The Board commended GC-RED for its significant achievements in 2017, particularly its effective contribution to the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD (COP13), which resulted in excellent visibility and positioned the Centre as a valued partner for global work on sustainable land management and restoration. In a letter to the UNDP Administrator, the UNCCD Executive Secretary acknowledged that the significant achievements of COP13 were made possible by UNDP's contribution and the support provided through GC-RED.

The need to maintain the growing momentum of the LDN agenda was highlighted, with increasing focus on helping countries implement their LDN targets to achieve land degradation neutrality (SDG Target 15.3) by 2030. The Board acknowledged the strong partnerships established on LDN and invited GC-RED to continue investing in them to support its work on sustainable land management and restoration. GC-RED should explore the possibility of linking its ELD expertise/network to the work of the Poverty-Environment Initiative on the valuation of ecosystem services, including the cost/benefit analysis of land restoration.

The Board recognized the important progress achieved under the BES-NET component during this reporting period. The First Regional Dialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development represents a good practice for facilitating dialogue and action among scientists, policy-makers and practitioners. The experience gained should be used to organize future regional dialogues, including on the IPBES Thematic Assessment on Land Degradation and Restoration. The Government of Kenya expressed its interest to co-host the Regional Dialogue for Anglophone Africa on Land Degradation and Restoration. The Board stressed that GC-RED should build on its expertise in sustainable land management, LDN and UNCCD implementation to support the delivery of this work.

The Centre's work on resilience building was effectively delivered in 2017, including the substantive contribution to UNDP's policy on resilient recovery and development, the implementation of resilience assessments in Malawi using the Community Based Resilience Analysis (CoBRA) tool developed by the Centre, and the technical support provided for the implementation of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Syria and Lebanon. In recognition of the reduced number of staff, the Board advised GC-RED to take greater advantage of broader resources available within UNDP at global and regional levels to enhance the effectiveness of its work on resilience.

Presentation of 2018 Work Plan & Discussion

The GC-RED Director presented the Centre's 2018 AWP together with the latest organogram. The alignment of the Centre's work with the new UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 (SP) is captured in this workplan. Building on its mandate, on-going work and available project resources, the Centre will contribute to the three SP outcomes, namely: Outcome 1 – Eradicate Poverty in all its forms; Outcome 2 – Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development; and Outcome 3 – Build resilience to shocks and crisis. Specifically, the Centre's activities will feed into the achievement of the

following SP Outputs: 1.1.1 (Mainstreaming 2030 Agenda); 1.4.1 (Scaling-up NRM Solutions); 2.4.1 (NRM Policies and Institutions); 3.1.1 (Crisis Recovery); and 3.3.1 (Resilience Preparedness).

The Board endorsed the 2018 workplan while requesting to include a short narrative on the Centre's partnerships (both within and outside UNDP) to support the delivery of intended activities, and better reflect the Centre's engagement in global UNDP endeavors (e.g. substantive input - as possible - to major events, SDG/MAPs missions and Nature-Based Solutions Group initiatives).

Strategic Guidance from the Board on the Way forward

The GC-RED Director outlined key resource mobilization efforts ongoing and planned during 2018 as part of the 2018 AWP (Please see Annex 3: GC-RED Resource Mobilization Strategy and Action Plan). Board Members provided insightful comments on where they see potential opportunities for the Centre: e.g. support towards LDN implementation; expanding BES-NET activities; and support to resilience building based on the Centre's on-going work on CoBRA and the Syria crisis. The Board encouraged the Centre to pursue these and other innovative opportunities pro-actively in 2018.