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Directorate of Information and Communication

Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative

An African Alliance contributing to a land degradation neutral world

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Windhoek, Namibia, 20 September 2013- In the margin of the Eleventh Conference of Parties to the United Nations Conference to Combat Desertification (UNCCD-COP11), the African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the FAO and Global Mechanism of the UNCCD held a joint side event on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) on 20 September 2013 in Windhoek, Namibia.

The GGWSSI meeting under the theme, *an African Alliance contributing to a land degradation neutral world*, has been focused on promoting integrated land management to address the challenges of land degradation, poverty alleviation and improved livelihood in the Sahel and the Sahara zones of the continent.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Kaid Simane, Ambassador of Democratic People's Republic of Algeria to Namibia and attended by representatives from the African Union Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency.

Representing the African Union Commission, Mr. Almami Dampha, Policy Officer, Forestry and Sustainable Land Management the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission highlighted activities at the regional level, which support national and sub-regional actions for the implementation of the GGWSSI. "Regional activities aim at harnessing the collective capacities of countries and communities. They are beyond the political mandate and technical or financial capability of one country and thus allow the pooling of various kinds of resources to address the common issues such as, pastoralism; water resource management; illegal trade in forest and wild products; and bushfire management", he said.

Mr. Dampha emphasized the complementarity, and strong support of the national level activities for the effectiveness of regional activities. The synergy between regional and national level activities leads to the amplification of impact and attainment of the global objectives of regional programmes, he added.

He also underscored the importance of partnership in providing the necessary expertise and financial resources for the national programme implementation. The partnership of GGWSSI has played a vital role in some specific areas including, the elaboration of regional harmonized strategy; capacity development strategy;

communication strategy; and knowledge management and sharing platform, he pointed out.

On his part Mr. Stephen Danyo, the World Bank Senior Natural Resource Management Specialist in the Africa Region, expressed the happiness of the Bank to be part of the GGWSSI partnership programme. “The World Bank has great potential to scale up sustainable landscape management programme”, he added.

The World Bank has allocated 1Billion USD through World Bank/GEF Sahel and West Africa Program (SAWAP) in support of the Great Green Wall Initiative.

The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) is a pan-African programme launched in 2007 by the African Union (AU). Its goal is to address land degradation and desertification in the Sahel and Sahara, boost food security, and support communities to adapt to climate change. GGWSSI is Africa’s flagship programme for meeting the Rio+20 objective of a land degradation neutral world.

Further information:

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