



Directorate of Information and Communication

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AFRICAN GREAT GREEN WALL: A FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME REPRESENTING AFRICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF NEUTRAL LAND DEGRADATION

Doha, 05 December 2012 – What are the achievements reached so far to operationalize the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel (GGWSSI) and what are the best ways and means to attract more donors and boost the implementation of the initiative? These two major questions and some others were at the heart of a side event on the GGWSSI, organised at the margins of CoP18, on Tuesday 5 December 2012, in Doha, Qatar.

The side event organised by the African Union Commission in partnership with European Union (EU), Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy of France, UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the GEF Secretariat, the World Bank and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification Global Mechanism (GM-UNCCD), sought to build a wider collaborative partnership/or alliance with the key stakeholders with a view to accelerating the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative of the African Union.

Although challenges persist, some good news was stated.

“Two projects, covering 13 countries are on-going, elaborating national action plans, a regional harmonized strategy, as well as a knowledge management and best practices sharing platform”, underscored Mrs. **Rhoda Peace Tumusiime**, African Union **Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture**, adding, “The thrust to mobilize resources has been hinged on these milestones”.

Commissioner Tumusiime said, “The work done by the African Union Commission and its partners have paved the way for field investments by the World Bank through its Sahel and West Africa Programme. To date, only this initiative of the World Bank supports field interventions”, stressed the Commissioner.

She recalled that the 14th session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment decided to consider the Great Green Wall as a flagship programme representing Africa's contribution to the achievement of neutral land degradation. At the same time, there was recognition that this endeavour would bolster Africa's commitments towards climate change mitigation and adaptation. (See the full statement of Mrs. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace on African Union Web Site: www.au.int)

The GGWSSI is an African Union Programme supported by the EU, FAO and the GM-UNCCD, bringing together more than 20 countries from the Sahelo-Saharan, as well as regional and international organisations. It aims to halt the advancement of the Sahara desert and improve the livelihoods of people living in the Sahara desert and the Sahel. The programme seeks also to enhance the capacity of communities to improve their resilience to climate change and climate variability.

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