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Saving biodiversity by fighting desertification in West and Central Africa

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SAVING BIODIVERSITY BY FIGHTING DESERTIFICATION IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA



WORKING TOWARDS INTEGRATION OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS:
UNCCD, CBD AND UNFCCC



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SAVING BIODIVERSITY BY FIGHTING DESERTIFICATION IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

WORKING TOWARDS INTEGRATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS: UNCCD, CBD AND UNFCCC

RNSCC: the Regional Network for the Synergy between the
UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity,
and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,
a science-based network of CSOs in West and Central Africa

Editors:

Paul E. Loth - Theodore B. Mayaka - Hans H. de Jongh



RNSCC
Leiden – Maroua
2008

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Planning RNSCC Trust Fund activities in Natittingou, Benin, February 2007



RNSCC excursion in Lama Forest, Benin, February 2007

RNSCC, A NETWORK FOR SYNERGETIC ACTION: OUR VISION, OUR MISSION, OUR GOALS

RNSCC, the Regional Network for the Synergy between:

- the UN Convention to Combat Desertification,
 - the Convention on Biological Diversity, and
 - the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,
- a science-based network of CSOs in West and Central Africa.

OUR VISION

The three global Conventions dealing with the Earth's environment (UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC) have each generated phenomenal amounts of knowledge concerning their specific contexts: desertification, biodiversity and climate change respectively. The synergy of these bodies of knowledge will lead to optima of sustainable natural resource use while maintaining the biological diversity with minimal impact on the climate. The RNSCC translates this knowledge into projects at grass root level aiming at poverty alleviation.

OUR MISSION

RNSCC acts as a broker between the Secretariats of the UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC and the grass root level. RNSCC provides science-based insights on the synergy of these conventions to relevant West and Central African CSOs working at grass root level to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Reciprocally RNSCC provides the three Secretariats with grass root level examples validating theoretical options for the optimal use of natural resources.

OUR GOALS

- Maintain and expand the regional network of West and Central African CSOs (RNSCC) whose members are active at grass root level in activities that reflect upon natural resource use;
- Provide these network members access to science-based knowledge relevant to natural resource use, and referring to the deliberations of the three conventions;
- Assist the network members in implementing this knowledge at grass root level;
- Document and demonstrate the results of the network members to the global community.



Lunch during RNSCC meeting in Kribi, Cameroon, February 2006

For four years the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) funded the Regional Network for the Synergy between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in West and Central Africa (RNSCC). The thrust of the network is to assist its members in gaining access to global knowledge and funding networks that are connected to the synergy between the CBD and the UNCCD.

During their latest annual meeting in Maroua (North Cameroon) in February 2008, the network members decided that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) should be incorporated as the third leading theme for their network activities. In this way, the programme hopes to contribute to the multiple objectives of the Millennium Development Goals; poverty alleviation, sustainable land use, biodiversity protection, and climate change mitigation.



Mass transportation of firewood, Mali



Work session with traditional healers inside Pebunco botanical garden, Benin, October 2005

POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH SENSIBLE RESOURCE USE

2

In 1972 the Club of Rome shook the world by predicting that the limits of growth would soon be reached; within a few generations shortages would dictate mankind's future.

The Club of Rome sensitized the world about the negative consequences of over-stressing the environment, leading to the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, better known as the Brundtland Commission, promoting the concept of sustainable development. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, or the "Rio Earth Summit", formulated sustainable social and environmental development goals in *Agenda 21*. During the Rio Earth Summit three international treaties were launched: the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). These three conventions are especially relevant for safeguarding Africa's dry lands.

The Kyoto Protocol (held in Japan in 1997) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was recently followed-up by the Bali Mandate (Indonesia, 2007), reflected the world's concern about the effect of the emission of greenhouse gases on the climate.

These milestones mark the resolve of the global community to embark on sustainable development for the world's poor. The alarming effects of climate change have, however, drawn the world's attention away from the plight of the rural poor who eke out a living under unpredictable environmental circumstances. It can be feared that the living conditions in rural areas will further deteriorate precisely by the changes that occur in the climate.

Now, the need for bio-fuels further intensifies the competing claims on farming lands. Most importantly, however, carbon sequestration helps redressing the shifted CO₂ balance. Through the Ecosystem Approach the CBD offers tools for the management of ecosystems at the appropriate scale, thus ensuring the participation of local people at all relevant scales. All three conventions: CBD, UNCCD and the UNFCCC, are working towards the united goal to provide the needy of our planet with a brighter future.

ABOUT RNSCC: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN UN CONVENTIONS AND GRASS ROOT ACTION

3

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have in common several objectives (sustainable use of natural resources and the improvement of the living conditions of the poor) and requirements (research, reporting, training, and public education and awareness). Accordingly, the need for a synergy between these conventions has been aired oftentimes from different quarters. At Secretariat level, such a collaborative effort should lead to several benefits, including a relieved burden of multiple reporting, greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Yet in the day-to-day practice, this cooperation is hampered by many institutional, political and scientific factors. In West and Central Africa a major constraint is that, at grassroots level, civil society organisations (CSOs) are, to a large extent, absent from the global process of synergy between UNCCD, CBD, and UNFCCC. These constraints led to the creation of RNSCC: the Regional Network on the Synergy between CBD and UNCCD, and since this year, the UNFCCC in West and Central Africa.

The RNSCC programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Directorate General for International Coopera-

tion (DGIS), under the Thematic Co-financing Fund (TMF) scheme. The secretariat of the programme is at the Centre for Environment and Development Studies in Cameroon (CEDC), with technical support by the Institute of Environmental Sciences (CML) of Leiden University, the Netherlands.



Acacia-plantations combine desertification reversal with fodder and fuelwood production and nitrogen fixation, Green Senegal

The RNSCC network consists of network members and partners. Network partners are resource persons and resource institutions, which may contribute to the network with (scientific) information, logistics and funding. Network partners are invited to participate in Steering Committee meetings. The following network partners have been involved in the programme since its initiation:

- **The World Conservation Union (IUCN)** (through its Regional Offices for Central and West Africa);
- **WWF-CARPO** (Central Africa Regional Programme Office);
- **Laboratory of Applied Ecology** (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin);
- **BOTH Ends** (the Netherlands).

In November 2004, during the IUCN World Summit held in Bangkok, Thailand, several participating CSOs from West and Central Africa were invited to join the network under creation. Many other CSOs absent from that summit were later informed by electronic mail. By November, a core group of eight organisations had shown a real commitment to join the nascent network. This number was later brought up to thirteen during the international starter seminar in February 2005 in Maroua, Cameroon.



CFC encourages biodiversity conservation by rational use of natural resources, Congo



Studying soil fertility, CFC, Congo

*Member CSOs of the Regional Network on the Synergy between CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC in West and Central Africa (RNSCC).
For their contact details see page 29 - 30.*

Country	CSO	Mission
Benin	CERGET - Centre de Recherche pour la Gestion de la Biodiversité et du Terroir	Contribute to biodiversity protection and management, for sustainable development
Burkina Faso	AfESG - African Elephant Specialist Group - IUCN	Promote the long-term conservation of Africa's elephants throughout their range
	NATURAMA	Improve the living conditions of rural populations by promoting environmental and development ideals
Cameroon	APELD - Association pour la Protection de l'Environnement et la Lutte contre la Désertification	Promote sustainable natural resource management through alternate energy sources
	ENVIRO-PROTECT - International Association for the Protection of the Environment in Africa	Sensitise groups and individuals on issues related to environmental protection and sustainable development; and assist groups and individuals in solving environment and development problems
	WWF - Northern Sudanian Savannah Project	Conserve ecological processes to maintain biodiversity within political and institutional frameworks that promote sustainable NRM for economic development to improve people's livelihood
Chad	ACODE - Action et Développement pour la Coopération	Ensure economically vulnerable populations access to financial services, benefiting the poorest of the poor through providing savings, education, micro-credit, money transfers and financial training
Congo	CFC - Conservation de la Faune Congolaise	Contribute to information exchange, wildlife conservation, and rational use of natural resources

Country	CSO	Mission
Ghana	EPAG - Environmental Protection Association Ghana	Encourage, support and organise activities which promote sustainable environment in Ghana
	TBI Ghana - Tropenbos International	Develop guidelines for sustainable integrated natural resources management
Mali	AMCFE - Association Malienne pour la Conservation de la Faune et de l'Environnement	Promote local development mindful of biodiversity conservation
Niger	EIP - Ecole Instrument de Paix	Promote human rights, environmental education, initiatives in support of biological conservation and the fight against desertification, and the education of women and young girls
Senegal	Green Senegal	Contribute towards food security through the promotion of a sustainable agriculture, and environmental protection



Beekeeping as income generating activity, CERGET, Benin



Traditional medicines prepared with local plant species, CERGET, Benin



Shop of traditional medicines, Benin

Yearly meetings have been organized during which the RNSCC members convene, consisting of one-day *scientific seminars*, two-day *intervention meetings* and *training courses*, which usually lasted for a full week.

Renowned scientists highlighted the theme of each *scientific seminar* by delivering thought-provoking key-note presentations. Researchers from the region reported on the results of their studies, exemplifying the state of knowledge on the theme at hand (Box 1).

BOX 1 RNSCC International Scientific Seminars

The topic of the first seminar in 2005, *Synergy between CBD and UNCCD*, marked the launching of the Regional Network for the Synergy of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in West and Central Africa (RNSCC). A number of issues related to the synergy of UNCCD and CBD were discussed, dealing with conceptual, operational, technical and advocacy issues. A number of recommendations came forward from the presentations given by scientists and representatives of international NGOs concerned with conservation issues.

The topic of the 2006-seminar was *Community-Based Conservation of Natural Resources in Dry and Sub-humid Savannas*. This seminar brought together network partners, subject specialists, scientists, experts, and policy makers sharing scientific and technical knowledge in the light of practical experiences on the community-based approach of natural resources conservation and sustainable development. Speakers discussed co-management principles, processes, procedures and practical experiences as related to the CBD - UNCCD synergy.

In 2007, the topic of the seminar was *Ecosystem Restoration in Dry and Sub-humid Savannas*. This topic was chosen because little was known about the scope of this scientific discipline in sub-Saharan Africa. The presentations were indicative of three main restoration approaches, namely ecosystem restoration (and conservation), re-vegetation experiments, and land reclamation. The presentations gave a good overview of current restoration practices in West and Central Africa.

The topic for the 2008 seminar was *Management of Land and Resource Use Conflicts*. During the seminar the processes (political, social, economic) that lie beneath conflicts that are related to land and resource use were discussed, but also innovative ways to monitor, prevent, solve or simply mitigate such conflicts were brought to light.



Management meeting for a botanical garden, CERGET, Benin



Energy-efficient cooking stove, APELD, Cameroon



Making compost, AMCCE, Mali



Stake holder groups discussing elephant corridors, AfESG/IUCN, Burkina Faso



Demonstrating more energy-efficient cooking materials, APELD, Cameroon

The *inter-vision* meetings provide members with an opportunity for peer-to-peer exchange on field experiences. During the starter workshop in 2005, the SWOT analysis led to the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by the network members. This diagnosis was followed up by a reflection on possible RNSCC activities that could help network members alleviate their weaknesses and fully take advantage of the existing opportunities.

In the following years, the inter-vision meetings have continued to focus on the shared learning process. Also, these gatherings have provided the coordination unit, the network members and partners with an opportunity to refine and/or adjust the initial network activities and draw up a time frame for those activities, in a participatory manner.

A modest amount was yearly available to fund small projects by network members. The results of the Trust Fund activities are detailed in the following chapter.



Splendid view on the River Niger



Composting water hyacinth, EIP, Niger



Composted soil produces larger potatoes, EIP, Niger



Supporting local women marketing smoked fish, NATURAMA, Burkina Faso

The annual meetings included a *capacity building component*. Network members were trained on topics that had been identified during the first intervision meeting (Box 2).

BOX 2 RNSCC Training Courses

Training course on *Sustainable use of natural resources* (2005). The course consisted of four modules namely ecological processes, land use transition, CBD/UNCCD related activities, and study cases. The first module examined the ecological processes that are affected by land degradation, when natural resources are used unwisely. The second module focused on the land use changes that are triggered by environmental degradation as well as socio-political processes, while the third module delved into the types of actions that can be envisaged within the frame of the Rio conventions in order to remedy biodiversity loss and desertification. The last module gave the network members the opportunity to present their activities in relation to the thematic issues of CBD and UNCCD conventions.

The topic of the 2006-training course, *Project management*, came forth from a SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analysis that had been carried out during the meeting the previous year. Lectures were given on management cycle, indicators and feed back, monitoring and financial reporting, evaluation and formulating activity plans.

In 2007, a training course on *Environment Impact Assessment* was given. Most, if not all network members are involved in field projects that may have unforeseen consequences for the functioning of the ecosystems they are working in. The course provided the network members the technical know-how on how to assess the impact of their activities in the field.

The *People and Pixels* course provided examples of the use of remote sensing and GPS for human-wildlife conflict management (2008). During a one-day seminar examples were provided on how changes in land cover form can be monitored by using satellite data, and how information gathered by Global Positioning Systems (GPS) can assist in the analysis of animal movements, be it livestock or wildlife.



Jatropha curcas seedlings, ENVIRO-PROTECT, Cameroon



Community anti-erosion project, ENVIRO-PROTECT, Cameroon



Jatropha curcas hedges, ENVIRO-PROTECT, Cameroon



Reforestation project, ENVIRO-PROTECT, Cameroon

The aim of the Regional Network for the Synergy between the CBD, the UNCCD, and the UNFCCC in West and Central Africa (RNSCC) is to contribute to the triple objective of poverty alleviation, land use sustainability and biodiversity protection. The RNSCC members carry out a vast array of activities inherent to the thematic synergy between the CBD and the UNCCD, and, in the near future, the UNFCCC. A trust fund with an annual amount of initially € 50,000 (later reduced to € 42,000) was set up in order to support such activities undertaken by RNSCC's network members towards the achievement of the objectives of the network.

These activities are often intertwined and come under several broad themes including, among others, the following.

- *Biodiversity conservation*, notable examples in this respect include assistance to the management of protected areas; projects in favour of threatened medicinal plants in northern Benin; projects to eradicate the water hyacinth, an invasive species that threatens the biological diversity of the River Niger Ecosystem, in Niger.
- *Fight against desertification*, mainly through several reforestation activities that are carried out with the participation of local communities in almost all member countries; this activity may either



A cooking demonstration using a solar stove, APELD, Cameroon

be restorative (reclaiming degraded lands) or preventive (setting up community forest reserves and botanical gardens).

- *Sustainable natural resources management*, through the promotion of land use forms that maintain the livelihood basis of rural populations over several generations.
- *Environmental protection*, this group of activities involve, among many other things, sanitation, processing of domestic wastes (used to make compost), the promotion of technologies based on alternative sources of energy (*i.e.*, eco-stoves and solar drier) to ease the human pressure on forested lands.
- *Research and training*, carried out in collaboration with research and learning institutions in order to gain appreciation on the functioning of savanna ecosystems, and using research projects to train future scientists. Specific activities include on-site monitoring of impact of project interventions.
- *Education and awareness rising*, network members are actively involved in sensitising several target groups (school children, women, opinion leaders, decision makers, etc.) on environmental protection and other related issues. A wide variety of approaches are used in this regard, including formal and informal education, workshops, and cultural events, amongst others.
- *Communication*, this activity is mostly concerned with the gathering, processing, repackaging, and dissemination of scientific information in order to promote the uptake of successful solutions.

- *Capacity building* to assist action groups in their development and conservation endeavours; the assistance can be either financial (allocation of small grants) or technical (*e.g.*, knowledge transfer, skill improvement, assistance in proposal writing and review, etc.).

As said earlier, the RNSCC trust fund has served to finance partially or entirely projects executed by the members. The projects should provide an example of the synergy of the CBD and UNCCD, with a clear capacity building component. The projects should also be directed at poverty alleviation, while promoting gender balance.



Tree plantation protected by an elder tree, EIP, Niger

All network members had executed one or more projects funded by the RNSCC trust fund. In the initial year, there was competitive bidding for funding, but this was redressed as a result of the intervention meeting the following year. It was agreed that each network member should get the opportunity to partake in a project so that the members could exchange their experiences.

ACODE – Chad (2005 - 2007)

The emphasis of ACODE's projects was on educating people on sustainable resource use, while specific training was given on the sustainable use of non-timber forest products. ACODE facilitated the foundation of stakeholder groups to safeguard the biodiversity in the small pockets of humid forest. Raising welfare through income generating projects is part of ACODE's strategy to counteract deforestation, and ACODE provided training on micro-project management. For these projects ACODE received € 13,000 from RNSCC.

AfESG African Elephant Specialist Group IUCN – Burkina Faso (2005, 2007)

Elephant corridors in southern Burkina Faso are threatened by expansion of farm land and settlements around wildlife conservation areas. The objective of the RNSCC funded project was organising a three-day workshop as a forum where stakeholders (local communi-



'Tie and Dye' project, EPAG, Ghana

ties, traditional and state authorities) could draw up, in a participatory manner, management plans for the existing corridors. A follow-up project consisted of organizing an evaluation and monitoring workshop on the management of the elephant corridors and the impact of it on trans-frontier elephant movement in NE Ghana. The project had a total budget of € 12,000, entirely funded by RNSCC.

AMCFE – Mali (2005 - 2008)

AMCFE operates in the last intact wooded savannah area in Mali, adjacent to the Bafing Wildlife Reserve, harboring the only chimpanzee population of the country. The reserve is threatened because

deteriorating socio-economic conditions force the people to enter the reserve to collect resources (food, medicinal plants, and construction material) for their own use and for trading. Uncontrolled bush fires threaten economically valuable trees, which are used for instance for timber or for making palm wine. Project activities include sensitizing the population on the use of fire, improving palm wine exploitation, and providing bicycles to village guards to facilitate patrolling for bush fires. An exchange program with Burkinabé palm wine producers was one of the activities in the project. RNSCC financed the project with €12,000.



Results of the 'Tie and Dye' project, EPAG, Ghana

APELD – Cameroon (2005, 2006)

APELD's priority laid in strengthening its own capacity. Staff members were trained on project planning, project management, monitoring and evaluation, and accountancy. RNSCC supported the capacity-building efforts of the organization with € 4,000.

CERGET Centre de Recherche pour la Gestion de la Biodiversité et du Terroir – Benin (2005 - 2008)

Tree species are threatened in the sub-humid zone of Benin due to overexploitation (as fire wood, medicine, food, etc.), and other incident human activities (agriculture, grazing, bushfires, etc.). The project aimed at conserving threatened endemic tree species for medicinal use. The project established a network of local botanical gardens, trained women's groups for the maintenance of the gardens, and provided the inputs to the gardens. In the last year (2008), it is expected that an income-generating project (beekeeping) will generate adequate funds for the management of the gardens after the completion of the project.

Additional activities carried out by the project were promoting tree planting through radio broadcasting. The total budget provided by RNSCC was € 22,000.

CFC Conservation de la Faune Congolaise – Congo (2007)

CFC represents Africa's more humid zones where deforestation, though not yet at a large scale in Congo, may lead to exhaustion of the soils or the formation of lateritic soils. These unproductive soils are found in the sub-humid zone in West Africa, witnessing that humid climatic conditions did prevail there. CFC's project is aiming at rehabilitating degraded soils to increase the income of local communities by boost-



Erosion in Sourou Valley, NATURAMA, Burkina Faso

ing the yields, and to prevent further cutting of forest to create new farm land. CFC received € 4,000 for a study on soil fertility.

EIP – Niger (2005 - 2007)

The project's activities comprise the organization of an information campaign to mobilize stakeholders for the creation of a green belt along the upper reaches of River Niger, and to organize training sessions for local organizations on fire management, use of water hyacinth as organic fertilizer, and on project management. Farmers, of which the majority were women, were trained on tree nursery techniques. RNSCC contributed € 16,000 to the projects.

ENVIRO-PROTECT – Cameroon (2005 - 2007)

In successive years ENVIRO-PROTECT initiated several projects to mitigate land degradation in the vicinity of Maroua town in the Far North Province of Cameroon. One project consisted of the protection through participative management of a forest reserve that was previously considered as no man's land. An awareness campaign was organized for local communities to drive home the need for sustainable use of communal forest resources, and representatives were trained to manage these natural resources. Another project by the organisation was the restoration of degraded soils through reforestation and promotion of compost use. The costs of the two projects, € 8,000, were entirely borne by RNSCC.

EPAG, Environmental Protection Association – Ghana (2005 - 2007)

Fiaso is a farming community in the Techima District of Brong Ahafo Region in Ghana. The area once produced cocoa, but this ended in the 1980s after wild fires destroyed most of the cocoa plantations.



Watering a tree nursery, Green Senegal

Further, deforestation resulted from inappropriate farming practices, which undermined soil fertility. Farmers now depend on inorganic fertilizers and chemicals, further degrading the environment.

The project developed management skills in community-based afforestation and provided training and seedlings for setting up orchards (mango trees, oranges). In successive years the project built skills for income-generating activities to reduce poverty in the community, before the trees bore fruits.

RNSCC contributed € 7,000 for the establishment of woodlots. The costs for capacity building in the following years amounted to € 8,000 and were entirely borne by RNSCC.

GREEN Senegal – Senegal (2008)

Whereas most projects include awareness creation on the two conventions among the general public, GREEN Senegal directs its information campaign at local leaders, decision makers and government technicians. The training provided such persons with competences and knowledge for sustainable natural resource management, to better realize their own responsibilities and those of others, and know the relationships between the various actors. The building of a dyke as a measure against soil salinization was carried out as a hands-on activity where the targeted persons of the training had to co-operate with the local people. GREEN Senegal received € 4,000 to implement the project.

The NATURAMA Foundation – Burkina Faso (2005 - 2008)

NATURAMA executed a variety of projects. The first project aimed at preserving the natural resources in the Sourou valley against spreading deforestation and overgrazing, in agreement with the government's



Tree care near school, WWF-Northern Sudanian Savannab, Cameroon

policy to alleviate poverty among vulnerable groups (*i.e.* women, children, and the elderly) while promoting sustainable use of the area's natural resources. The activities included restoring soil fertility through participative reforestation and boosting income generating activities through micro-credit facilities. In 2006, project staff was trained on park and wildlife management. The effects of this training were clearly reflected in the 2007 and 2008 projects, in which NATURAMA strived to improve the management of Kabore Tambi National Park through training of ecoguards in the surrounding villages to monitor the ecological condition of the park. The project further included awareness campaigns on sustainable resource use and park manage-



Co-management of natural resources in practice, Green Senegal

ment specifically targeted at the youth. RNSCC contributed € 19,500 to NATURAMA's activities.

TBI Ghana – Tropenbos International-Ghana (2005 - 2007)

The dry forests of the northern part of the Offinso District, which lies within the transition between the high forest and the savannah zones, is prone to annual wild fires. The communities depend heavily on the forest resources for fuel wood and timber, herbal medicine, and other non-timber forest resources, and the over-exploitation of these resources lead to loss of biodiversity. Soils are impoverished and crop yields are low, resulting in very low incomes for farmers and high levels



Teaching tree care, WWF-Northern Sudanian Savannah, Cameroon

of poverty. The project created awareness about biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resources management in 10 communities. Over three years, several 1000s of people have been reached. In addition, selected persons have been trained in alternative livelihood schemes such as tree planting and production of non-timber forest products including bee keeping, grass-cutter rearing and the production of leafy vegetables. RNSCC contributed € 7,000 to this project.

WWF – CARPO Cameroon (2006 - 2008)

The WWF Savannah project operates around the Bénoué National Park in the North Province of Cameroon. Indiscriminate tree cutting

for cotton growing has led to land degradation. The WWF Savannah project has opted to educate grown-ups by teaching school pupils the function of trees in nature.

As a demonstration, the project set up tree nurseries at the schools, where the children can watch the trees grow and learn to take care of them. The project produces and distributes education material, e.g., flyers, posters, and notebooks. The children had to ask their parents to keep away their livestock from the school tree nursery. RNSCC contributed € 12,000.



Tree planting near schools, WWF-Northern Sudanian Savannah, Cameroon



Tree protection, WWF-Northern Sudanian Savannah, Cameroon



Cooking by solar radiation, APELD, Cameroon



Training nature management staff, NATURAMA, Burkina Faso

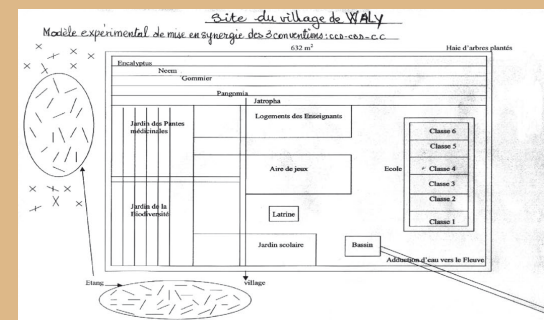
During the last meeting of the RNSCC network members in February 2008, the consensus was to expand the scopes of RNSCC both thematically and geographically. It was deemed timely to include the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the programme agenda for promoting synergy between Multilateral Environmental Agreements. The overwhelming scientific evidence has made it clear that the emissions of greenhouse gases cause global changes in the climate, which may well have negative impacts on the life of future generation. Land degradation and loss of biological diversity cannot be considered in isolation from climate change, so that all three conventions should be considered in unison.

The initial decision to restrict membership to the current thirteen members was arbitrary and proceeded from a cautious approach given difficulties with past networking experiences. After three years of successful functioning, RNSCC can now confidently expand its number of members and countries.

RNSCC intends to maintain its goal (*i.e.*, contribute towards poverty alleviation, land use sustainability, and biodiversity protection through stimulating approaches that mitigate the effects of greenhouse gases on climate change) and mission (*i.e.*, assist network members in gaining access to global knowledge and funding networks that are connected

to the synergy between the CBD, UNCCD, and UNFCCC). Its strategies will, however, take into consideration the results of internal evaluation that have been conducted yearly since 2006.

In particular, the network will focus on regional, large-scale projects with a strong IEC (information, education, communication) component to promote dissemination and uptake of innovative solutions. Furthermore, the network will expand its networking activities at national levels by reaching out to associate members who link up with the strategic information database available at the RNSCC web site. New activities will also include active lobby and policy advocacy among decision makers in the region.



Sketch of 'green belt' around a primary school, EIP, Niger

List of publications

RNSCC Seminar Proceedings

2008

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