



Tropentag, October 6-8, 2009, Hamburg

“Biophysical and Socio-economic Frame Conditions
for the Sustainable Management
of Natural Resources”

The Potential of Drylands Observatories to Contribute to Sustainable Dryland Development

ELENA MARÍA ABRAHAM

*Argentine Institute for Arid Lands Research - National Research and Technological Council, Laboratory of
Desertification and Land Management, Argentina*

Abstract

The need for consensus on dryland development models valuing the contributions of science is discussed. We briefly set out the desertification problem in developing countries, options for dryland development models, and the need to translate knowledge into concrete measures, pointing out that science should be the basis for decision-making, giving priority to the role of Observatories. This presentation is framed within strategic goals of UNCCD regarding the reinforcement of its CST and the new role that knowledge generation must play in decision making. Emphasis is laid on the need to work with B&I at all levels. The state of the art is presented for all Annexes, and a set of impact indicators in compliance with UNCCD's 10-year strategic objectives.

For these goals to be accomplished, continuity, robustness and homogeneity of data collection and processing must be guaranteed. The potential of national and international observatories is analyzed, ensuring their permanence to enable them to contribute assessment and monitoring systems and constant surveillance to generate early alert systems. Observatories can add value to national databases, scientific collections (biodiversity, soils, climate, land use, etc.) overcoming problems of data collection and processing and information gaps. Strategies are put forward to incorporate local communities and governments into integrated assessment processes. International and national experiences are presented: the OSS (Sahara and Sahel Observatory), the Gobabeb Training and Research Centre in Namibia, and Ñacuñan Biosphere Reserve in Argentina. Opportunities posed by the Global Network of Dryland Research Institutes and the World Network of MAB Reserves are discussed.

Keywords: Dryland development models, observatories