



Executive Summary

Sustainable Solutions for Climate Action **Food Security in Dry Lands under a Changing Climate**

Tuesday, 4 December 2012, from 13:15 to 14:45
Qatar National Convention Center, Side Event Room 1, Hall 5

This High-level event, co-hosted by the UN Secretary-General, as Chair of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the State of Qatar, showcased people-centered sustainable solutions to the challenge of climate change. The event fostered a dialogue among the Host Country, Parties to the Convention, civil society and UN system leaders in demonstrating the UN system's collective capacity to support countries in the implementation of climate action. In particular, it highlighted initiatives by the Host Country and others to address food security and dryland issues. Participants in the inter-active debate shared experiences, highlighted best practices and identified additional areas for climate action within the framework of sustainable development.

H.E. Mr. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, President of COP-18 opened the event by emphasizing the urgent need to address the effects of climate change on food security and water availability which are threatening the livelihoods of millions of people, especially people living in drylands. The point was echoed by H.E. Mr. Fahad bin Mohamed Al-Attiya, Executive Chairman of the Qatar National Food Security Programme, who acknowledged that climate change posed a severe challenge to a country like Qatar which is highly dependent on food imports. To promote collaboration and knowledge sharing among dryland countries, Qatar has spearheaded the establishment of the Global Dry Land Alliance to better meet the challenges of food and water insecurity by harnessing the best of scientific, technological and financial resources on a sustainable basis. Commending the State of Qatar for its leadership on food security and climate change, the Secretary-General pledged that the United Nations would use all the tools at its disposal to meet the needs of people today and in the future. "We are very much committed," the Secretary-General said. "We have a political and moral responsibility to our future generations—we are borrowing our future from our next generation."

During the interactive debate, many participants highlighted country, regional and global efforts by the UN System to jointly work toward transforming economies and societies towards less carbon intensive, more resilient and more sustainable production and consumption patterns. Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP, who moderated the event, noted the economic opportunities generated by climate action. Climate action, she said, “can drive the creation of new goods, services, jobs, and exports. It can create new opportunities for both developing and developed countries.” UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner further emphasized the point by remarking that progress does not have to come at the expense of the environment. “UNEP is challenging the notion that if you are greening your economy you are killing jobs. You are actually creating jobs instead, by investing in technological solutions,” he stated.

Water was identified as a critical issue by many participants. Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), noted that water stress has reached critical levels in some countries and increased water variability further heightened people’s vulnerability. Benedito Braga, President of the World Water Council, argued that the water sector itself needed to better adapt to climate change and that the issue of water needed to be addressed in the UNFCCC negotiations. Rachel Kyte, Vice President of the World Bank, called for the establishment of viable, functioning social safety nets to allow people to withstand the climate change impacts already being experienced. Speakers also emphasized the need for more sustainable consumption and production patterns, research and technology transfer and predictable and adequate financing for climate adaptation.

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