

AFRICAN UNION

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4th SAWAP Conference, Accra 8 – 13 May 2017
Global Perspectives for the Future of SAWAP

**Welcome Remarks from the Representative of the Africa
Union Commission**

Elvis Paul Nfor TANGEM

**Coordinator, Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel
Initiative
Africa Union Commission**

Prof. Frimpong Boateng, Minister in charge of Environment, of Ghana

Dr. Djime Adoum, Executive Secretary, Permanent Interstate Committee for drought control in the Sahel (CILSS)

Mr. Henry G.R. Kerali, World Bank Country Director for Ghana Addresses

Mr. Jean-Marc Sinassamy, Representative of the Global Environment Facility

Representatives of the Pan African Agency for the GGWSSI

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome on behalf of the African Union Commission to this important event, 4th conference of the SAWAP/BRICKS in support of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative, under the theme: **Global Perspectives for the Future of SAWAP**, here in the beautiful and historic city of Accra, Republic of Ghana.

Let me sincerely thank the Government and People of the Republic of Ghana, for accepting to host the meeting and for their hospitability. You know all know how important Ghana and the Ghanaians are to Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance, Democracy on the Continent.

The theme is very appropriate, at a time of multiple interventions.....

Our gratitude to the SAWAP BRICKS team for the implementation of the project, which is so far the biggest project in support of the GGWSSI and organisation of this 4th conference.

Before I go on, let me congratulate the People of France for the voting in a new president and welcome President Macron, we all know the increasing importance of policy Makers for the development and implementation of the macro environmental policies.

Excellences, Mr Minister, Distinguished Guests, and participants,

The benefits of the GGWSSI is very clear today, few years from the initial implementation of the programme, through various projects and multiple partners, we can now proudly show concrete results from the implementation of the initiative in over 15 Member states on the continent and beyond. Thousands of Hectares of degraded and barren lands have been restored and millions of trees planted, livelihoods have been improved and thousands of jobs created in communities that is attributed to the initiative.

The initiative have made tremendous political and diplomatic mainstreaming land degradation, Drought and desertification and the contribution of policy makers, leading to the harmonisation and close relationship between the policy Makers and all other Stakeholders and Actors in the above sector, as aspect which was a **paucity** in Africa and even globally. The GGWSSI have become a political, technical, exchange and connecting platform, connecting the capacities of countries, organisations, initiatives and expertise far beyond the continent of Africa. We have initiatives that implemented in the image of the initiative in the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

We will be listening to the progress made for the implementation of the initiative through the SAWAP/ BRICKS projects as examples of the results of the implementation of the initiative.

Excellences, Mr Minister, Distinguished Guests, and participants,

As we celebrate the achievement, contributions the GGWSSI have so far made in combating DLDD and building the resilience to Climate change of communities in the Dry lands, the current drought in the Horn of Africa especially in Somali where over 4 million people face starvation and over 20 million have been affected by the ELNINO phenomenon is glaring reminder of the huge challenges that lies ahead and the a call for us all to make more efforts, to put it in a very modest way. We all know of the millions of people DISPLACED in search for food, the millions of young people undertaking **precarious** migration in search for Greener pasture, I really mean Greener Pasture. The NEXUS degraded lands – poverty- conflicts – migration is no longer a myth as the cases of the Lake Chad region have clearly shown. With the GGWSSI, we are in the right direction, however, we have more than enormous tasks as the challenges of DLDD & Climate change seems to be doubling efforts.

Excellences, Mr Minister, Distinguished Guests, and participants,

Recommendations from the The third SAWAP Conference held in Dakar/Senegal, from 2 to 7 May 2016 with similar objectives as this conference, focused on the need for closer collaboration, alignment and harmonization of the SAWAP/ BRCKS with all other projects. The need for closer collaboration and synergies amongst Actors, Stakeholders in the SLM sector was echoed in all major forums including the First International conference and at various side events organized at the COP 22 in Marrakech, this conference is the first major come together this year 2017 this is indeed an opportune time to discuss progress made in the recommendations and other aspects of the SAWAP / BRICK and to map out the next annual and recommendations

Furthermore, the call for synergy and closer collaboration of actions between the 3 Rio convention was also the requested in the Windhoek Declaration on Strengthening Resilience Capacities for Drought in Africa adopted by the African States, Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at the High-level Meeting of the first African Conference on Drought, held in Namibia, from 15 to 19 August 2016, has adopted the Strategic Framework for Risk Management and Strengthening Drought Resilience in Africa, which proposes a prepared and resilient Africa for drought. The need to support

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At the level of the AUC, the GGWSSI have increasingly been recognised as an important flagship programme in contributing to the AGENDA 2063, the AGENDA 2030 and other flagships like the CAADP the CFTA etc. To improve on its coordinating and political role, the Commission is working very closely with FAO, UNCCD and others to enhance the capacity of the Continental coordination Hub. Following the recommendations from the first International conference on need to leverage the contribution of the CSOs, CBDs and NGOs, the Hub received over 50 requests from CSOs/ NGOs globally responding to the call, a database has been created, we are working with some of them with concrete proposals and need and plans are to set up an appropriate engagement strategy.

The issue of support to Member states and Partners in the mobilisation of resources is as ever primordial, approaches for leveraging the current initiatives like the SAWAP / BRICKS to raise funds is being worked on and you all will be contacted in the course of the year.

Following requests from Cameroon, Ghana and the SADC member states, the Commission has kick-started the inception phase of the process, we will seek your support and participation. In the Republic of Ghana, discussions are currently ongoing with some CSOs, EPA and Ministry on the inception phase, I will seize this opportunity to request for an audience with H.E. the Minister and our EPA colleagues.

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Now is the time to reflect on what has been achieved so far within the SAWAP // BRICKS projects and the initiative in general. The SAWAP /BRICKS project remains the largest in size, time frame and amount of funding, the successes is determinant to the future funding of the initiative as it will set an ethos for large scale financing. The project is laying the groundwork for the effective development and future large scale financing of the initiative.

In relation to Funding, there is a need for innovation and look more at leveraging / pull domestic and diaspora funds and other sources, The AUC sees a lot of opportunities at the level of the continent especially with the increasing confident private sector and philanthropy (Moo Ibrahim, Elumelu, and DANGOTE). In the Addis Ababa declaration on financing development, Private sector is identified as being more important, the various Climate related funds are important. We have to work with the member states, propose financing strategies, including tax breaks and PPP in the sector.

We have to change our approach from requesting governments to act to showing why they should (Cost Benefit Analyses). Show measures to de-risk investments, to reduce uncertainty, manage and mitigate risks to promote Private investment. We should also expand to other projects like the Renewables. During the 5th Mediterranean forest week held in Agadir, lots of innovative funding approaches were presented including Green ATM cards, Green bonds, Crowd funding, leveraging pension funds for investment, Lets innovate, the Capital market has unlimited possibilities regional and National, work with the water investors, those in dams, hydroelectric, tell them that protecting watershed is part of the investment.

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Before I end, let me use this opportunity to extend, on behalf of the Commission a word of gratitude to Mr Steve DANYO, who will be leaving us at the end of year, we know Steve, he has been instrumental in the development and success of the SLMP and SAWAP/ BRICKS. Steve, we wish you well, you will be greatly missed (hand a Pin).

Let me use this opportunity to announce a series of events

- Workshop for the inception phase of the GGWSSI in Cameroon coming up 4th week of May (23rd – 27th)
- Workshop for the inception phase of the GGWSSI in the SADC region, Windhoek coming up early June
- Southern Africa (SADC+) High Level Roundtable on the Bonn Challenge, July 12, 2017, Lilongwe, Malawi contact Charles KARANGWA, IUCN Eastern and Southern
- Africa Group of Negotiators Pre COP 13 Meeting in Nairobi, first week of August 2017
- Side event on the GGWSSI at the COP 13 in Inner-Mongolia

I wish all of us an excellent week as we deliberate on the future of SAWAB BRICKS and the GWSSI in general, the Commission is ready to keep pushing the initiative forward, I request you to keep supporting the Commission.

In concluding, I wish you every success in your discussions and outcomes.