Knowledge and institutional requirements to promote land degradation neutrality in drylands – An analysis of the outcomes of the 3rd UNCCD scientific conference

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Achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN) through sustainable land management (SLM) targets the maintenance or restoration of the productivity of land, and therefore has to include decision-makers, knowledge generators and knowledge holders at the different relevant geographic scales. In order to enhance the implementation of the Convention, the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification therefore decided that each future session of its Committee on Science and Technology (CST) would be organized in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format.

This contribution will outline the major outcomes of UNCCD′s 3rd scientific conference that will be held in Cancún, Mexico, from 9 to 12 March 2015, on addressing desertification, land degradation and drought issues (DLDD) for poverty reduction and sustainable development. The conference follows an exceptional new round table conference format that will allow the various stakeholders to discuss scientific as well as the contribution of traditional knowledge and practices in combating land degradation. This format should provide two-way communication and enable deeper insight into the availability and contribution of all forms of knowledge for achieving LDN through the assessment of:

• the vulnerability of lands to DLDD and climate change and the adaptive capacities of socio-ecosystems;
• best examples of adapted, knowledge-based practices and technologies;
• monitoring and assessment methods to evaluate the effectiveness of adaptation practices and technologies.

The outcomes of UNCCD′s 3rd scientific conference will serve as a basis for discussing:

• contributions of science to diagnose the status of land;
• research gaps that need to be addressed to achieve LDN for poverty reduction;
• additional institutional requirements to optimally bridge knowledge generation, knowledge maintenance and knowledge implementation at the science-policy interface.