

**Workshop on NAP Alignment and UNCCD Financing
in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)**

Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist

Director of Programmes

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is an honour and a pleasure to be with you this morning at the opening of this workshop. My greatest appreciation goes to Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic and the whole team for the organisation and hosting, once again, of this tripartite initiative between the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic and the Permanent Secretariat of the UNCCD and the Global Mechanism .

Since the Convention's inception, the National Action Programmes (NAPs) have been the key strategic documents guiding countries' implementation of the UNCCD. The *10 Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the Convention (2008-2018)*, however, outlined a new vision for the UNCCD, raising the pressing question of how to ensure that countries' NAPs were aligned to the Convention's new trajectory. Indeed, this workshop is something of a milestone, in that it represents the first instance of country Parties of the Convention gathering to discuss the issue of the alignment of NAPs to the *10 Year Strategy*. In this regard, we will all be learning from each other over the coming days, and I very much look forward to developing a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that the NAP alignment process presents. At this point, I would also very much like to thank Belarus for providing the rest of us with the key contribution of their draft NAP. This, I feel, shows courage, and even more importantly commitment to this initiative and the evolution of the role and position of the Convention in this region. As we will see as the workshop progresses, his efforts have provided the necessary background material to facilitate discussion on this crucial issue.

Regarding the financing element of the workshop, as we have seen from the expert consultation in Brno, Czech Republic two years ago, there is potential for the mobilisation of resources. However, realising this potential is dependent on the use of the flexible and innovative approaches, as well as a strategic packaging of sustainable land management (SLM), an issue which is yet to garner the global support that it warrants. I firmly believe that it is on these points that the future success of the Convention rests. If SLM is packaged correctly and the right approach is applied, I believe Annex V will be instrumental in defining a new outline in the *10 Year Strategy* and can contribute to a re-imagining of developmental strategy. NAPs can play a crucial role in this.

This workshop also represents the final activity of the *Regional initiative on financial resource mobilization for strengthening the implementation of the UNCCD in Central and Eastern Europe*. As was asserted in Brno, this initiative should be about the self-organisation of Annex V and I hold to this position. I am sure you will agree with me that the countries know their options for SLM financing better than anyone. However, you need to ask the question: what does UNCCD mean for your country? In answering this question, Annex V can redefine the interests of the UNCCD by looking at issues such as agricultural production, food security, forestry, water, biodiversity and climate change. The question is not only relevant to the approach to the Convention but also to the economic and geographical realities that the different countries in the region face. The chosen approach is therefore dependent on the country context. There are also a number of emerging donors in the region, as has been demonstrated by the strong leadership of this initiative by the Czech Republic. In this regard, more than any other annex of the Convention, Central and Eastern Europe has the great potential to be a self-sustaining.

This in turn can lead to new approaches to regional coordination. I must stress the importance of regional coordination and self-organisation to the successful mobilisation of financing for the UNCCD. The Global Mechanism can offer institutional and knowledge support to Annex V but the objective of this initiative should be capacity building and knowledge sharing, as called for by the 10 Year

Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the UNCCD. Last week's Training of Trainers workshop for financial reporting, held at FAO headquarters in Rome, is an excellent example of the direction in which the Convention is moving, as countries are increasingly taking responsibility for their role within the UNCCD.

In this regard, I finally wish to thank the countries participating in this workshop for their commitment to the successful implementation of the Convention, and I am sure the workshop will provide a fine example of how the Global Mechanism and the Permanent Secretariat of the UNCCD are working well together for a common aim.