

**PRESS RELEASE N°288/2015****COP 12 event calls for enhanced efforts towards the Great Green Wall initiative*****‘When Africa Calls, The World answers’***

**Ankara, Turkey 21 October 2015 -**

H.E. Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on Thursday 15 Oct 2015 called for “Scaling up Africa’s Great Green Wall for the Sahel and Sahara Initiative. This was during a side event organised within the margins of the Twelfth Conference of Parties of the UNCCD (COP12) which brought together a multitude of partners involved in implementing numerous initiatives in support of the Great

Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative.

The event organised by the Africa Union Commission, UNCCD and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was designed with the two-fold aim of sharing with the international community the results achieved so far under the Pan-African initiative, and sharing thoughts on the way forward.

H.E. Monique Barbut took the floor with a passionate appeal on the strategic importance of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative and her personal commitment to ensuring its success.

“My heart has always been on this initiative. The Great Green Wall is the modern world’s greatest endeavor that symbolizes man and nature coming together to overcome some of today’s most urgent challenges: climate change, food security, migration and, of course, land restoration.” She declared. “The Great Green Wall is far more than simply growing trees, it is about growing solutions and opportunities; growing resilience to climate change; growing ‘green’ jobs that provide a stable income for African women and youth; about growing food security where 20 million people in the Sahel still go to sleep hungry every night.”

Ms. Barbut committed the UNCCD to embarking on scaling up the Great Green Wall Initiative through partnership with the AUC and stakeholders involved in the cause.

AUC Senior Policy Officer for Forestry and Land, Mr. Dampha Almami welcomed the participants and presented a summary of the key achievements of the Initiative to date.



And AUC Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative Coordinator, Dr. Elvis Paul Tangem pointed out that the initiative had become a global platform for combating land degradation and desertification. He reiterated the general call for a similar initiative in other regions of Africa and taking best practices to the Caribbean and Pacific regions, noting that, “the GGWSSI will play a central role in

promoting Global Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

A panel question and answer session involving key players in the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative followed the opening session.

By the end of the meeting, the message was clear, “The potential that exists both at the local, national and regional levels needs to be tapped to develop Public and Private partnerships so that through Africa’s Great Green Wall we can ‘grow a world wonder’ – that serves all humanity for generations to come.”

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