

**Minutes on Decisions taken at the Third General Assembly of DesertNet International (DNI)  
15 November 2014 in Hamburg, Germany**

*(compiled by Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Francesca Demuro, Giuseppe Enne, Wafa Essahli, Maria José Marques,  
Pier Paolo Roggero and Chiara Zanolla)*

**Venue and General Information:**

The General Assembly of DNI was held at the Biocenter Klein Flottbek, University of Hamburg,  
Ohnhorststrasse 18, 22609 Hamburg

**Meeting room:** Carl von Linné Building, Conference room on 2nd floor, Room nr 2.506

Time: 09.00 – 13.00

The meeting was organised with kind support of Dr. Ute Schmiedel, (DNI member) from the University of  
Hamburg (GA agenda: **Annex 1**; participants: **Annex 2**).

**1. Announcement and Inauguration of the newly elected Steering Committee and Advisory Board of  
DesertNet International**

Prof. Giuseppe Enne officially announced and inaugurated the newly elected Steering Committee (SC) and  
the newly elected Advisory Board (AB) of DNI by introducing the newly elected members in the SC and AB,  
and by announcing the nomination of the new Chair, Co-chair, Treasurer and General Secretary of  
DesertNet International for the next two legislative years. The results of the DNI elections and nominations  
are as follows:

**Chair:** Eng. Wafa ESSAHLI (Consultant, Tunisia)

**Co-Chair:** Dr. Richard ESCADAFAL (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement - IRD , France)

**Treasurer:** Dr. María José MARQUES (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)

**Secretary General:** Prof. Pier Paolo ROGGERO (Desertification Research Centre NRD – University of Sassari,  
Italy)

**Steering Committee** (alphabetical order):

- Prof. Elena **Abraham** (Argentine Institute of Arid Zones, IADIZA-CONICET, **Argentina**)
- Dr. Michael **Cherlet** (European Commission DG Joint Research Centre, **Italy/Belgium**)
- Dr. Richard **Escadafal** (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement - IRD , **France**)
- Eng. Wafa **Essahli** (Consultant, **Tunisia**)
- Dr. María **José Marqués** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, **Spain**)
- Dr. Abdul **Raziq Kakar** (Al Ain Camel Dairy - **UAE**)
- Prof. Pier Paolo **Roggero** (Desertification Research Centre NRD - University of Sassari, **Italy**)
- Dr. Gergerly **Toth** (European Commission DG Joint Research Centre, **Italy**)
- Dr. Fei **Wang** (Inst. Of Soil & Water Conservation, Northwest A&F University, **China**)
- Dr. Pandi **Zdruli** (CIHEAM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, **Italy**)

**Advisory Board** (alphabetical order):

- Dr. Mariam **Akhtar-Schuster** (PT-DLR, Berlin, **Germany**)

- Prof. Jorge **Battle-Sales** (Universidad de Valencia, **Spain**)
- Dr. Dau lal **Bohra** (Seth Gyaniram Bansidhar Podal College, **India**)
- Prof. Giuseppe **Enne** (NRD, University of Sassari, **Italy**)
- Prof. Norbert **Juergens** (University of Hamburg, **Germany**)
- Dr. Christopher **Martius** (Centre for Intl. Forestry Research, **Indonesia**)
- Dr. Mark **Schauer** (GIZ, **Germany**)
- Dr. Mary **Seely** (Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, **Namibia**)
- Dr. Stefan **Sommer** (European Commission DG Joint Research Centre, **Italy/Germany**)
- Prof. Lindsay **Stringer** (University of Leeds, **UK**)

General information and details on the elections process were provided to the General Assembly (**Annex 3**)

## 2. DNI activities in 2012 - 2014

**2.1 Financial Report 2012-2014:** As defined in Article 6 of the Statutes of DNI, the newly re-confirmed treasurer Dr Maria José Marques presented the DNI financial report for the period 2012-2014. The detailed financial report is available in **Annex 4**

On 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the budget of the association accounts for € 3625,79 distributed in two different accounts: CIC Bank, based in Toulouse, France: € 3 310,49, and PayPal, the online payment service provider: € 315,30.

During this 2<sup>nd</sup> year period, 40 new payment fees have been received. The rate of paying-members is 20% of membership.

**2.2. DNI activities in 2012 – 2014.** As defined in Article 6 of the Statutes of DNI, Prof. Giuseppe Enne as former Chair of DNI presented a Report on the activities and services of DesertNet in the period 2012-2014. (**Annex 5**).

**3.1 DNI proposed Activities in 2014 - 2016:** the newly elected madam Chair, Wafa Essahli, warmly thanked the outgoing chair Giuseppe Enne for the excellent work carried out during his mandate. She then proposed the strategies for the next biennium. A detailed report is available in **Annex6**.

### a) **DECISIONS TAKEN with regard to the DNI Future activities 2014-2016:**

#### **With regard to the DNI Statutes**

The General Assembly approved the changes in the DNI Statute (Annex 7) that mostly concern i) the differentiation between services provided by DNI to paying vs non-paying members; and ii) the higher flexibility in the composition of the SC and AB.

The changes proposed are the results of the past 4-year experience and aim to increase the efficacy and operability of the Association.

#### **With regard to SC and AB specific activities in the next biennium**

The need is expressed by the former Bureau to achieve a greater involvement of DNI SC and AB to enhance the scientific role in all future strategic activities of DNI. This can be done by:

- a) Assigning specific tasks to individual members of the boards (e.g., SDSN network activities assigned to (one) member(s) of DNI, etc.).
- b) Developing new relations with young DNI Post Doctoral students with the aim to enhance scientific activities of the Association on specific topics (see also decisions taken about DNI Working Groups)

- c) Improving relationship with national and international scientific associations (e.g. through joint membership);
- d) Publishing position papers on specific issues;

**With regard to membership**

- a) The number of DNI members in the 2012-2014 period increased by 13%. This percentage should increase over the next two years and a specific support from SC and AB members is requested, particularly for the LAC and Southern African region. Sensitization and visibility events to be encouraged;
- b) Action to be taken to increase the number of DNI fee-paying member (this is also reflected in the changes to the DNI Statute). Reminders of payment will be circulated among DNI members with information concerning the benefits available to paying members (e.g., accreditation to UN events, possibility to candidate to positions inside the DNI Boards) and link to paypal payment system. Such reminder should be sent before important events (e.g. UNCCD Scientific Conference, COP, CRIC, CST or other) where DNI members intend to participate and have the opportunity to pay their fees directly without banking transfer problems.

**With regard to the Working Groups:**

- a) A message will be sent by the DNI chair to all WG and TF leaders to ask confirmation by a given deadline for leading the Working Group in the period 2014-2016. WG leaders who confirm their availability will provide the newly elected SC and AB with: i) a report on the WG achievements in the past period; and ii) the description of the activities planned for the period 2014-2016 (see draft template in **Annex 8**).
- b) Working Groups have an important role in enhancing the scientific relevance of DNI, and in identifying gaps at the scientific and political level. For this reason an invitation to propose new WGs will be circulated among DNI members;
- c) General support of DNI to WGs will be enhanced by encouraging young (post doc) scientists to promote and/or participate in DNI WGs with ad hoc support of DNI for, inter alia, the identification of relevant international calls for proposal and potential partners.

Signed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014

**Dr. Wafa ESSAHLI**

**Chair**

Résidence le Patio, Appt. B23, Les Berges du Lac,  
1053 Tunis, Tunisia

**Dr. Richard Escadafal**

**Co-Chair**

IRD-CESBIO, 18 av. E. Belin  
31401 Toulouse cedex 9, France

**Prof. Pier Paolo Roggero**

**General Secretary**

Centro Interdipartimentale di Ateneo NRD-UNISS  
(Nucleo Ricerca Desertificazione)  
Università degli Studi di Sassari  
Via Enrico de Nicola, 9 - 07100 Sassari, Italy

**Dr. Maria Jose Marques**

**Treasurer**

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid  
Dept. Geology and Geochemistry  
Calle Darwin 2  
28049 Cantoblanco, Madrid, Spain

**4. Annexes to the minutes:**

**Annex 1** of the minutes: Agenda of the General Assembly.

**Annex 2** of the minutes: Participants to the General Assembly.

**Annex 3** of the minutes: DNI Election Process

**Annex 4** of the minutes: DNI Financial Report 2012-2014

**Annex 5** of the minutes: Tasks accomplished by DNI SC and AB during their mandate phase from 05.07.2012 to 15.11.2014.

**Annex 6** of the minutes: DNI Activities in 2014 – 2016: proposal for the way forward

**Annex 7** of the minutes: Revised DNI Statute as approved by the 3<sup>rd</sup> DNI General Assembly

**Annex 8** of the minutes: template for WGs

## Annex 1

### Agenda of the 3<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of DesertNet International (DNI) 15 November 2014 in Hamburg (Germany)

**Venue address:**

Biocenter Klein Flottbek, University of Hamburg, Ohnhorststrasse 18, 22609 Hamburg

**Meeting room:**

Carl von Linné Building, Conference room on 2nd floor, Room nr 2.506

**Programme:**

8.30: Registration of participants

**Session I: Welcome** (Chair Giuseppe Enne)

9.00: Opening of the Third General Assembly of DNI

- Welcome by DNI Chair

**Session II: DNI elections** (Chair Giuseppe Enne)

9.30: Adoption of the meeting's agenda

DNI election process and its results (Chiara Zanolla)

Proclamation and inauguration of the new DNI Steering Committee, Advisory Board and Bureau

**Session III: DNI activities** (Chair Eng. Essahli Wafa)

10.00: Status report on:

- Financial report 2012 – 2014 (Maria Jose Marques Perez)
- DNI activities in 2012 -2014 (Giuseppe Enne and Chiara Zanolla)
  - DNI involvement in the Scientific Advisory Committee of the UNCCD 3<sup>rd</sup> Scientific Conference
  - DNI and the Regional workshops in preparation of the UNCCD 3<sup>rd</sup> Scientific Conference
  - Collaboration agreement between DNI-WOCAT-GNDRI
  - Accreditation to IPBES and SDSN
  - Participation to relevant International Conferences

10.45 - Break

11.15: DNI organisational strategies in 2014-2016 (Chair Eng. Essahli Wafa)

- Changes to the Statute of DesertNet International
- Active involvement of early career researchers in DNI activities;
- Activities to promote DNI visibility towards and interactions with International Organizations;
- Any other item to be indicated by the next DNI Chair

12.30: Wrap up

13.00: Workshop closure

## Annex 2

### 3<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of DesertNet International (DNI) 15 November 2014 in Hamburg (Germany)

#### Participants

FULL NAME	AFFILIATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
AKHTAR-SCHUSTER, Mariam	Univ. of Hamburg, Germany	mariam.akhtar-schuster@t-online.de
CHERLET, Michael	JRC - Institute for Environment and Sustainability, Ispra, Italy	michael.cherlet@jrc.ec.europa.eu
DEMURO, Francesca	Desertification Research Centre, Univ. of Sassari, Italy	nrd@uniss.it
ENNE, Giuseppe	Desertification Research Centre, Univ. of Sassari, Italy	ennegiuseppe@gmail.com
ESSAHLI, Wafa	International Consultant, Tunisia	wafa@essahli.com
GUTIERREZ, Luciano	Desertification Research Centre, Univ. of Sassari, Italy	lgutierr@uniss.it
MARTIUS, Christopher	Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Indonesia	c.martius@cgiar.org
JÜRGENS, Norbert	Univ. of Hamburg, Germany	norbert.juergens@t-online.de
MARQUES, María José	Univ. of Madrid, Spain	mariajose.marques@uam.es
ROGGERO, Pier Paolo	Desertification Research Centre, Univ. of Sassari, Italy	pproggero@uniss.it
SCHMIEDEL, Ute	Univ. of Hamburg, Germany	Ute.Schmiedel@uni-hamburg.de
SOMMER, Stefan	JRC - Institute for Environment and Sustainability, Ispra, Italy	stefan.sommer@jrc.ec.europa.eu
SOP, Tene Kwetche	Univ. of Hamburg, Germany	tenesop@googlemail.com
ZANOLLA, Chiara	Desertification Research Centre, Univ. of Sassari, Italy	czanolla@uniss.it

## **Annex 3**

### **DNI Election Process**

**24 September:** letter sent out to DNI members to request candidatures (only paying members)

**29 September & 02 October:** circulation of first and second reminder

**03 October:** circulation of the extended deadline

**09 October:** extended deadline for returning nominations (10 candidates for SC & AB)

**16 October:** deadline for selection process by DNI SC and AB\* and agreement on need to propose the DNI General Assembly changes to the Statute with respect to the election process.

**27 October:** circulation of candidate lists to DNI members (10 candidates to SC and AB respectively), with instructions on voting procedure

**5 November:** Personal electronic link to the ballots sent to all eligible voters of DNI

**6-7 November:** election period

**8 November:** Election results automatically generated by the system were sent to the DNI Bureau members.

**10 November:** Results of the elections announced

**13 November:** Newly nominated Chair, co-Chair, Secretary General, Treasurer are settled by the newly elected Steering Committee

**15 November:** Third DNI General Assembly in Hamburg

The electronic election system was set up and managed by Olivier Piau, from Acropolis Production in Montpellier (FR). It met the specific requirements set by the DNI Bureau: i) to allow each and only DNI member to cast only 1 vote (expressing 6 preferences for SC and AB candidates); and ii) to guarantee anonymity, confidentiality and security

**Annex 4**

**DNI Financial Report 2012-2014**

	Costs/Payments	Incomes	Balance €
June 2012 balance (G.A. 2012)			3.165,35
Bank commissions	39,08		
Membership fee income (7 new)		310,00	
July 2012 to 31 Dec 2012 Balance			3.436,27
Bank commissions	109,71		
Payment UNCCD Namibia	994,59		
Difference between transactions	50,00		
Membership fee income (22 new)		620,00	
1 Jan 2013 to 31 Dec 2013 Balance			2.901,97
Bank commissions	71,48		
Membership fee income (11 new)		480,00	
1 Jan 2014 to 10 Nov 2014 Balance			3.310,49

**Formal letter indicating formal approval of the financial report 2012-2014.**

To whom it may concern

Your reference

Our reference

Telephone

Hamburg /Berlin

23.12.2014

**SUBJECT: Approval of DesertNet biennium financial report 05.07.2012 – 15.11.2014**

The biennium financial report for the period 05.07.2012 to 15.11.2014, as compiled by the Treasurer of DesertNet International, Dr Maria Jose Marques Perez, has been checked for correctness by the former and by the present members of the Bureau.

We herewith confirm the completeness and correctness of the financial report for the above period, and its accurate and timely presentation to the General Assembly on 15.11.2014.

Signed by

Prof. Giuseppe Enne  
(Former Chair)

Dr. Richard Escadafal  
(Former Secretary General)

Prof. Elena Abraham  
(Former Vice Chair)

Dr. María José Marques  
(Treasurer)

## Annex 5

### Tasks accomplished by DNI SC & AB during their mandate phase from 05.07.2012 to 15.11.2014

*(Compiled and presented by the former DNI Chair, Prof. Giuseppe Enne and by the DNI Bureau Coordinator Chiara Zanolla on behalf to the former SC and AB).*

#### About the Membership Status

As of 15 November 2014, the total number of DNI members amounts to 310 from 51 countries. These numbers shows that there has been a 13% increase compared to the previous General Assembly in July 2012. The majority of members are from Europe (203) followed by Asia (57), Africa (32), North America and Australia (11) and Latin America Countries (9). This geographical distribution is also reflected in the composition of the past and current DNI SC and AB.

#### DNI Main activities in the period 2012-2014

**UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference:** Following the call for a lead institution/consortium to organize the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference, in September 2012 DesertNet International actively promoted the constitution of the STK4SD Consortium composed by 5 full members (Agropolis International - lead institution, DNI, Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel, IADIZA, CGIAR) and three affiliated partners (JRC-Ispra, NRD University of Sassari, Chinese Academy of Forestry).

The STK4SD Consortium candidature was selected for the Organization of the UNCCD 3<sup>rd</sup> Scientific Conference on “*Combating Drought, Land Degradation and Desertification for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development. The contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices*” that will be held on 9-12 March 2015 in Cancún, Mexico. DNI’s main role is to provide scientific support; DNI members are part of the conference Scientific Advisory Committee.

In the framework of the UNCCD Scientific Conference DNI strongly promoted and encouraged the organization of four regional workshops on the Conference theme to provide further inputs to the main conference and/or to uptake results:

- ✓ 21 Sept. 2013: Regional workshop for Southern Africa in Windhoek (Namibia)
- ✓ 19 – 20 Dec. 2014: Regional workshop for Western Africa (Tunisia)
- ✓ 20 – 26 January 2015 – Regional workshop for Latin America (Brasil)
- ✓ April 2015: Regional workshop for the Mediterranean area (Italy)

**DNI-GNDRI-WOCAT Collaboration agreement:** DNI has strongly encouraged and contributed actively to the establishment of a collaboration agreement between the three global networks DNI, GNDRI (Global Network of Dryland Research Institutions) and WOCAT (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies). The agreement was signed on the occasion of a side event organised during UNCCD COP 11 in Windhoek, Namibia (16-27 September 2013). Aims of the agreement are to provide multi-disciplinary policy-relevant knowledge to support the UNCCD and other Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and science-policy advisory bodies; and strengthen role and visibility of the dryland science and knowledge community in the identification of options for definition and implementation of appropriate SLM and SDGs. The first Workshop of the newly born network of networks was held on 13-14 November 2014 in Hamburg where the needs, demands, opportunities were discussed and the Statue finalised. The consortium’s main aim is to scientifically support the science-to-policy process established by the new

Science-Policy Interface (SPI) of the UNCCD's Committee on Science and Technology (CST) (please see below).

#### **DNI's involvement at the UNCCD Science Policy Interface:**

DNI members were selected by the UNCCD CST Bureau as members of the UNCCD *ad hoc* Working Group to further discuss the options for the provision of scientific advice focusing on desertification/land degradation and drought issues (AGSA). Mariam Akhtar-Schuster chaired the AGSA Working Group that was established in July 2012 and concluded its mandate in September 2013, with the presentation of its proposal to UNCCD COP-11 in Windhoek. Please see ICCD/COP(11)/CST/3 (pre-session document); and ICCD/COP(11)/CSTINF.2 (INF Document).

Several members of DNI were nominated by the CST Bureau at UNCCD COP-11 for the Scientific Advisory Committee that is tasked with the scientific review of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UNCCD Scientific Conference to be held in Cancun, Mexico from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

#### **DNI Participation to relevant international conferences and events:**

**UNCCD 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Conference** on Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. (9-12 April 2013 - Bonn, Germany). Besides being Conference Affiliate, DNI organized a Special session on *"Tackling key challenges in the economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid and semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas: Perspectives from DesertNet International's Working Groups"*, during which the activities of the 5 DNI working groups and the Task Force were presented. DNI provided its members with accreditation to this UN event and a booth was at the disposal of all DNI members throughout the event. A meeting of the Steering Committee and Advisory Board was also organized.

**UNCCD 11th Conference of the Parties (COP 11)** on 16-27 September 2013 in Windhoek, Namibia. DNI organized a side event titled *"Launch of a Networking Process of International Scientific Bodies on Research on Land Degradation and Desertification"* (16 Sept. 2013), during which a DNI WOCAT GNDRI collaboration Agreement was signed by the three chairs of the network in the presence of the former UNCCD Secretary General, Luc Gnacadja. DNI provided its members with accreditation to this UN event and a booth was at the disposal of all DNI members attending COP-11 throughout the event.

**First and Second Global Soil Week (2012 & 2013)** in Berlin (Germany). In the 2012 DNI organized a talk on *"Science-policy interface: Options for improvement (e.g. international/ intergovernmental panels)"*, by Dr Mariam Akhtar Schuster, at the Global Soil Policy Session. In 2013, DNI co-organised the Dialogue Session 2: *"Making connections between soil and societal challenges"*, by Dr Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Dr Maria Jose Marques, Prof Giuseppe Enne and chaired by Dr Richard Thomas. Presentations are available online at [http://globalsoilweek.org/gsw-2013/programme/wednesday/wednesday\\_2\\_5/](http://globalsoilweek.org/gsw-2013/programme/wednesday/wednesday_2_5/).

**EGU 2013 – European Geosciences Union - General Assembly 2013**, 7-12 April 2013, Vienna (Austria). The DNI Task Force on Land and Soil organised the workshop *"Studying soils and/or land: Approaches for sustainable management of the environment"*. Convener: Marques M.J.; Co-conveners: Escadafal, R.; M. Akhtar-Schuster; L. Montanarella, M. Anaya-Romero, D. De la Rosa, A. Braimoh, JL Weber.

In total, 7 Oral presentations about case studies in Spain, Niger, Tajikistan, Ethiopia, Switzerland, New Zealand, China and Tibet, and 18 Poster presentations about case studies in Hungary, Finland, West Iceland, Ethiopia, Romania, Argentina, Spain, Belgium, Czech Republic.

**ILACCT (Latin America and Caribbean Initiative on Science and Technology)** held in Sobral (Brasil) on 28-29 August 2013. ILACCT is a network established 2008 to enable and enhance participatory processes that facilitate science and technology activities in the LAC region. Composed of country Parties in the region, National Focal Points (NFPs), Correspondents of Science and Technology (STCs), representatives of scientific institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders. On this occasion, DNI was officially represented by E. Abraham, DNI vice Chair, and R. Escadafal, DNI Secretary General, at the round table titled “*Scientific Networks*”.

**Parliament hearing on desertification** held in Strasbourg (France) on 11 December 2013. On this occasion, DNI was represented by its chair Giuseppe Enne and by Pier Paolo Roggero (DNI member) who promoted and participated in the special session on Desertification for a selected group of EU parliament members. DNI was represented and promoted as the widest, interdisciplinary network of researchers (on drylands?) at the interface of science and policy.

#### **DNI accreditation to other relevant networks**

**IPBES - Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:** Established in April 2012, it is an independent intergovernmental body open to all member countries of the United Nations. The members are committed to building IPBES as the leading intergovernmental body for assessing the state of the planet's biodiversity, its ecosystems and the essential services they provide to society. DNI is accredited to the IPBES with an observer status and can thus attend IPBES official meetings. During the 2012-2014 period, DNI participated to the IPBES-2 Stakeholder meeting in Antalya, Turkey (Dec. 2013); provided scientific support to IPBES by reviewing the scoping document on land degradation and restoration (IPBES deliverable 3bi) with a specific focus on drylands. Other documents in preparation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> IPBES Plenary, were analysed by DNI were the draft stakeholder engagement strategy (deliverable 4d); assessment options and rationale for five regional scoping reports (deliverable 2b). Furthermore, DNI registered for participation to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary of IPBES in Bonn, Germany from 12 to 17 January 2015 and its stakeholder meeting: 10-11 January 2015.

**SDSN – Sustainable Development Solutions Network:** DNI is full member of the network since October 2013. Launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in August 2012, SDSN mobilizes scientific and technical expertise from academia, civil society, and the private sector in support of sustainable development at local, national, and global scales. The aim is to enable leaders from all regions and a diverse set of backgrounds to participate in the running of the network while ensuring effective structures for decision-making and accountability. Two conference calls of the SDSN have been held to launch the network.

#### **Status Report of DNI Working Groups/Task Force:**

At the General Assembly in Bari in July 2012 it was agreed that a survey would be carried out among all DNI WG leaders in order to assess the current status and the way forward.

Following the surveys, the following five working groups and 1 task force have confirmed their willingness to continue their activities:

**WG on Economics of SLM;** WG leader Dr Richard Thomas. No updates were submitted about the evolution of the WG in the biennium

**WG on Food Security:** WG leader Dr Lindsay Stringer informed about the recent publication of this working group: Stringer, L. C., Akhtar-Schuster, M., Marques, M. J., Amiraslani, F., Quatrini, S., & Abraham, E. M. (2011). Combating Land Degradation and Desertification and Enhancing Food Security: Towards Integrated Solutions. *Annals of Arid Zone*, 50(3&4), 1-23. The peer-reviewed paper was accepted in 2013, however, printed in the 2011 special issue of the journal.

**WG on Indigenous Livestock Breeds:** WG leader Dr A. Raziq Kakar. No updates were submitted about the evolution of the WG in the biennium

**WG on Soil Salinization:** WG leader Prof Jorge Battle-Salles. No updates were submitted about the evolution of the WG in the biennium

**WG on Dryland Observation Systems:** WG co-leaders Dr Michael Cherlet and Dr Stefan Sommer. Dr Cherlet informed the GA about the participation of the WG to 2 side events in which 15 people participated.

**TF on Land & Soil:** TF co-leaders: Dr Richard Escadafal and Dr Maria Jose Marques informed the GA about the participation of the TF to two sessions of the European Geosciences Union General Assembly (EGU), Vienna, in 2013 and 2014. The TF also participated in the Global Soil Week – task force on land soil. A special issue on “Soil Science for Land Management” is going to be published in the spring 2015.

With respect to the WGs on Environmental Management and Science Policy Interface, active in the period 2010-2012, they have ceased their activities as reported.

A special session on *Tackling key challenges in the economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid and semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas: Perspectives from DesertNet International's Working Groups*, was organized by DNI and held during the UNCCD 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Conference where the preliminary results of the DNI WGs and TF were presented.

In general, it was noted that working groups work on a voluntary basis with no dedicated funds. This implies that they very much depend on the institutional activities of their leaders. This accounts for the limited activities that were realised during the past two years.

## Annex 6

### **DNI proposed Activities in 2014 – 2016 - Lessons learned and proposal for the way forward**

*(proposed by the newly elected DNI chair Wafa ESSAHLI)*

Since its launch in 2008, DNI has performed important activities and gained a large experience and several successes. Former Chairs of DNI, Dr. Mariam Akhtar-Schuster and Prof. Giuseppe Enne conducted the Network towards high level of visibility and renowned image thanks to their dynamism, involvement and the support of several members of the SC and AB. Lessons learnt from these periods could be summarized as follow:

#### Strengths:

- Positive image at the international level (UNCCD)
- Ability to mobilize partners to create consortia to respond to the global demand for organizing scientific conferences
- Capacity to mobilize a large regional audience (NFP, regional organizations representatives...) during side-events
- Success in mobilizing partners to organize regional pre-Scientific conference meetings at the regional level (South-African Countries in Namibia, West Africa in Tunis, LAC in Brazil...)
- Editing Newsletter regularly and updated website

However, some weaknesses continue to hinder DNI evolution such as:

- Regional imbalance is still a challenge despite significant efforts of the outgoing SC (Africa: 10,5% LAC: 1,7%)
- Limited involvement of members in Networks' activities
- Limited activities of some working groups despite coordinators' efforts
- Difficulty of applying provisions of current statutes

To meet such challenges, experience has shown that:

- we have to rely mainly on Bureau's members to mobilize new memberships and partners;
- we should develop a win-win relationship with members to encourage their involvement in DNI activities and answer the question : what can be the contribution of the DNI for its regional members (from Africa, LAC and Asia) beyond the exchange of information and experience?

The proposed action plan for the next biennium 2014-2016 aims to:

- Mobilize all SC and AB members
- Increase the number of regional membership, mostly focusing on those continents where DNI is still underrepresented
- Improve the involvement of members in Network activities, especially young members
- Adapt statutes to current realities and existing environment.

The first draft of the action plan given below was submitted to SC members in order to be finalized and disseminated among all DNI members.

Results	Actions	Where?	When	Who?	How much?	Available Funds
<b>Expected Result, R1: The number of DNI members, especially from those continents still underrepresented, is increased by 25%</b>						
	Participation to regional preparatory meetings to the 3rd UNCCD Scientific Conference and promotion of DNI					
	West Africa	Tunis	Dec. 2014	WE	pm	pm
	LAC	Brasil	Jan. 2015	GE		NRD
	Contact Africa Union and NEPAD to plan side-events during African events and look for funding opportunities		Dec.2014 - Feb. 2015	WE	pm	pm
	DNI Stand and Informal contact with delegates and participants during the 3rd UNCCD Scientific Conference to promote DNI	Mexico	March 2015	???		
	Side-event of NoN during the 3rd Scientific conference	Mexico	March 2015	???		
	Organization of the post-UNCCD Scientific conference for Med countries	Roma	April 2015	NRD/GE/PPR		MAE via Global Mechanism
<b>Expected Result, R2: The number of DNI members, especially young early career researchers, involved in DNI activities is increased</b>						
	Organisation of a summer school or/and Webinar (one per year/semester and per region). This could be considered with the CGIAR dryland programmes (Richard Thomas)					
	Europe	Sardegna or Spain or Tunisia or Algeria	2015	PPR/NRD	tbd	in kind contribution of teachers, course fees
	Africa	tbd	2015-2016	WE		
	LAC					
	ASIA					
<b>Expected Result, R3: DNI's efficiency and visibility are increased</b>						
	Working Groups' activities are more effective and their results better disseminated among the DNI Website and Newsletter					
	Proposal of a new working group on climate change and land degradation			PPR		

<b>Expected Result, R4: DNI's visibility at the international level is improved</b>					
Participation at the Sustainable Development Solution Network Initiatives	tbd	tbd	???		
IPBES			MAS		
<b>Expected Result, R5: Membership fee is paid by at least 75% of DNI members</b>					
Circulate an email to all non paying members before the 3rd UNCCD Scientific Conference clarifying the benefits member could get from DNI		Jan-Feb 2015	CZ	pm	pm
Simplify payment modalities, integrate membership fee in event subscription fees, agreements with scientific societies for joint membership		Jan-Feb 2015	Fr.	pm	pm
<b>Expected Result, R6: Resource mobilization</b>					
Organization of hi-profile events for researchers policy makers and practitioners in connection with other organizations (e.g. scientific societies)					
Ask members to include DNI as partner for organizing dissemination and capacity building events in the context of research and cooperation projects					

**Annex 7**

**DNI revised statute, as approved by the General Assembly  
(please refer to the separate document enclosed)**

**Annex 8**

**DRAFT Template for requesting information about DNI Working Groups / Task Force**

<b>Title of the Working Group / Task Force</b>	
<b>Name of the leader(s)</b>	
<b>Institute(s)</b>	
<b>Participants to the Working Groups</b>	
<b>Theme/Rationale</b>	
<b>Past activities</b>	
<b>Products (publications, presentations, ...)</b>	
<b>Planned activities in the period 2014-2016</b>	
<b>Funding concept</b>	