



***FIFTH MEETING OF HIGH OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRIES
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ARAB AND
SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES***

Doha, Qatar, October 20-23, 2008

FINAL REPORT

As a follow up to the Summit of Arab and South American countries, held in Brasilia in May 2005, High Level Officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries held their Fifth Meeting in the city of Doha, Qatar on October 20-23, 2008.

The meeting was co-chaired by Ambassador Saif Bin Moqadam Alboainain, Assistant Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar ; Ambassador Pablo Romero Munoz , (Chile) as Presidency of UNASUR ; Ambassador Milad Atieh, (Syria) as President of the Arab Summit; Ambassador Ahmed Benhelli, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs at the Arab League and Ambassador Arnaldo Carrilho, Special Representative of Brazil for ASPA Affairs.

The High Level Officials reviewed the progress made since their fourth Meeting held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, on July 19-20, 2007 and the meeting of ASPA Ministers of Foreign Affairs, in Buenos Aires, on 20-21 February 2008, and exchanged views on the steps to meet the commitments that have been made, taking into consideration the need to focus their activities on the areas contained in this Report.

They noted with satisfaction the progress made regarding the bi-regional dialogue during 2008, and highlighted the results of the last meetings held at experts level which took place this year, in Algiers and Recife.

Likewise, they reiterated the need to continue efforts to meet the commitments contained in the Brasilia Declaration and the decisions and recommendations approved in subsequent meetings.

They noted with appreciation the broad participation of Delegations in the Fifth Meeting held in Doha, which denotes the importance attached to the process of growing understanding among the parties.

They agreed on the following;

First: Political Coordination

1. Commend the ongoing institutionalization process of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) which will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the integration process between the two regions.
2. They call on the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to resume negotiations in order to find, as soon as possible, a fair, peaceful and lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute referred to as "Question of the



Malvinas Islands", in accordance with the many relevant UN Resolutions. They further state that the inclusion of the Malvinas, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands as territories associated to Europe in Annex II to Title IV, "Association of Overseas Countries and Territories", of Part III of the Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community is not in accordance with the fact that a sovereignty dispute over such islands exists.

3. Support the Government of Bolivia in the development of initiatives of dialogue currently in process, and urge all the members of Bolivian society to attain a sustainable solution within the framework of the full respect for the state of legality and the legal order force. In this respect they recognize the efforts being excerpted by UNASUR to achieve these purposes.
4. Call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran for a positive response to the United Arab Emirates' initiative to reach a peaceful settlement in the issue involving the three UAE islands (Tunb Al-Kubra, Tunb Alsughra and Abou Moussa) through dialogue and direct negotiations, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and International Law.
5. Reaffirm the need to intensify existing efforts to resume the Arab – Israeli peace process in order to reach a just, lasting and comprehensive peace on all tracks on the basis of relevant resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly of the United Nations, as well as the Madrid Framework, in particular the "Land for Peace Principle", "the Road Map", and the "Arab Peace Initiative" adopted at the Beirut Summit (2002), and reaffirmed at the Riyadh Summit (2007) and Damascus Summit (2008) and the Annapolis Conference (2007), leading to the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories up to the lines of 4 June 1967, including the occupied Syrian Golan, and what remained from Lebanese territory and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State peacefully coexisting side by side with the State of Israel; and the dismantling of the separation Wall and all settlements including those in East Jerusalem; and they call upon the international community to resume their assistance to the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people and to lift all kinds of sanctions.
6. Reaffirm that regional security and stability in the Middle East require that the whole region be free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Within this context, they call upon all parties concerned as well as the international community to take practical and urgent measures for the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East. They reaffirm the importance of the accession of all countries of the region without exception to the NPT and the placement of all their nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East. They also express their support to the Arab Initiative calling for the establishment of a nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East.
7. Reaffirm that the use of nuclear energy for peaceful use is an alienable right for the states parties to the "Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty", and applying this right in a discriminatory or selective way, especially to the states parties, will affect the credibility



- of the treaty. And reaffirm the importance of cooperation in this field and support economic and technical research, and intensify exchange of experts between the research centers in the Arab and South American countries.
8. Affirm the importance of cooperation between both regions in international fora on issues related to disarmament.
 9. Express deep concern with regard to unilateral sanctions imposed on Syria by the government of the United States of America and consider that the so-called "Syria Accountability Act" violates principles of International Law and constitutes a violation of the objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter thereby setting a serious precedent as regards dealing with independent states.
 10. Welcome the Doha Agreement with respect to Lebanon under the auspices of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al- Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, which has successfully led to the election of Lebanese President, General Michel Soliman, as well as the formation of the national unity government, and reaffirm their solidarity with Lebanon according to the resolutions adopted by the Arab Foreign Ministers Council in Cairo, September 2008.
 11. Reaffirm the need for the unity, freedom, sovereignty and independence of Iraq and the right of non-interference in its internal affairs; they respect the will of the Iraqi people to freely decide their future, and strongly condemn all acts of terrorism and violence perpetrated against the Iraqi people. They also reaffirm the need to achieve national reconciliation in Iraq, and they support the efforts of the Iraqi government in this regard and to achieve security and stability; they also support the efforts of the various national Iraqi political factions in this respect. They also express their support for the efforts made by the League of Arab States for that purpose, and they call upon the international community to cancel Iraq's debts and to offer the assistance needed to undergo the process of reconstructing its institutions and infrastructure.
 12. Welcome the initiative led by the Arab League and the African Union to resolve the Darfur crisis, and express support for the Darfur Committee headed by H.E Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, H.E Amr Moussa Secretary General of the League of Arab States and the President of the African Union Commission, in this respect, express appreciation for the regional and international support rendered to the initiative, calling upon all the Sudanese factions to respond positively to the initiative to ensure its success. And call for an urgent solution to the Darfur crisis, stressing the priority of peace building. Also, highlight the importance of supporting the respect for human rights in Darfur. And reject any attempt to politicize the crisis in the name of international justice, and to use it to jeopardise peace and stability in Darfur.
 13. Reaffirm the unity, sovereignty and stability of Somalia, renew support for the Somali National Reconciliation and help it to overcome the crisis.



14. Reiterate the need to make structures of global governance more democratic, representative and legitimate by increasing participation of developing countries in the decision-making bodies of multilateral institutions.
15. Reaffirm the support of their Governments for the reform of the United Nations -- including the Security Council' s expansion in order to make it more democratic and responsive to the priorities of the Member States, particularly those of the developing countries that constitute the vast majority of its membership.
16. Took note of the postponement of the Second African-South American Countries Summit, with participation by the Arab countries of Africa, which was due to take place in Venezuela at the end of November 2008, at the request of the Government of the State of Qatar, as it would coincide with the UN Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Doha, on 29 November 2008, so as to allow a broader participation of African Heads of State in the latter. The Venezuelan Government is carrying out consultations to set a new date for holding the Second ASA Summit within the first four months of 2009.

Second: Economic cooperation

17. Decide to establish an open-ended committee to prepare for the businessmen conference to be held in Qatar in 2009 on the sidelines of the Second ASPA Summit. The core of this committee will be composed of representatives of the Troika of Arab Summit (Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar) and Chile (as pro tempore presidency of UNASUR), Brazil, the General Union of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in the Arab Countries, the Arab Businessmen Union and Arab Investors Union and their counterparts in South American Countries, in coordination with the Arab League. The meeting of the committee will be held before the end of the year and the date will be decided in due consultation with the State of Qatar.
18. Call on the Secretariat of LAS in coordination with UNASUR to undertake actions agreed upon mentioned in the Second Item of Rabat Declaration.
19. Decide to increase the cooperation and coordination between General Secretariat of LAS and General Secretariat of UNASUR.
20. Welcome the proposal to sign a memorandum of understanding between the League of Arab States and the Union of South American Nations to promote tourism between the two regions.
21. Welcome the convening of the international follow up conference for financing development which will be held in (Qatar; 29/11-2/12/2008).
22. Express their mutual concern at the International Financial Crisis, and its ramifications on the economies of the ASPA countries, with a view to safeguarding their interests within the efforts deployed by the International Community. They emphasize the need



to establish an international financial system, which prevents financial speculation and takes into account adequate regulations. In this context, the construction of this new international finance architecture must be congruent with socioeconomic development. Financial cooperation instruments, in addition to the international efforts, should be implemented. Cooperation mechanisms among the countries of the South must be reinforced to prevent crisis and poverty.

23. Look forward to holding bi-regional Seminars on Energy and Mining, as well as Financial and Capital Market laid out in the Rabat Plan of Action.
24. Welcome the convening of the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit in Kuwait 19-20 January 2009, which would lead to enhance cooperation between the two regions.
25. Noted with satisfaction that the dynamism of the South is thriving today, with a substantial part of the global GDP growth and trade being due to the trade promoted by and between countries in the South. They pledged to promote these mutually beneficial trends through enhanced linkages such as trade, investment and technology transfer, including the negotiation of trade agreements of bilateral or multilateral nature, such as the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP).
26. Welcome the Brazilian delegation announcement that Brazil will host in the city of Sao Paulo, from 17-21 November 2008, an International Conference entitled “Bio fuels as a Driving Force for Sustainable Development”, and distributed written information on the subject. Invitations have been sent to countries by the embassies of Brazil abroad . The Brazilian delegation stressed the importance of Arab and South American countries to participate in the event, in order to go for a deeper analysis and to separate facts and myths on the matter.

Third: Social Cooperation

27. The South American side will provide the League of Arab States General Secretariat with focal points on social affairs to enable it to coordinate and follow up matters in this regard.
28. Welcome the Meeting of Social Development Ministers in a South American country. The date and venue of the meeting will be determined through focal points to be decided later by the South American side.
29. Stress the importance of exchanging expertise and successful national initiatives to combat poverty and achieve social development.

Forth : Cultural Cooperation

Decide to adopt the recommendations of the cultural committee as follows;

30. The preparation of a budget for the operation of the Library, to be shared according to the financial possibilities of each participating country, and overseen by a technical



committee formed by members of the current Committee for Cultural Cooperation, for the coordination and follow-up of this issue.

31. The acceptance of the project presented by the Moroccan kingdom on the building of the Research Institute on South America in Tangier, presented in details and concerning the surface, the internal distribution of rooms, the administrative offices and different departments, and also the preparation of a budget for the operation of the institute to be shared according to the financial possibilities of each participating country, and overseen by a technical committee formed by members of the current Committee for Cultural Cooperation, for the coordination and follow-up of this issue.
32. The welcoming of the publication of the third and fourth editions of the book “The foreigner’s delight in everything that is astounding and marvelous”, issued by BIBLIASPA. These editions will be published by Brazil and Venezuela before the II Summit of Arab and South American Countries, aiming at its distribution in colleges, universities, libraries, schools, cultural and research centers.
33. The welcoming of the presentation of the update on the exhibition project “A Story of Two Rivers: the Amazon and the Nile”, including technical, geographical and social factors, inviting the concerned parties, Egypt and Sudan, to present their own propositions and studies for the development and the support of this project.
34. The welcoming the announcement made by Peru on the incoming presentation of two books, one related to the proximity Peruvian and Arab cultures entitled “L’ Andalous au Perou” by Ambassador Jaime Caceres, and the other entitled “The Origins of the Amazon” by Czech researcher Vohumir Jansky, within the framework of the Exhibition Project “A Story of Two Rivers: The Amazon and the Nile”, the latter published under the auspices of Peruvian institutions and the Czech Republic.
35. The consideration and acceptance of the newly added information presented by Brazil concerning the enlarged website of the Arab and South American Library (such as Calligraphy, Maps, Poetry, Articles, Videos and the Agenda of the activities of the Library, e.g. the “Conference on Arab Contributions to South America”, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, 12-14 November 2008), calling upon the countries of both regions to submit their contributions for the development of the site. In addition to supporting the site, the Committee also called upon the sending of contributions for the Review of Arab and South American Studies, which will be distributed during the forthcoming II Summit of Arab and South American Countries.
36. The acceptance, in principle, of the organization of the II Meeting of Arab and South American Ministers of Culture, to be held in Brazil, before the forthcoming II Summit of Arab and South American Countries, by the end of March 2009.
37. The welcoming of the proposal by the delegate of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on behalf of supporting cultural cooperation in different fields, especially the cultural cooperation between Arab and South American Countries, under the aegis of the



Declaration of Brasília. The Committee also welcomed the proposal of the delegate of the State of Kuwait concerning the activities of joint external festivals.

38. Call on Venezuela to set the date of the joint Meeting of Education Ministers in Arab and South American Countries and provide the agenda of the Meeting.
39. The Arab Countries confirm their support to the nomination by the Arab Republic of Egypt of Mr. Farouk Hosni, the Egyptian Minister of Culture, for the post of Director General of UNESCO, as the only Arab candidate for the post. He has extensive artistic and cultural experiences and has made Arab and international contributions in this respect. The South American Countries took note of this candidature, and the Arab Countries seek the support of the South American Countries for this nomination.

Fifth: Scientific, Technological and Environmental Cooperation

Decide to adopt the recommendations of the Science, Technology and Environment committee as follows;

40. Draft Riyadh Ministerial Communiqué

Cooperation on water resources, semi-arid lands and desertification has always been a major topic in the ASPA dialogue. It was initially addressed prior to the I ASPA Summit, in the “Seminar on Semi-Arid Lands and Water Resources” (Fortaleza/Petrolina, 29/8–1/10/2004), and included in the *Brasília Declaration* under chapter 9. In the follow-up process, the topic has been taken up in all High Officials Meetings, and was incorporated into the *Arab-South American Joint Communiqué on Environment*, approved in Nairobi on 6/2/2007, by the Arab and South American Ministers of Environment.

The initiative of the Ministerial Meeting on Water Resources was suggested by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the 3rd High Officials Meeting (Cairo, 30-31/1/2007). In the 4th High Officials Meeting (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 18-20/7/2007), the Brazilian delegation offered to host a preparatory meeting in Recife.

In the Recife Meeting (20-22 August 2008), experts and delegates engaged in discussing proposals and priority areas for cooperation on water resources and combating desertification. Accordingly, the draft communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of Riyadh, to be held on 16-17 November, 2008, has been prepared (as presented in **Annex 1**).

During the Joint Meeting of the Committees on Science and Technology and Environment, the delegations agreed on reviewing the draft communiqué and sending their remarks to LAS to envsusdev.dept@las.int before 7th of November 2008.

The final version of Riyadh Ministerial Communiqué will be approved in the Meeting of the High Officials of the Ministries in Charge of Water Resources to be held in Riyadh on the 16th of November 2008, before submitting it to the joint Ministerial Meeting, to be held on 17th of November, 2008, and look forward for the participation of the Ministers in charge of water resources in both regions to attend the Riyadh Ministerial meeting.



41. Joint Executive Biannual Program for environmental cooperation (2009–2010).

The committee reviewed and approved the program proposed by the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the Environment (CAMRE/LAS), which includes the following areas for cooperation:

- Integrated waste management.
- New technologies in water desalinization.
- Techniques and technologies to limit and adapt to climate change.
- Modern techniques and technologies to mitigate the effects of droughts and combat desertification.
- Cleaner production technologies and clean development mechanism (CDM).
- Integrated coastal zone management.
- Convening coordination meetings during the international conferences related to the environment.
- Activation of the information network established in Brazil.

The LAS and the ACSAD suggested to host a training workshop that deals with regional climate system modeling to reduce uncertainties in climate change scenarios.

42. Follow up on the outcome of the Santa Cruz and Recife meetings.

42.1. Recommended structure:

- The LAS (Department of Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development and ACSAD) will act as the regional Nodal Point to the Committee on Science and Technology as well as the Committee of Environmental Cooperation. Brazil (Ministry of External Relations) will be the regional Nodal Point for South America until the Secretariat of the UNASUR is formed and can assume this responsibility.
- Each country shall designate a national Nodal Point to act as coordinator between the committees and relevant national entities.

42.2. ASPA-Science website:

- The ASPA-Science website (www.aspa-science.org) shall be a platform for the follow-up on the activities on Science and Technology, as well as a means of interchanging projects, proposals and experiences and of encouraging contact between the scientific communities of both regions.
- The Committee welcomes the positive response of some countries in the two regions in nominating their nodal points to the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, which is responsible for the website data management, and requests other countries to follow suit before the forthcoming High Officials Meeting.

42.3. Creation of the Arab-South American Technological University:

- The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Palestinian Government agreed to prepare a preliminary proposal for the creation of the “Simón Bolívar” Technological University, to be submitted before the forthcoming High Officials Meeting.



42.4. Cooperation program in the areas of research, management capacity, exchange of experiences and experts on science and technology:

- The Committee requests feedback on the proposals submitted in the Santa Cruz de la Sierra High Officials Meeting by the Delegations of Bolivia, Chile, Venezuela and the Arab League/ACSAD concerning cooperation activities.

42.5. Encourage the bi-lateral cooperation between Palestine and South American countries in providing the Palestinians with under and postgraduate fellowships:

- The Committee encourages Palestine to inform the South American countries the areas of specialization and the number of fellowships it needs in order to allow the effective implementation of cooperation programs.

42.6. Peaceful applications of atomic energy

- The Committee welcomes the proposal of the Peruvian Institute of Nuclear Energy (IPEN) to participate in cooperation and research programs in the field of atomic energy with peaceful applications. These programs will include capacity building, research and pilot project implementation in the fields of agriculture, medicine and electricity generation. Such programs should be carried out within the IAEA framework of cooperation. The Committee encourages Arab Countries to benefit from the Peruvian offer.

43. Other matters.

43.1 Project proposal "*Land Degradation Monitoring and Assessment in Arab Region and South America*" (LAMAARSA):

- LAS/ACSAD presented the project proposal "Land Degradation Monitoring and Assessment in Arab Region and South America" (LAMAARSA), to be considered by South American and Arab countries. The committee requests interested South American countries to analyze and give their remarks on the project. Brazil, as regional nodal point, will work in coordination with the LAS/ACSAD on this matter.

43.2 Brazilian proposal of cooperation between ASPA countries to implement the National Action Programs (NAPs), which will be similar to the *Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) Platform for Cooperation in the Area of Environment*.

- The Committee welcomes the "Proposal of Cooperation Among the Member Countries of the South American-Arab Countries Summit (ASPA) in the Field of National Programs to Combat Desertification" (**Annex 2**), presented by the Brazilian delegation, and requests the member states and LAS/ACSAD to review it for discussion during the next High Officials Meeting.

43.3 Areas of Cooperation proposed by The Delegation of Brazil

- The Committee highly appreciates the proposals made by the Brazilian Delegation which covers the following areas:
 - Space-based satellite environmental monitoring.



- Global and regional climate system modeling (early warning drought forecasting systems) to reduce uncertainties in climate changing scenarios.
- Impact adaptation and vulnerability research in arid and semi-arid regions.
- Development of desalinization technology.

Sixth : Follow-up Mechanisms

44. ASPA STRUCTURE

44.1 Propose to establish an organizational structure for ASPA in order to make it more dynamic, to be submitted to the up coming ASPA Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting, in March 2009, as follows;

- (a) (Highest level) The Summit, formed by Heads of States and Governments, to meet every three years;
- (b) (Second level) The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, to meet every two years;
- (c) (Third level) The Council of High Officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, formed by the National Coordinators (Focal Points), to meet every six months;
- (d) (Fourth level – 1) The Sectorial Committees, formed by experts in each area (Nodal Points), to meet at least twice a year;
- (e) (Fourth level – 2) The Executive Coordination Group, formed by the Chair of the Arab Summit, the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, representing the Arab Countries, and the Presidency of the UNASUR, Brazil (Brazil will temporarily join this Group until UNASUR becomes fully structured) representing the South American countries. This Group should meet twice a year.

44.2 Decide that the currently existing Committees for Cultural Cooperation, Science and Technology, and Economic Cooperation will be joined by two new Committees, those for Environmental Cooperation and Social Cooperation.

44.3 Decide the above-mentioned meetings should convene in rotation between Arab and South American Countries if possible.

45. DRAFT DECLARATION OF SECOND ASPA SUMMIT

Decide to set up an open ended ad hoc group to draft the declaration to be issued at the closure of the Second ASPA Summit. This drafting group will be integrated by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, Syria, Qatar, Egypt, Brazil, Venezuela and Chile. This declaration will include the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Political Coordination
3. Economic & Financial Coordination



4. Bi-regional Cooperation (Culture & Education, Environment, Science & Technology, Business & Trade, Social Affairs)
5. Follow-up Mechanism

All countries are invited to send their contributions (paragraphs) to be included in the sections above.

46. Decide to hold the preparatory meeting of High Officials for the Doha Summit in Egypt during the first half of the month of February 2009.
47. Suggest to hold the preparatory meeting of Ministers of Forging Affairs in the Arab League Head Quarters in Cairo during the month of March before the Doha Summit to be held during 31/3 – 1/4/ 2009.

The High Officials delegates thank the government of Qatar for its hospitality and for the excellent organization of the meeting.

Doha, Qatar, October 23, 2008



Annex 1

Draft Riyadh Ministerial Communiqué between Arab Countries and South American Countries on Water Resources and Combating Desertification.

Recalling the Brazilian Declaration adopted by the heads of states and governments of the Arab states and the South American countries on May 11th, 2005 particularly Chapter 9, which stipulates the development of cooperation and dialogue between the two groups to limit degradation in water and land resources, combat desertification and seek to develop and manage their resources in a sustainable manner that would positively affect the standard of living of the people in both the Arab and South American countries.

Referring in this respect to the Join Communiqué adopted by the Ministers of Environment in the Arab and South American countries on environmental cooperation in Nairobi, Kenya on February 6, 2005.

Taking into consideration the UN conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and Section Two of Agenda 21 on the conservation and management of resources for development, as well as Chapters 9 and 33-34 on financial resources and mechanisms, transfer of environmentally sound technology cooperation and capacity building to assist developing countries in the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

We the ministers responsible for water affairs in the Arab and South American countries and heads of delegations gathering in the Riyadh, Saudi Arabia during the period November 16-17, 2008 express our appreciation to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia for having generously hosted this joint ministerial meeting that is considered as a base for future actions and which reflects the views of the Arab and South American countries in dealing with issues related to water resources and combating desertification. We declare our commitment to achieve the following:

-Adopting the concept of comprehensive planning and sustainable management of the available water resources.

-Implementing information management systems that include exchange of relevant data on exploring, developing, benefiting and preserving water resources, managing its demand and rationing its use.

-Encouraging applied research and exchange of experiences in the assessment and development of water resources, rationalizing its use, and improving and increasing water use efficiency, particularly in irrigation.

-Developing the use of non-conventional water, such as treated waste water, water desalination, water reuse as well as joint training and exchange of experiences in these areas.

-Implementing the concepts of sustainable development when dealing with environmental systems that are prone to drought and desertification with special focus on environmental and social issues, on monitoring drought and land degradation, on coordination and communications at all governmental levels, on integrated policies, on



poverty reduction and on establishing the institutional structure as principal component of the issues under consideration.

-Cooperating in the field of combating desertification through the use of appropriate technologies for the rehabilitation, the implementation and management of water harvesting techniques, the rational use of water resources in agriculture, the establishment and development of plant gene banks in addition to enhancing the implementation of the principles of best practices in agriculture.

-Identifying suitable opportunities and fields of cooperation for both regions, in areas related to climate change, such as the preparation and development of models for climate studies at the level of environmental systems, the establishment and development of early warning systems for monitoring desertification, droughts, forecasting at the level of environmental systems, countries and sites; changes in land use; through the adoption of methodologies based on benefiting from modern technologies such as remote sensing and geographic information systems.

-Proposing and implementing strategies and scientific, technical and research cooperation programs, encouraging exchange of experiences, establishing joint working groups, developing programs for institutional set up in the fields of integrated water resource management, combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

-Benefiting from available opportunities provided by the countries of the two regions to offer technical support in the management and use of small units for water desalination.

-Increasing the yield of nonrenewable fossil water unit while preserving the rights of future generations in this water.

-Encouraging investment in agriculture in countries which are rich in water resources, as well as in agro-industries, in trade in agricultural products between the two regions based on the competitive advantages of each country of the countries of the two regions with the aim of rationalizing the use of natural resources, developing production and establishing the basis for sustainable development.

-Join training and exchange of experiences in all areas and issues related to water resources, combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought

-Coordinating positions in the international fora related to water to serve the interests of both the Arab countries and the South American countries.



Annex 2

PROPOSAL OF COOPERATION AMONG THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTH AMERICA-ARAB COUNTRIES SUMMIT (ASPA) IN THE FIELD OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

ABBREVIATIONS

ASD	Areas Susceptible to Desertification
ASPA	Summit of South American-Arab Countries
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
COP	Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought
CRIC	Committee for the Review and Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought
CSEA	Consolidated Strategy and Enhanced Approach
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
MERCOSUL	Southern Common Market
GM	Global Mechanism
NAP	National Action Program to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNASUL	Union of South American Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biodiversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

LINEAMENTS OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAM

1. FRAMEWORK

This Programmatic Framework for South-South Cooperation in the ASPA Context is intended to serve as an initial reference framework for the technical cooperation actions among the Mechanism's Members by contributing to the setting of priorities, to determining demands, and to identifying real possibilities of cooperation within the scope of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought (UNCCD).

The main goal of the intended cooperation will be the implementation, within the ASPA Member States, of their National Action Programs (NAPs) to combat desertification. The objective is to strengthen the efforts made by each country to achieve the Convention's goals through exchange of experiences and labor qualification, and by overcoming any deficiencies that may be found in the National Action Programs.



1.1 - Background

Cooperation for combating desertification and managing water resources is a central issue in the ASPA dialogue. It was first addressed prior to the first ASPA Summit (May 10-11, 2005) at the “Seminar on Semi-Arid Lands and Water Resources” (Fortaleza/Petrolina, September 28-October 1, 2004) and included under Chapter 9 of the *Brasilia Declaration*, ASPA’s foundational document. During the process of regional follow-up, this topic was addressed at all Senior Officials Meetings and included in the *Joint Arab-South American Communiqué on the Environment*, approved by the Arab and South American Ministers of the Environment in Nairobi (2/6/2008).

In Recife, at the meeting of ASPA’s Committee on Science and Technology and at the Seminar on Water Resources, Semi-Arid Lands, and Desertification (August 20-22, 2008), the topic was taken up again with a view to the definition of specific cooperation initiatives in preparation for the Ministerial Meeting on Water Resources and Desertification to be held in Riyadh (November 16-17, 2008). On that occasion, the Brazilian delegation presented a draft of the proposal and proposed to be submit it to other ASPA Member States, for possible approval, at the Fifth Senior Officials Meeting in Doha (October 20-23, 2008). This draft is a systematization of the proposal presented in Recife.

1.2 – Objectives

The primary focus of cooperation to Combat Desertification should be on strengthening national capabilities to implement the UNCCD and on establishing a platform to bolster National Action Programs to Combat Desertification (NAPs). To this end, it should foster the building of a South-South cooperation proposal within ASPA based on the following characteristics:

1. it should be a long-term effort with successive execution stages carried out through specific projects;
2. it should take into account the priorities of the participating countries, in terms of support for the implementation of the UNCCD, within the framework of their socioeconomic development programs;
3. it should seek to benefit from the experiences of each country;
4. it should not duplicate initiatives, Focal Points, and technical personnel and should use the structure set up by each country under the UNCCD for this program’s implementation;
5. it should take into account existing financial and technical supports.

Each country should perform a brief evaluation of their needs based on national consultations and on the elements already identified in their respective NAPs in regard to strengthening national capacities, with a view to implementing the UNCCD. These needs would constitute the foundation of a long-term South-South cooperation initiative among the members of the ASPA, on the basis of the Programmatic Framework for Cooperation, harmonized with a proposal to be submitted to the pertinent parties at a time determined by the participants.

It is suggested that the *Pro Tempore* Presidencies of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and of the League of Arab States (LAS) cooperate in the coordination and formulation of the proposal, with the support of the respective UNCCD Focal Points of each country.



The parties involved would offer the countries' experiences in implementing the commitments undertaken under the Convention, and commit themselves to seek the support of possible collaborators, financial entities, and potential specific funds.

It is recommended that follow-up meetings be held as Side Events of the Programmatic Framework during UNCCD COP's or other events related to the issue. Follow-up to the discussions on the final Programmatic Framework could occur through meetings of the proponents and the Working Group to be established by the parties.

1.3 – New International Framework

The changes in the standards for attributing resources to development, as set out in the *Monterrey Consensus* and the *Paris Declaration*, have important implications for the implementation of the UNCCD in regard to national anti-poverty and natural resource management programs. The implications in terms of financing to meet the UNCCD objectives are: adaptation; the shift from sectoral financial instruments to more global and integrated instruments; positioning the UNCCD within priority national and international budgetary programs; and harmonizing the activities among donors and the convergence of those activities with the priorities of countries.

The UNCCD's target for the next 10 years is the establishment of renewed global partnership to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas and to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. This target focuses not only strategic objectives to improve the conditions of life of populations and affected ecosystems, but also operational objectives such as:

- mainstreaming;
- strengthening of capabilities;
- development of integrated investment frameworks;
- possible synergies with other Environmental Conventions; and
- strengthening of South-South cooperation.

1.4 – Facilitating Framework

1.4.1 – South American countries of Experience

The South American countries had a decisive role in the establishment of the UNCCD and have achieved significant progress in its implementation. The seminar on "*Climate Variability, Climate Change, and Social Vulnerability in the Semi-arid Tropics (ICID)*", held in Fortaleza, Brazil, offered the technical arguments required for the countries to decide to create the UNCCD during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio 92), in Rio de Janeiro, 1992. Subsequently, in 1994, the South American Conference on Combating Desertification (COSLAD) drafted the first Regional Annex to the Convention.

There followed several cooperation initiatives that stressed the issue at a regional level, as illustrated by the Subregional Plan of Action of the Andean Countries (PAS Andes), the Subregional Chaco Program (PAS Chaco), and the Mercosur Strategy for Combating Diversification. These instruments have helped the South American countries to develop several techniques and technologies for combating desertification and managing soil and water resources in arid and semi-arid regions of South America.



There is still much progress to be made in implementing the UNCCD, but it is possible to learn and evolve together. Development should and must be a collective process in which all parties offer mutual assistance through the pursuit of common objectives and the strengthening of their historical and cultural ties.

1.4.2 – Experience of Arab League countries

(Text to be prepared by the Arab League countries)

1.4.3 – Convergence with Other Initiatives

The proposed cooperation will also seek close coordination between the various initiatives of the Arab countries and the activities of international and/or regional organizations and potential partners. The objective of this coordination will be to ensure effective convergence in mobilizing and using financial and technical resources and establishing a dialogue with bilateral and multilateral agencies within the framework of the *Paris Declaration*.

2. DEMANDS TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE UNCCD NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

Interested countries should submit their cooperation needs in regard to the Convention's implementation with a view to developing this cooperation proposal. The demands should be interpreted and systematized according to the proposed model in Table 1. With regard to methodology, a tentative three-category classification is suggested (which does not exclude the possibility of introducing other potential areas of cooperation based on the priorities and interests of participating countries). A facilitating framework to be filled in by the countries is attached hereto.

- (a) training of human resources;
- (b) organizational development, legal and institutional framework, and development of manuals, diagnostic studies, and indicators;
- (c) communication strategies and awareness-raising about desertification

3. FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL FOR COOPERATION AMONG THE ASPA COUNTRIES

Considering:

- a) the demands to be submitted by the different countries;
- b) the current capabilities of countries willing to collaborate in the required areas;
- c) the possibility of mobilizing specialized technical assistance under bilateral North/South and multilateral cooperation;
- d) the applicable experiences of each country,

a medium-term (approximately 5 years initially) Programmatic Framework for Cooperation is proposed based on intervention axis to be accomplished through specific projects developed under ASPA's thrust to combat desertification, in which interested Member States would take part according to their respective priorities.

In addition, a set of actions for immediate implementation, which could constitute a first stage of the intended cooperation and, simultaneously, serve to promote opportunities, with active and



participative interaction among the partners throughout mid-2009, for improving and developing the Cooperation Program through medium-and-long-term axes, objectives, and actions, for the purposes of implementing the Program in the 2009-2013 period. To this end, the organization of participative seminars and workshops is recommended to exchange experiences and provide possible assistance in the development of specific technical cooperation projects.

Objectives

The primary objective of this cooperation proposal is to provide the necessary conditions for implementing the UNCCD and the updated National Action Programs to Combat Desertification (NAP's), thereby responding to the specific demands of the countries involved and to the requirements of the current global development assistance setting. Therefore, the proposal must include technical actions (training), strategic actions (mobilization of financial resources based on a National Financial Strategy), policies (possible synergies with other key strategies, such as efforts against poverty and soil degradation), and mobilization actions (coordinated international technical and financial assistance).

The goal is to adopt a collective approach that is adapted to national realities. To this end, four axes can be tentatively identified (Table II):

- Axis I: Institutional Strengthening;
- Axis II: Environmental Communication and Citizenship;
- Axis III: Scientific and Technological Development; and
- Axis IV: Partnerships and Synergies.

Each axis will be developed on the basis of various typologies (see suggestions in Table II), coordinated through specific projects for one or several countries. Specification of the activities and modalities of execution will be carried out in partnership with interested organizations. For the initial five-year period, it is proposed that a mission track be organized so as to formulate and clearly set out the support necessary to develop an environment that facilitates specific technical actions which would be incorporation into one project or more with guaranteed financing.

Table II – South-South Cooperation Program: Axes and Types of Actions

AXES	TYPE OF ACTION
INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING	ADVISORY SUPPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION.
	ADVISORY SUPPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.
	ADVISORY SUPPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS IN THE LEADING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ANTI-DESERTIFICATION CENTERS.
	TRAINING OF TECHNICAL PERSONNEL IN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAP's.
	TRAINING OF TECHNICAL PERSONNEL AND EDUCATORS TO STAFF THE LEADING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ANTI-DESERTIFICATION CENTERS.
	COMMUNICATIONS AND INTEGRATION OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES.
	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIRTUAL COMMUNITY NETWORK IN THE LEADING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ANTI-DESERTIFICATION CENTERS.



ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMUNICATION AND
CITIZENSHIP

MOBILIZATION AND ACTIVATION OF THE COLLECTIVE LEARNING NETWORK.

MANAGEMENT AND TRACKING.

SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND
DESERTIFICATION NETWORKS.

SCIENTIFIC AND
TECHNOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT TO RESEARCH ON COMBATING DESERTIFICATION AND
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, EXTENSION COURSES AND PUBLICATIONS.

DEVELOPMENT OF A DIALOGUE WITH COOPERATION AGENCIES ON MOBILIZING
RESOURCES FOR THE ASPA/UNCCD PROGRAM.

SUPPORT TO IDENTIFYING AREAS OR INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE SYNERGIES IN
THE DOMESTIC SPHERE, INCLUDING LAND DEGRADATION, MITIGATION
OF/ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE, AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION.

PARTNERSHIPS AND
SYNERGIES

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASPA-UNCCD COMMITTEE

PREPARATION OF A CONVERGENCE MATRIX WITH EXISTING INITIATIVES AT THE
NATIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL, REGIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS TO
IDENTIFY COMPLEMENTARITIES.

ORGANIZE WORKSHOPS TO EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES WITH INITIATIVES SUCH
AS TERRAFRICA, SOLARID ETC.

Axis I: Institutional Strengthening

The aim of the Institutional Strengthening axis is to develop and execute the following types of activities:

- Advisory support to Organizational Development processes;
- Advisory support to the formulation and implementation of National Plans to Combat Desertification;
- Advisory support to the formulation and implementation of National Environmental Education Programs;
- Advisory support to the formulation of educational projects in Green Rooms or Leading Environmental Education and Anti-Desertification Centers;
- Training of technical personnel in government and civil society to implement the NAP's;
- Training of technical personnel and educators to staff the Green Rooms and Leading Environmental Education and Anti-Desertification Centers;
- Management and Tracking.

These activities will be based on:

- a) the methodologies developed in Brazil with the support of international partners and tested through ongoing projects in arid zones of Brazil, following the required preparation of a preliminary diagnostic study and an implementation Work Plan;
- b) the analysis of the experiences and progress attained in all of the Member States, for the purpose of preparing the National Anti-Desertification Authorities and for the



Executing Agents for Environmental Education Policy so that, upon the conclusion of the Programmatic Framework for Cooperation, they can implement and evaluate their own policies, which would facilitate the integration of their policies with other development policies and help mobilize the necessary financial resources.

- c) the possible technical contributions of potential partners (FAO, Global Mechanism)

Axes II: Environmental Communication and Citizenship

The activities in the Environmental Communication and Citizenship axis will serve to promote ongoing communications and interaction among countries, in addition to forming a community of professionals capable of responding to the challenges of Combating Desertification and Environmental Education.

To ensure consistent communications founded on the lessons learned throughout the Program's execution, the communications strategy will be submitted to and periodically reviewed by a Management Committee established for this purpose by the Secretariats of the UNASUR (substituted by Brazil until it is formally created) and the Arab League Secretariat.

After the program's execution, National Environmental Education and Anti-Desertification Networks will be implemented, all of which interconnected and operating in conformity with the specific National Plans.

The Environmental Communication and Citizenship axis will include actions to identify and systematize the experiences in all of the participating countries. The documentation and analysis of the experiences will form the basis for exchanges, which will be initiated through an educational project that recognizes and values the peculiarities of each country, while promoting growth and collective learning.

Axis III – Scientific and Technological Development

The activities of the Scientific and Technological axis will support research of mutual interest to the ASPA countries on issues related to Combating Desertification and Environmental Education. As an example, these activities will analyze the costs of natural resource depletion (the costs of taking no action in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid dry regions), including land (as relates to agriculture) and biodiversity loss, in addition to the measures required to adapt to climate change.

These activities will also support post-graduate extension courses – whether taught in regular classes or through distance and Internet learning methods – to qualify personnel and communities in several technical topics, as well as those related to management and basic financial mechanisms, including innovative subject areas such as mitigating/adapting to climate change. In addition, financial resources will be provided to publish research studies considered relevant to the other partner countries.

With regard to research, it may be possible to capitalize on the experiences of the Global Mechanism and other partners such as the Center for Tropical Agricultural Research and Education (CATIE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and FAO, in addition to the specific experiences of other countries with advanced implementation of their National Action Programs (NAPs).



Axis IV: Partnerships, Synergies

This axis includes the development of bioregional and multilateral activities in the area of cooperation management, involving all activities related to fostering, promoting, exchanging, coordinating, identifying complementarities and synergies and identifying opportunities for mobilizing financial and technical resources.

In addition, an ASPA Committee to Combat Desertification (ASPA/CCD) will be established, which could meet during ASPA meetings with a view to developing a periodic cooperation plan and reviewing financial and accounting records. Furthermore, an ASPA Network will be created to promote, develop, and monitor the objectives of the activities specified under the Program.

3.1 Short-Term Implementation Actions

Considering the actions that can be implemented in the short term under this Programmatic Framework in regard to the continuing the exchange of experiences already under way in the countries, the following activity could be programmed:

3.1.2 Suggested Seminar: “ASPA – Strategies for Combating Desertification and Poverty Reduction”

Possible comparative studies of areas susceptible to desertification in order to meet the “Strategies to Combat Desertification and Poverty Reduction,” focusing on the experiences undertaken with the support of international cooperation initiatives, notably those that promote food security and contextualized education, dry land management, and programs to combat rural poverty.

The objective of the seminar would be to offer technical capacity-building to participating countries to develop and submit projects/programs to international financing organizations on “combating desertification and drought” in the member ASPA states.

Various potential partners for Combating Desertification (GM, FAO, and UNEP) could take part in the event, given their expressive experiences.

4. PRELIMINARY PROGRAM FINANCING FRAMEWORK AND ARCHITECTURE

The global cooperation program will coordinate in four categories of implementation actions:

- development actions, including technical assistance, travel to the participating countries, workshops, etc.;
- technical actions executed on the basis of the experiences of Brazil and/or partner nations;
- technical assistance actions executed through international cooperation (international partners);
- global coordination and management program actions, which encompass the human resources to ensure ongoing coordination and secure operational costs, including the meetings of the CCD/ASPA.

The global program’s costs will be calculated initially to cover a five-year period and will be afforded by the interested ASPA countries. Based on the amounts determined, the parties will then commit to securing financing sources and partnerships.