

**CSD 17 Partnership Presentation submitted by  
Namibian National Rangeland Management Policy and Strategy Working Group**

**Fostering a Culture of Partnership for Rangelands**

**Namibian National Rangeland Management Policy  
and Strategy Working Group**

**Organizing Partners:**

Namibian National Rangeland Management Policy and Strategy (NRMP&S) working group, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF), Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) from Namibia

**Introduction:**

Namibia may be seen as an extreme. For example it is classified as the driest sub-Saharan country and it is one of the youngest independent nations with a small, yet rapidly growing population. However, it shares many similar ecological, social, political and economic conditions with other African countries and even countries on other continents.

Soil degradation and loss of productivity takes place on privately held and communal land as well as in the national parks. It negatively affects crop production, water supply for people in rural areas and in towns and cities, and it reduces the income generated from the second largest economic sector and the biggest employer in the country: agriculture and land-based tourism. The symptoms of land degradation include soil erosion, bush encroachment, sinking underground water tables, loss of biodiversity and loss of livelihood among many others.

In response the Country Pilot Partnership Program (CPPP) was initiated to help coordinate the policies and activities of 6 government ministries as well as several civil society organizations, producer associations, donors and private sector representatives. Also, the National Rangeland Management Policy and Strategy working group (NRMP&S) was initiated by the Livestock Producers' Association of Namibia after it was recognized that efforts to improve marketing and breeding genetics by farmers and ranchers were not addressing the even greater challenge of the dwindling primary resource base: abundant and healthy forage and water for animals and plants and ultimately people needed to come into focus.

In this side event Namibian delegates share their experiences with:

- Policies and practices that combine agricultural production and economic livelihood with nature conservation and land-based tourism;
- The dynamics and successes of community based natural resource management (CBNRM);
- The establishment of conservancy areas and management groups on both privately held and communally managed land to enhance de-centralized decision making and monitoring;
- The role of livestock for the essential ecological services when healing land degradation as well as for livelihoods in arid and sub-arid environments where large scale crop production is not viable.
- The power of the interactions between modern science and traditional knowledge and practices.

The interactions between various sectors and industries and service providers and even between various role players in local communities require the acceptance of complexity. What has helped to establish trust and capacity to manage that complexity is a holistic approach to program and project planning and implementation, patient communication and personalized engagement. It led to the realization that partnership, if it should be sustainable and dependable, cannot simply be introduced as a strategic “organizational structure” or “concept”.

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When partnership emerges from well dialogued and jointly agreed upon principles of a healthy eco-system process and when the connections are made to the cultural context it tends to nurture internalized confidence. Trust in self and others can grow and the sense of “being in this together” strengthens all partners’ capacity to face and grow through risks, change and uncertainty.

### **Methodology of the Session:**

- The session will feature a 25 minute film titled *Herding the Future – knowing what a grass plant needs* produced by IRDNC and documenting the process of re-introducing planned grazing and herding practices in several pastoral communities in North Western Namibia in order to improve ecological health, bio-diversity and livelihoods of people.
- It will be followed by a simple inter-active demonstration of the **effect of soil surface condition** on water infiltration into the ground and a powerpoint presentation of practices and programs elsewhere in Africa, USA and Australia where the **grazing and animal impact of livestock is used to prepare crop lands in a no-till or minimum-till process.**
- Following will be a **Q&A session with the facilitators and presenters from Namibia**, sharing their experience of formulating a national policy for rangeland management.

### **Target audience, objectives and impact:**

Government, academia and Major Group delegates and UN organizations addressing innovative, low-cost and sustainable land management approaches and cross-sectoral coordination of development activities.

### **The objective is to:**

- Enhance the understanding of delegates of the root causes for land degradation and of the co-evolution and symbiosis (another partnership) of plants and animals. This is expected to enhance the recognition and contribution of the planned management of free ranging animals, both domestic and wildlife, to sustainable development.
- Enhance the confidence of the audience in creative partnerships between modern scientific research and development, indigenous and cultural practices, organizational support as well as democratic state governance.
- Link with and learn from other national and international groups working on similar issues and interested in partnering on shared goals and objectives.

### **Experts/trainer/instructors:**

Wiebke Volkmann (of Earth Wise Enterprise, free-lance facilitator for Farmer Support and Holistic Management and member of the National Rangeland Management Policy and Strategy working group), Government representatives from Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry.

### **Expected Outcomes and relevance to the CSD:**

Development can only be really sustainable if there is a triple-bottom-line approach that is sincerely realized and implemented by teams of mutually supportive partners in development. The presentation highlights the encouraging opportunities that lie in approaching natural resource management practices and policies as an **integrated web of food security, commercial activity, ecological services, cultural vitality and political peace.** This session serves to inspire participants to strengthen or to recognize up to now un-tapped opportunities for national, regional and international integration of policies and implementation efforts, taking into account the specific needs of plants, animals and people in diverse environments.