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**AGREEMENT OF COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL DRYLAND RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS: *DESERTNET INTERNATIONAL (DNI), THE WORLD OVERVIEW OF CONSERVATION APPROACHES AND TECHNOLOGIES (WOCAT), AND THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF DESERT RESEARCH INSTITUTES (GNDRI)***

Independent and peer-reviewed science needs to be available in timely and policy-relevant (but not policy prescriptive) formats to ensure preparedness of decision-makers to properly address sustainable land management (SLM) and sustainable development goals (SDGs) in areas exposed to or at risk of land degradation and desertification (LDD).

This agreement on collaboration and cooperation between three of the world's leading non-governmental scientific research and knowledge networks on LDD and SLM will initialize the collaboration and cooperation of existing independent networks and institutions. The aim of the agreement is to build a broad multi-disciplinary web of independent knowledge-generating, -assessing, -sharing and -exchanging networks on LDD and SLM to:

- (a) Promote the required recognition for this collaborative and cooperative agreement to provide multi-disciplinary policy-relevant knowledge to support the UNCCD and other Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and science-policy advisory bodies;
- (b) Strengthen the role and the visibility of the dryland science and knowledge community in the identification of options for definition and implementation of appropriate SLM and SDGs with particular consideration of dryland requirements and opportunities.

The international collaboration and cooperation of independent knowledge-generating, -assessing, -sharing and -exchanging networks on LDD and SLM will include the following complementary functions at the science-policy interface, but are not limited to these, to support the implementation of measures to achieve LDD and SLM:

- Provision and further development of continuously up-dated documentation and evaluation of local SLM knowledge, based on the evaluation of SLM technologies and approaches with local and national partners (WOCAT);
- Development and provision of support tools for the selection and up-scaling of identified best practices, which are fundamental for providing guidelines for the validation of best practices at local, regional and national levels (WOCAT);
- Facilitating access to established institutions, which can provide institutional scientific and technological knowledge at local, national and regional scales for the long-lasting observation and monitoring of the status of drylands (GNDRI);
- Testing of new approaches and technologies for SLM and restoration to support measures to achieve a land degradation neutral world (GNDRI);
- Organisation of international, independent scientific and policy-relevant yet not policy prescriptive assessments of specific desertification and SLM issues and the synthesis of existing data and information (DNI);
- Continuous identification and mobilization of experts in all regions to constantly enlarge the basis of independent, novel and multidisciplinary expertise, pertinent to an holistic approach to LDD and SLM promoted by DNI to work at the science-policy interface under this agreement (DNI).



All three networks will also join forces to promote the following issues of LDD and SLM under this agreement:

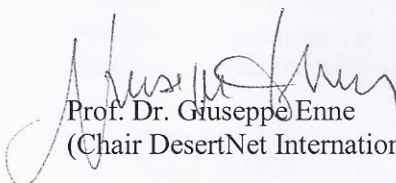
- Ensure objectivity and scientific credibility of the provided data and information;
- Respect and consider also variable perspectives, minority views and non-academic approaches in a transparent way;
- Inform policy on scientific and research developments addressing the demand of stakeholders and opening new policy options;
- Promote public awareness on LDD issues, SLM solutions and SDGs.

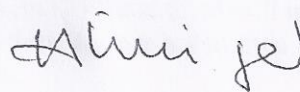
The collaborating and cooperating networks will be independent of any form of lobbying or private interests, and abstain from political activities, and will actively take steps to remain so. The sole aim of this agreement is to advance the services from the science and research community to attain multi-disciplinary policy-relevant scientific knowledge on LDD and SLM and enhance social benefits arising from their use.

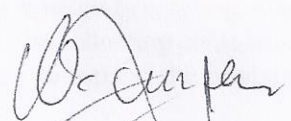
DNI, WOCAT and GNDRI will remain autonomous and maintain their individual institutional mandates under this agreement.

This agreement between DNI, WOCAT and GNDRI is effective for an unlimited period and is open, thereby, cordially inviting other dryland research networks to join.

Signed in Windhoek, Namibia, on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

  
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