

Concept Note

Restoring African Landscapes, Restoring Hope

High-Level Side Event: Scaling the Great Green Wall through Continental Integration and the AUGGWI Strategy (2024–2034)

Date: 24 August 2026

Time: 12:00–14:00 (2 hours)

Venue: MET 22, COP17 UNCCD, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Organizers: African Union Commission (AUC), African Development Bank (AfDB), Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PAGGW), SADC Secretariat, United Nations Convention to Combat Drought and Desertification (UNCCD).

Background

As the international community gathers for COP17 UNCCD under the theme “*Restoring Land, Restoring Hope*”, Africa is advancing a decisive shift in how land restoration is planned, financed, and delivered. The Great Green Wall (GGW) has evolved from a Sahel-focused initiative into a **continental delivery platform for land restoration, drought resilience, jobs, and the transformation of food systems**.

The adoption of the **African Union Great Green Wall Strategy and Ten-Year Implementation Framework (2024–2034)** marks a new phase, integrating interventions across the continent under a unified African vision. The Strategy positions the GGW as Africa’s principal instrument for achieving **Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)**, advancing drought resilience, **Agenda 2063**, and operationalizing synergies across the **Rio Conventions (UNCCD, CBD, UNFCCC)**.

This high-level event will showcase how Africa is moving from ambition to **bankable, scalable investment pipelines**, while calling on public and private partners to mobilize finance for implementation at scale.

Objectives

The event aims to:

1. **Showcase delivery at scale** by highlighting concrete actions and lessons across Africa on investment in addressing land degradation, drought and desertification.
2. **Share best practices across Africa and mobilize finance and partnerships** by aligning technical and financial partners with the **private sector**.
3. **Strengthen policy and financing coherence** by positioning Africa’s Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) as Africa’s principal platform for scaling up land and water management, land restoration, Nature-based Solutions (NbS), drought resilience, food system transformation and green jobs.

Expected Outcomes

By the conclusion of the event, the expectations are that :

- Countries' innovations in investment towards the Great Green Wall Initiative, including land restoration, drought resilience, desertification, climate adaptation, biodiversity restoration, sustainable land management, forestry, natural resources management, and green jobs creation, are showcased;
- Public and private sector partners to continue supporting **scaled land restoration, livelihoods, and green jobs creation** aligned with the AU Strategy (2024–2034);
- Strengthened **coordination and partner alignment** around AU, SAGGWI, and PAAGGWI leadership;

Target Audience: AU & AfDB Member State Ministers and senior officials

- Regional Economic Communities (Sahel, SADC, others)
- Technical and Financial Partners (AfDB, IFIs, GEF, GCF, World Bank, UN agencies)
- Private sector and impact investors

Proposed Programme

Time and Title	Speaker(s)
High Level Opening Segment 12:00 – 12:25	Opening and Scene Setting by the Moderator: H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Former Executive Secretary of UNCCD <i>Mobilizing Finance and Partnerships for Africa's Great Green Wall</i> H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Prof. Anthony Okon Nyong Director of Climate Change and Green Growth, African Development Bank (AfDB) H.E. Moses Vilakati Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), African Union (AU) H.E. Amina J. Mohammed Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

Time and Title	Speaker(s)
Keynote Speeches 12:25 – 12:45	This segment will address the importance of mobilizing public & private resources for land and water resource management and the strategic role of the Great Green Wall Initiative for Africa. Mr. Aaron Adu Managing Director of the Global Shea Alliance H.E. Ms. Doumbia Mariam Tangara Minister of Environment, Sanitation, and Sustainable Development. Pan-African Agency GW – Chair at the Ministerial Level – Mali H.E. Ms. Bernice Swarts Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. SADC-GGWI – Chair at the Deputy-Ministerial Level – South Africa
Official Group Photograph 12:45 – 12:50	
Ministerial Interventions 12:50 – 13:20	Predetermined Ministerial Allocutions 3 min each
Private Sector, Technical and Financial Partners statements 13:20 – 13:50	Predetermined Partner & Investor Allocutions 3 min each
Closing Segment 13:50 – 14:00	Mr. Juan Carlos Mendoza Director of IFAD's Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Mr. Nabil Ben Khadra Executive Secretary of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS - Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel)