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UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Fifth session

Buenos Aires, 12–21 March 2007

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND OF
ITS INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2 (a) AND (b), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION,
AS WELL AS DECISION 1/COP.5, PARAGRAPH 10**

**REVIEW OF THE REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFECTED COUNTRY
PARTIES OF REGIONS OTHER THAN AFRICA, INCLUDING ON THE
PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AND ON EXPERIENCE GAINED
AND RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE PREPARATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES**

**Compilation of summaries of reports submitted by Northern Mediterranean and
Central and Eastern European country Parties and other affected country Parties**

1. In accordance with decision 9/COP.7, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its fifth session will review the reports on implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) by affected country Parties of regions other than Africa, including Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern European country Parties and other affected country Parties. By its decision 11/COP.1, the Conference of the Parties requested the secretariat to compile summaries of such reports. Decision 11/COP.1 also defined the format and content of reports and, in particular, required summaries not to exceed six pages.

2. The present document contains the summaries of 22 reports officially submitted by 17 November 2006. All reports, including any which may be submitted after that date, will be made available in their entirety on the secretariat website <www.unccd.int>. A country which declares itself as not affected country Party submitted a report which contains information on national activities relating to the UNCCD process within the country itself.

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* Lithuania declares itself as a not affected country Party and submitted a report which contains information on national activities relating to the UNCCD process within the country itself.

ALBANIA

For Albania this is the second national report to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Following the guidelines provided by UNCCD secretariat, the report was elaborated in close collaboration of group of experts and institutions. It is also distributed for comments and discussed in the national workshop held for its validation on 9 June 2006.

The UNCCD describes desertification as land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors including climatic variations and human activity. In Albania the potential for land degradation and desertification is considered high due to climatic, land, and socio- economic factors.

Albania showed its commitment to the environmental processes in 2001 when the Ministry of Environment was established and several actions started to be taken for environmental issues in general and for land degradation especially.

Several policy documents have been approved and are being implemented, but only few are taking into consideration land degradation. Land degradation is one of many other environmental problems. The policy documents try to put in agenda the environmental issues, including the land property consolidation, land management and protection. The most important and wide policy document which has been elaborated is the national action programme (NAP), which address the land degradation issues in the framework of the UNCCD. The basic works have been completed except the national discussion and approval.

According to the law of ratification, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration is designated as the competent authority in charge of UNCCD implementation. Based on this clause and the UNCCD practices, in order to coordinate the activities on this issue the National Coordinating Body (NCB) was set up, composed by more than 10 institutions including representatives from academia and the non-governmental organization (NGO) community. Due to rapid and frequent institutional changes the NCB has not been functioning properly. Its role has been covered by National Focal Point, Department for Nature Protection and the Ministry of Environment Forestry and Water Administration. In close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Consumer Protection and other line ministries there have been some institutional arrangements for land degradation issues by putting in place some legal instruments.

The NAP drafted for the first time in Albania is one of the major documents dealing with land degradation in Albania. The main goals of this document are to assess the factors affecting land degradation and desertification and secondly to plan the activities for combating desertification and reduce the drought effects.

The legislation for land in Albania has been undertaken mainly for land property consolidation and management. Recently the legislation for land protection is in place with the main goal of establishing the measures and structures for preventing land degradation. Several sectoral laws have been passed by parliament, which has linkage with land degradation issues as well.

Albania has been part of several regional environmental activities and projects with an impact on land issues. Predominate projects in this regard are the projects with transboundary effect with neighbor countries: Greece, Montenegro and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Regional activities, where Albania is part, are some activities undertaken in the framework of Stability Pact and multilateral environmental agreements.

In whole process, the participation of public and NGO community is crucial. Since there is a demographic movement from mountainous areas to coastal areas, which are flat, there is a limited interest for what happens in their territory. Another factor regarding this issue is the limited culture for environmental issues in general and for land degradation especially. The process of decentralization of competences is in first steps, due to this fact there is no clear division of obligation on natural resources management. The participation of public in decision making is mainly through local councils. To overcome this fact, Albania has ratified the Aarhus Convention and it is fulfilling the requirements by including them into legal instruments. Exchange of information has not been done well in the past. Recently there are some improvements in this matter

From an institutional point of view there are some local and regional institutions which are covering knowledge transfer, exchange of experience and information. There is a linkage among institutions in central and local level. Based on this fact, through several projects there have been some awareness campaigns with the emphasis to environmental education.

Implementation of Albania's policy for land degradation, especially the NAP, is being consulted with the donor community in Albania. Several projects are being implemented, which have a direct impact in solving land degradation problems. In parallel by monitoring the land indicators, several activities have been undertaken in order to improve the environment where it is degraded especially in polluted and eroded areas. Specific attention is paid to forestation and construction of anti-erosion dumps. In these activities several institutions are involved giving their experience and scientific contribution.

Financial resources are mainly from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (MOEFWA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection, Local governance, and from international resources. Still these resources are very limited. To overcome this gap, the establishment of a National Fund for Environment is needed, when a part for land degradation and desertification may be set up as well.

Reconsolidation of the Ministry of Environment with the forest and water resources is one of the major institutional aspects which promise for monitoring of the implementation of the national policy on land degradation.

Data for the national responsible institutions

1. Focal point institution:

Name of focal point	Sajmir Hoxha
Address including e-mail address	Advisor to the Minister, MoEFWA, Ruga; Durrësit, Nr 27, Tirana, Albania, tel: +355 4 224456, fax: +355 4 270627, e-mail: shoxha@moe.gov.al
Country-specific websites relating to desertification	www.moe.gov.al

2. Status of NAP:

Date of validation	NAP is not been approved yet in Albania
NAP review(s)	NAP is not been approved yet in Albania
NAP has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy (PRSP)	No
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	The national development strategy was officially adopted in 2002 and include some of the land issues
NAP implementation has started with or without the conclusions of partnership agreements	N/A
Expected NAP validation	June 2006
Final draft of a NAP exists	No
Formulation of a draft NAP is under way	Yes
Basic guidelines for a NAP have been established	Yes
Process has only been initiated	N/A
Process has not yet started	No

3. Member of subregional action programme (SRAP)/regional action programme (RAP):

Name of subregional and/or regional cooperation framework	Involvement specifically in topics such as water harvesting techniques, soil erosion etc.
1. N/A	

4. Composition of the NCB:

	Name of institution	Government (√)	Scientific institutions	NGO (√)	Male/ female
1	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration	√			3M/1F
2	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection	√			2 M
3	Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy	√			1 M
4	Ministry of Interior	√			1 M
5	Institute of Soil Studies		√		1 F
6	Agriculture University		√		1 M
7	Representative of Science Academy		√		1 M
8	NGO			√	2 M/2 F
9	Representatives of Prefectures, Municipalities, Communes, Districts	√			4 M/1 F

5. Total number of NGOs accredited to the process: 5 (five)

Has an NGO National Coordinating Committee on desertification been established; if yes, how many NGOs or civil society organizations participate in it?	No
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6. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD: 11 (eleven)

	Title of the law	Date of adoption
1.	The law Nr 7501 on the land	19.07.1991
2.	The law Nr 8053 on transfer of ownership of Agriculture Land without compensation	12.12.1995
3.	The law Nr 8337 on the transfer of Agriculture Land, Meadows and Pastures	30.04.1998
4.	The law Nr 8752 on the creation and function of structures on Land Management and Protection	26.03.20003
5.	The law Nr 9244 on Land Protection	17.06.2004

7. The consultative process

Number of partnership agreements that have been concluded and/or are being initiated within the framework of the UNCCD:

Official title of partnership	Donor(s), international organization(s), and/or agencies of the UN system involved	Date of (expected) conclusion
1. N/A		

List of consultative meetings on UNCCD implementation:

	Name of consultative meeting	Date/year	Donor countries involved	International organizations or agencies of the UN system involved
1.	Meeting of the NAP Working Group	February 2002		
2.	National conference on "Land degradation and protection in Albania"	22-23 April 2003	Italian government	UNDP, WB, etc
3	Workshop for the implementation of convention	22 April 2005		UNDP, WB
4	National Conference "Balance elements, a tool for sustainable management of the land	March 2005		

Name of country which has taken over the role of *Chef de file*: N/A

8. Projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD.

	Name of project	Project implemented within the framework of the NAP/SRAP/RAP? (Yes/No)	Project implemented within the framework of ...	Timeframe	Partners involved	Overall budget
1	Natural Resources Development	No	World Bank project	November 2005- 2010	Italian Govern., SIDA	20 mil. USD
2	Rehabilitation of irrigation system and drainage (second project)	No	World Bank project	2005-2010		30 mil. USD
3	Agriculture Services Project					
4	Integrated Water and Ecosystem Management Project	Yes	World Bank project	2004-2008	EBRD	22 mil. USD
5	Water Resource Management Project	No	World Bank project	2004-2009	EU	8 mil.USD
6	Conservation of Wetland and Coastal Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region	Yes	GEF/UNDP project	2000-2006		2 mil.USD
7	Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lake Basin	Yes	GEF/UNDP project	2006-2010	Greek Govern.	4 mil. USD

ARMENIA

A number of national and regional programmes with regard to the main desertification problem of a strategic significance have been developed and implemented in Armenia since the last presentation of the Second National Report to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):

1. “Action Programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia for the Period of 2003-2007” adopted on 17 June 2003
2. “Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper” was approved by the Government Decree of Republic of Armenia, No: 994-P, dated 08.08.2003;
3. “Anti-Corruption Strategy and Measures for Implementation Thereof” Project approved by the Government Decree of Republic of Armenia, №1522-P, dated 06.11.2003;
4. “Interim State Expenditures Programme of Republic of Armenia for 2005-2007” approved by the Government Decree of Republic of Armenia, № 985-P, dated 17.06.2004;
5. The following environmental programmes of strategic importance have been developed and/or implemented:

- Lists of measures for implementation of Armenia's obligations derived from international environmental conventions, including the UNCCD for the period of 2005-2010, which were approved by the Government Decree of Republic of Armenia №1840-P, dated 02.12.2004 and № 880-P, dated 16.03.2005.
 - Development of "Rehabilitation of Lake Gili" project was completed in 2003;
 - "National Strategy and Action Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas in Armenia" was approved by the Government Decree of Republic of Armenia, № 54, dated 26.12.2002
 - "National Forest Policy and Strategy Paper" was approved by the Government Decree of Republic of Armenia, № 38, dated 30.09.2004
 - "National Forest Programme" was approved by the Government Decree of Republic of Armenia, № 1232-P, dated 21.07.2005
 - "Development Trends of Information Dissemination Process on Biodiversity Conservation and Specially Protected Natural Areas" was approved by the Order of the Minister of Nature Protection № 226-A, dated 10.08.2004;
 - "National Water Programme" was developed in 2005-2006, currently is under discussion in the framework of stakeholders;
 - PDF A phase of "Development of Institutional and Legal Potential in Armenia to Optimize the Information and Monitoring Systems of Global Environmental Management" project is completed, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) national coordinator has sent a written request for MSF financial support.
6. The following agricultural programmes of strategic importance have been developed and/or implemented.
- "Measures for Development of Agricultural Reclamation in Republic of Armenia for the period of 2002-2005" project was adopted by Government Decree № 1115-P, dated 2002;
 - A concept paper on "Development of Animal Husbandry in Armenia" was adopted by Republic of Armenia Government Protocol Decree in 2002;
 - "Sustainable Agriculture Development Strategy of Armenia" was adopted by Government Decree of Republic of Armenia, № 682-P, dated 14.04.2004;
 - The Government of Republic of Armenia has approved the project on "Provision of Food Policy in Republic of Armenia" in 2005.

Institutional reforms promoting desertification control have been carried out for conservation and use of water, land and forest resources, and for management of protected areas from 2002 to 2006 in accordance with the provisions of the national action programme (NAP).

According to Government Decree of RA, № 1372-P, dated 28.11.2002, a State Hydro-Meteorological and Monitoring Service was established under the Ministry of Nature Protection. Activities mainstreamed to empowerment of infrastructure and enrichment of logistical framework have been carried out in the framework of "Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction Project".

From 2002 to 2006 a considerable number of activities coherent with NAP strategy have been taken for perfection of legislation regulating public relations in environmental conservation and economic development sectors, which can contribute to expedient desertification control. Thirteen codes and laws were adopted by the National Assembly of Armenia within the

mentioned period, regarding Lake Sevan, management of land, water, forest resources and waste, as well as food safety, seismic safety, state environmental supervision, etc. Direct linkages to settlement of desertification control problems have the 18 legislative acts, adopted by the Government of Armenia, related to the use of fertile soil layers, land zoning and usage schemes, specially protected natural areas, improvement of forest areas, efficient use of water resources, etc.

Of the main principles of NAP implementation to combat desertification in Armenia is to ensure stakeholders' participation. In this respect special priority is given to the implementation of four primary pilot projects developed in the framework of NAP. In 2003-2005 two primary pilot projects were implemented financed based on the discussions between the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia and the UNCCD secretariat. "Sustainable Development Paper of the Republic of Armenia" was developed in 2002 by public and scientific layers of Armenia. "Environment Protection Local Action Plan" has been developed for city Ararat in the framework of REC Caucasus project. NGOs participated actively in development and discussion of "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" and currently are involved in implementation process. "Forest Recovery and Development Fund of Republic of Armenia" is functioning since 2004 under the direction of the Prime Minister, and "Inter-ministerial Task Force of Monitoring and Assessment of Raising Lake Sevan Water Level" with involvement of a number of NGOs since 2005. In 2006, Friendly Associations of Armenia organized a "Consolidated Tree Planting" on the entire territory of the country with active participation of all public layers. For conservation of green coverage and water surface of city Yerevan, several NGOs established "Protection of Green Coverage of City Yerevan" Union, associating 39 NGOs. Preconditions to ensure participation in expedient implementation of NAP are measures undertaken for training the stakeholders and raising public awareness of the main problems. A great number of relevant measures are inscribed in Armenia through 2002-2006: an Aarhus-Centre was established within the Ministry of Nature Protection and 4 Aarhus-Centres in different regions of Armenia with the support from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), reference materials have been published and freely distributed to the population; a number of video films have been produced, mass media has actively been functioning.

Support from donor countries and international organizations is important for NAP implementation in Armenia. Relevant negotiations are taking place between the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism aiming at developing international cooperation. 'A Round Table' is planned to be organized in Armenia involving potential donors and all interested entities. During the 5 European Environmental Taskforce Congress, held in Kiev, in May 2003, the Ministers approved Environmental Strategy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Implementation of the strategy was discussed during the Ministerial Congress, held in Tbilisi, in October 2004. The GEF has initiated "National Conversation" since 2004, anticipating also Armenia's participation. National Dialogue between the GEF and the Republic of Armenia was held through October 14-15, in Yerevan. The GEF national dialogue decision was developed, stating further cooperation sectors, outcomes of the held seminar, and ways of support. Upon becoming the 64-th member of Asian Development Bank (ADB) in September 2005, Armenia initiated development of strategic directions for obtaining the Bank's support. The trends of "Economic Report and Midterm Action Strategy" (ERMAS) were discussed in 2005, and existing environmental challenges and sectors requiring financial support were revealed. The Work Plan with its two components: "Efficient Energy Usage" and "Sustainable Conservation and Management of Natural Resources" was signed between the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) Armenia and Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia in March 2006, in the framework of which modernization of EPNAP is anticipated for 2006-2007.

The following technical programmes and operational projects were developed through 2002-2006, the implementation of which will significantly contribute to efficient desertification control:

1. “Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction project” which is currently under implementation;
2. Urban development project documents were developed within 2001-2005 on the account of the state budget of Armenia, aimed at regulating spatial planning, and simultaneously integrating environmental and sustainable land tenure strategic problems;
3. Projects for zoning and usage of 20 community lands for Ararat marz of Armenia have been developed in the framework of pilot projects on the account of savings of State Cadastre of Real Estate under the Government of Armenia, as a support to local self-administration bodies;
4. The main layout of city Gyumri and territorial scheme of Shirak marz have been developed and approved by the Government of Armenia;
5. The main layouts of Ararat, Artashat, Arzni, Jermuk, Hankavan, Arzakan, Goris, Martuni, Vardenis Nyuvadi and Agarak communities were developed in 2004, which are under concordance and approval phases;
6. The main layouts of Talin, Vedi, Echmiatsin, Gavar, Stepanavan, Charencavan, Artik, Kapan, Yeghegnadzor, Dilijan, Ijevan, Berd communities were developed in 2005. Simultaneously the main layout of Vanadzor city is in the development process on the account of the local budget.

A number of projects consistent with NAP are being implemented through 2002-2006.

1. “Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction project” launched on December 27, 2002, which should be completed in 2008;
2. During the reporting period state supervision over the chemical substances used for plant protection was strengthened, activities for regulation of collection, transportation, processing, neutralization and eradication of poisonous waste are carried out in the framework of “National Action Programme in the Sphere of Environmental Hygiene” adopted by the Government of Armenia in 2001;
3. Activities for cleaning and re-equipping collector-drainage systems were implemented in the country through 2002-2004, particularly 30 km of drainage system was recovered which helped to eradicate water coverage of 8.0-9.0 ha each year and organize sustainable farming;
4. “Irrigation Rehabilitation” Project is currently under implementation, due to which 260 km of water pipeline, tertiary channels, four pumping stations, four dams, 238 wells have been rehabilitated and constructed; 310 operating drainage systems have been cleaned and put in place;
5. GEF financed “Armenia National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment (NCSA) for Global Environmental Management.” UNDP/GEF project initiated by common efforts of UNDP and the Ministry of Nature Protection was implemented in 2003-2004. It was called to identify the potential needs of the country for implementation of the three global environmental conventions: the Convention on Biological

Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the UNCCD.

A proper early drought warning system is currently missing in Armenia, but several organizations are carrying out certain activities for establishment of such a system. Activities are undertaken to strengthen the warning system in the framework of “Information on Food Safety” European Community/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations project. “Armstatehydromet” is collaborating with Drought Monitoring Centre of CIS Intergovernmental Hydro-meteorological Board. This cooperation enables to issue a ten-days bulletin on monitoring of drought warning, and participates in establishment of agro-climatic characteristics’ fund for drought and drought phenomena.

The main trends of regional cooperation in Armenia are: harmonization of legislation; application of unified approaches for implementation of conventions; full participation in international processes; establishment of global environmental management in Armenia; etc. Transboundary problems are of a special concern. According to the Prime Minister’s decision a Transboundary Water Resources Commission was established on October 10, 2002. Together with relevant Commissions of bordering counties it settles down operative problems related to conservation and usage of transboundary water resources. Armenia is involved in implementation of “Modification of Risk into Cooperation” project proposed in the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/UNDP/OSCE “Environment and Security” regional initiative. National coordinators are assigned by the Ministry of Nature Protection (MoNP) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia to coordinate the activities of the initiative. A proposal for establishment of “Zikatar” regional forest training centre is submitted to the UNCCD secretariat. “Zikatar” forest centre is planned to be used as a regional training centre for UNCCD Central and Eastern countries.

Appropriate allocations were estimated for implementation of measures in 2002-2005 and for 2006 to combat desertification both by the state budget of Armenia and donor organizations. Besides, additional expenditures are made from the reserve fund of the Government of Armenia mainly for measures requiring operative interactions and contingencies for elimination of results of natural disasters (deluge, floods, devastation of littoral zones, abundant snow, strong winds, hail, drought, channels, plugging of irrigation and collector-drainage systems, landslides). Currently 36 science-research activities are in place financed by the Armenia state budget on contractual basis in the framework of the UNCCD. A number of credit and grant projects are currently under implementation: “Irrigation Rehabilitation Project” - USD 24,8 million, “Natural Resources Management Poverty Reduction Project” – USD 16 million, “Dam Safety Project” - USD 26,6 million, “Millennium Challenges” Project - USD 235,6 million, etc.

A list of ecological benchmarks is developed as a mechanism for monitoring, survey, collection, analysis and exchange of information on environment, including desertification processes, which has been submitted to the approval of Government of Armenia. Benchmarks of EECCA and benchmarks recommended by UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology were considered for selection of benchmarks.

BASIC INFORMATION

1. Focal point institution:

Name of focal point	Ministry of Nature Protection
Address including e-mail address	Republic of Armenia, Yerevan, 375010, 3 building of Government House, 5-floor e-mail: interdpt@rambler.ru Fax: (374-10)-58-53-49 Tel. (+374-10) 521099
Websites relating to desertification	www.mnpiacnam www.nature-ic.com www.mnp.am - in development process

2. Status of NAP

Approval Date	Protocol Decision of Government of Armenia 28.03.2002. № 13
Development of NAP	1999-2001
National Action Programme (NAP) has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy (PRSP)	Yes 2003
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	No (currently not adopted)
NAP implementation commenced with or without existence of partnership agreements	No (commenced without existence of cooperation agreement)

3. Subregional action programme (SRAP)/Regional action programme (RAP) is not developed

4. Composition of the national coordinating body (NCB)

	Name of institution	Government	NGO	M / F
	Coordination Body (CB) under the Ministry of Nature Protection (MoNP)	+	----	12/9
1.	MoNP, First Deputy Minister, Chair of (CB)	+		m
2.	MoNP, Convention Focal Point, Deputy of CB	+		m
3.	Office of <u>Ministry of Healthcare</u> of Armenia	+		m
4.	Office of the <u>Ministry of Urban Development</u> of Armenia	+		m
5.	Office of the Ministry of Agriculture of Armenia	+		m
6.	The staff of the <u>Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs</u> of Armenia	+		m
7.	The staff of the <u>Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs</u> of Armenia	+		f
8.	The staff of the <u>Ministry of Trade and Economic Development</u> of Armenia	+		m
9.	The staff of the <u>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</u> of Armenia	+		f
10.	Emergency Department under the Government of Armenia	+		f
11.	The office of State Cadastre of Real Estate under the Government of Armenia	+		m

12.	Botany Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia	+		f
13.	The office of MoNP of Armenia	+		5m/4f

NCB to combat desertification was established under the MoNP according to the Government Decree of Armenia, No: 620, dated 07.10.1998. UNCCD Coordination Committee (CC) was reformulated under the MoNP according to the Government Decree of Armenia, No: 1840-P, dated 02.12.2004. CC involves representatives from 12 line ministries and other agencies with total 21 members.

5. Total number of NGOs accredited to the process is 11

An NGO National Coordinating Committee on desertification is established	39 organizations from civil societies are involved
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6. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD:

1. Armenia Codes – 3
 2. Armenia laws –10
 3. Armenia government decrees – 26
 4. Armenia Prime Minister’s decisions – 3
- Total 42 legal acts.

Five Primary Laws and/or Normative Acts

	Title of the law	Date of adoption
1.	Land Code of Armenia	02.05.2001
2.	Forest Code of Armenia	24.10.2005
3.	Armenia Law on Environmental Supervision	11.04.2005
4.	“National Action Programme to Combat Desertification in Armenia” approved by Government Protocol Decision No: 13 of Armenia	28.03.2002
5.	Decree of the Government of Armenia on “Approval of the List of Measures for Execution of Armenia Obligations Derived from International Environmental Conventions”	02.12.2004

7. The consultative process

The number of partnership agreements signed and/initiated in the Convention framework

N	Official title of partnership	Donor(s), international organization(s), and/or agencies of the United Nations system involved	Date of (expected) conclusion
1	“Protocol of Intentions” between the Minister of Nature Protection and Executive Secretary of UNCCD, based on which the two primary projects developed in the framework of NAP are implemented.	UNCCD Secretariat and UNDP Armenia	2003
2	Organization of a national Forum in Armenia to support NAP implementation	Global Mechanism and UNCCD Secretariat	2004

List of consultative meetings on UNCCD implementation

Name of consultative meeting	Date/year	Donor countries involved	International organizations or agencies of the United Nations system involved
Issues of Implementation of UNCCD in Armenia	2003 January	-----	UNCCD Secretariat
Assessment of Opportunities to Organize a National Forum for NAP implementation	2004 December	-----	UNCCD Secretariat

MoNP of Armenia is undertaking negotiations with the Global Mechanism and the UNCCD secretariat to assist in organization of a “Round Table” in Armenia, involving potential donors and interested entities.

8. Projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD.

Name of project	Project implemented within the framework of the NAP/SRAP/RAP? (Yes/No)	Project implemented within the framework of	Timeframe	Partners involved	Overall budget (USD)
1. Rehabilitation of desertified lands in Garni community of Kotayk Marz	Yes	-----	2003-2006	UNCCD/ UNDP	42 500
2. Engineering-geological observations in the territory of Makaravank Memorial of Tavoush Marz of Armenia	Yes	-----	2003-2006	UNCCD/ UNDP	31 200
3. “Observations and Registration of Abandoned Mineral Resources” Tavoush Marz of Armenia	Yes	State Budget of RA	2005	-----	3 000
4. “Stock-taking of Abandoned Mineral Resources” of Kotayk Marz	Yes	State Budget of RA	2004	-----	3 000
5. “Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction” Credit Project	No	NEAP CBD UNFCCC UNCCD	2002 -2008	WB/SIDA, GEF/ Government of Armenia	16 000 000
6. Armenia improvement of energy efficiency of urban heating, and hot water supply	No	UNFCCC	2005-2009	GEF/UNDP	2 950 000

7. Expansion of irrigated areas, raising the efficiency of irrigation system	No	Millennium Challenge	2006-2011	USA	235 600 000
8. Development of Integrated National Programme for ecologically sound management of chemical substances and waste	No		2004- 2006	UNITAR/ IOMC	60 000
9. Project on substitution of substances deploying ozone layer and management of refrigeration techniques with its 6 subprojects	No	Montreal Protocol	2005-2008	GEF/UNDP UNEP/ Government of Armenia	2 080 000
10. Consolidation of Agricultural Lands Pilot Project	No		2004-2006	FAO	40 000
11. "Armenia National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment (NCSA) for Global Environmental Management."	No	CBD/ UNFCCC/ UNCCD	2003-2004	UNDP/GEF	250 000

AZERBAIJAN

1. Strategies and priorities set within the frame of plans and/or policy on sustainable development:

Azerbaijan is rich with mineral resources and raw materials. They are: oil, gas, non-ferrous and precious metals, construction materials and other mineral resources.

Also, the agricultural sector is well developed in the country. It is: production of crops, cotton, vegetables, fruits, forage plant, grapes, silk and farming of cattle.

Industrial sector is basically represented by oil production, refinery, petrochemical and chemical industries, mining, light industry and industries processing agricultural products.

After Azerbaijan acquired its independence, it has inherited many economic, environmental and social problems from the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and efforts are made to solve them.

One of such important and complex problems is the problem of land degradation. At times of USSR, basic method of economy was extensive as a result of severe planning of agricultural sector, when planned tasks were given from centre without consideration of real situation and assessment of capacities, this was leading to extension of erosion processes, salinization of soil, chemical contamination of soils as a result of unnormalized use of pesticides and mineral fertilizers, in summary all this was leading to land degradation and loss of their fertility.

In such conditions it was necessary to undertake the urgent measures to prevent the above-mentioned negative processes. Throughout the last 10-13 years special measures have been undertaken on legislative, economic, international and social levels to prevent this situation. But collapse of USSR had also political consequences besides indicated problems. Thus, more than 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan is occupied by Armenian aggressors. According to the available information 264 ha of forest fund actually devastated at occupied territories. Such phenomenon can have global negative consequences not only for Azerbaijan but also for all ecological system of Lesser Caucasus. Besides this, currently 200 thousand families or 1 million of refugees and internally displaced persons are settled in various regions of the Republic, who are living in unpractical temporary constructions. In this situation they use firewood for heating and cooking, which leads to increase of cutting of forests and their available livestock is increasing the pressure on pastures i.e. the pastures are getting useless because of unnormalized pasturing.

In such conditions it was obvious for the Government of the Azerbaijan Republic to undertake urgent measures on elimination of such situation.

The problems of poverty reduction are relevant also for Azerbaijan Republic. Thus, the poverty level in Azerbaijan is 29.3%. In this regard "State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Economic Development" was prepared and adopted to combat poverty and improve welfare of poor families during 2003-2005. At present this programme is realized. For the development of this Programme the "State Programme on Sustainable Human Development" is currently elaborated.

Besides this, taking into account the lack of work places and of economic development, provision of infrastructure, insufficiency and low level of medical service and education and also presence of other socio-economic problems in the regions of the republic, the "State Programme on Social Economic Development of Regions of Azerbaijan Republic for 2004-2008" was prepared.

In this Programme all problems are considered, including problems related to poverty reduction and sustainable development, and also the policy on regional development is presented in more detail. The issues of solution of regional environmental problems are also reflected in this Programme.

The establishment of 6 national parks was one of the priorities within the Project on Poverty Reduction, which are established now by according Decrees of the President of Azerbaijan Republic. As a result of this the area of protected territories increased from 4.5% to 8% of the area of the Republic. Realization of this project will contribute not only to conservation of various ecosystems and landscapes but also to establishment of new work places in regions and creation of basics of Ecotourism. At present intensive activities are undertaken to develop ecotourism, to establish according bodies and necessary potential.

Besides that, the project on establishment of additional 2 national parks is being prepared with assistance and partnership of World Bank, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The total cost of this project is 17.3 million US dollars, which will be allotted as grants and credits by partners and from state budget by government.

The Azerbaijan Republic joined the UNCCD in April of 1998, but intensive activities on implementation of Convention began in recent years. Thus the “National Programme on Effective Use of Winter and Summer Pastures and Combating Desertification” has been prepared and approved by the Government of the Azerbaijan Republic. This programme was prepared on the initiative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. The initiative was derived from deteriorating conditions of pastures in connection with extensive development of cattle-breeding (mainly nomadic and semi-nomadic). The whole scope of problems and also the ways of their solution were reflected in this programme and certain tasks within certain timescales were assigned to all stakeholder ministries and agencies (Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, National Academy of Sciences, municipalities and etc.).

The work on “Capacity-Building for Solution of Global Environmental Problems” Project was finalized in 2005. Within the framework of this project the assessment of situation on implementation of three significant United Nations Conventions (UNCCD, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)) was given. Situational analysis was prepared, the basic aspects and ways were determined for capacity-building for resolution of problems on desertification processes (land degradation), conservation of biodiversity (extension of the area of forests and establishment of National Parks for conservation of rare and endangered species of flora and fauna and also of natural landscapes). The representatives of all ministries, agencies and representatives of scientific organizations and NGOs took part in preparation of the Project.

“Environmental Performance Reviews” (Azerbaijan) was prepared and published in 2003-2004 jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

At present the Project Proposal (PDF) is being prepared for “Capacity-Building for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management” to be presented to GEF in June of this year. This work has started on the initiative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and with direct support of UNDP office in Azerbaijan. Financial support for preparation was from GEF – 25 thousand US dollars and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 10 thousand US dollars. The experts from all stakeholder ministries, agencies and from NGOs and also foreign consultants are involved in preparation of proposal.

It should be particularly emphasized that the Government of Norway in collaboration with UNDP office in Azerbaijan allotted 650 thousand US dollars for realization of “Capacity-Building for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management” project.

Within the framework of this project it is planned to establish a National Centre to combat desertification, to accomplish the National Plan of Activities, to build capacities for provision of access of private land-users – farmers to necessary information on effective use of land and water resources with consideration of ecological situation on sites.

Along with the above, one of the primary tasks is accomplishment and ratification of National Plan of Activities on Combating Desertification and its coordination with other relevant State plans and programmes of the same profile to reach synergisms, maximum output and effectiveness. So, they are also used in preparation of proposal for “Capacity-Building for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management”.

For the last 4 years the activities within “National Programme on Rehabilitation and Extension of Forests in Azerbaijan Republic” consisted not only of rehabilitation and plantation of new forests. During 2003-2005 new forests were created at an area of 11216 ha and also the support to natural rehabilitation of forests was given at an area of 16352 ha. 110 Million saplings (planting material) were grown. 42.75 Billion Azeri manats or about 10 million of US dollars were allotted to all these activities from state budget.

On the whole the Government has placed higher emphasis on the environmental problems in recent years, and particularly on problems of combating desertification because these problems are inseparably linked with economic and social problems.

2. Institutional measures undertaken for implementation of Convention including legislative and institutional basics and mechanisms, relations and synergism with other conventions on nature protection and with national strategies on development in pertinent cases:

We inherited very large system of environmental management and of regulation of natural resources use from previous USSR. A number of various agencies were responsible for different resources, so there was parallelism and weak coordination of cooperation.

Beginning from the end of the 1990s up to the present the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan is reorganizing purposefully the whole managerial apparatus of the country with the assistance of World Bank.

One of the first steps was improvement of the environmental protection system with relevant Decree of the President. Conjoining certain organizations and bodies the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources was established in May of 2001 by the Decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic.

Newly established Ministry has extensive authority not only in nature protection but also has significant responsibilities and authority in regulating and controlling of nature use.

In recent years several very significant legislative acts were adopted in the Republic. This is – Land, Water and Forest Codes; the Law on Land Rent; the Law on Amelioration and Irrigation; the Law on Land Cadastre, Monitoring and Land Structuring; the Law on Land Market and the Law on Municipal Territories and Lands. Besides that the Law on Land Reform was also adopted.

In December of 2001 on the initiative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and Ministry of Education, the “Law on Ecological Education and Enlightenment of Population” was prepared and adopted.

To establish mechanisms of implementation of indicated laws the packets of normative and regulatory documents have been developed. But, for more effective management of land, water, forest and of natural resources in general the according amendments are continuously made to legislative and normative acts. Azerbaijan Republic joined to many international conventions and agreements on environment protection, so the sustainable tendency towards European and world-wide standards of management and quality of environment, particularly management of land resources, is observed.

Currently the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Azerbaijan Republic is a National Coordinating Agency (NCA) and is responsible to the Government for implementation of all conventions on environment including the Convention to Combat Desertification.

A working group, consisting of experts of necessary profile from all ministries, agencies, scientific organizations and NGOs, was established in 2003.

Besides this, it should be emphasized that NGOs have chosen common coordinator, who was directing the efforts of these organizations and was in continuous contact with NCA. It should be also emphasized that after Azerbaijan's joining to the Convention the cooperation between NGOs and NCA has significantly activated. The joint work strengthened and the frequency of consultations on implementation of the Convention has increased. The works on clarification of objectives and tasks of Convention among women and youth on local level particularly increased.

Recently the work on coordination of activities on implementation of such Conventions as UNCCD, Convention on Biodiversity and UNFCCC is strengthening to provide synergism of results.

The problems and measures undertaken to implement obligations to the UNCCD are discussed quarterly, profile seminars are held with the participation of representatives of civil society (land users – farmers) and mass media. In this year, in connection with General Assembly resolution 58/211 declaring 2006 as a International Year of Deserts and Desertification several measures are planned. This is the preparation and realization of thematic Conference “Desertification Problems in Azerbaijan and ways of Combating Desertification”. It is also planned to conduct seminars in the regions of the Republic with extensive involvement of farmers, youth and women.

It is necessary to note that the work on development of the National Action Plan (NAP) began in Azerbaijan in 2000. Because of absence of finance and managerial reorganizations held in 2001 this work was [un]finished.

Today this work is continuing with technical assistance of UNDP office in Azerbaijan and financial support of Norway.

Currently collecting of information and basic data for real modelling of situation is finished and the choice of main priorities is being made.

Awareness-raising of population and making them to comprehend the problem of desertification not only as an ecological task but also as a vital factor of socio-economic character is one of the main aspects for realization of National Action Plan. NGOs, specifically women organizations, which are to influence effectively the growing generation must play significant role in above-mentioned activities.

It is the fact that the choice of priorities is based on those previously accepted in other NAP, strategies, programmes and projects in order to prevent the repetition of the same measures, on the contrary to complete or continue them, within the frame of tasks on combating desertification and thus to reach the maximal synergism in solution of main ecological problems challenging Azerbaijan Republic.

Upon being developed the NAP will be coordinated with all stakeholders and according to accepted procedure and further it will be presented to the Government for adoption and ratification.

Within the Regional Environmental Centre, located in Georgia, the thematic Conference on desertification problems was conducted and after that no other initiatives were held in this sphere.

3. Participation in support of preparation of action plan:

There is relevant subdivision within NCA i.e. Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, which informs all mass media about all important activities without fail and especially about implementation of obligations to international agreements and conventions on environment protection.

All significant decisions made at Conferences of Parties to UNCCD, by Secretariat, the summaries of seminars and the text of Convention and other important documents have been translated and delivered to public.

Very extensive spectrum of participants was determined during preparation of NAP. They were: representatives of stakeholder ministries, agencies, scientific organizations, various environmental (including youth and women) non-governmental organizations.

In preliminary determined priorities of NAP, high importance is given to participation of civic communities in the process at local (community) level and to participation of private sector. The private sector became of first importance in socio-economic development of country, especially in agriculture, after the land reform and privatization of lands. Thus, severe commanding methods of management are not acceptable at present rural state and during processes of further democratization of society. According to the situation there is necessity for clear progress in delivering necessary information on rational use of lands, water and of environment in total and protection of nature to wide public (especially rural) in order to provide capacities for proper, environment-friendly use of natural resources, which are in their ownership and to be inherited by forthcoming generation.

The Government of Azerbaijan adopted several significant State programmes aimed at socio-economic development of regions. The high emphasis is placed on development of agricultural production in order to provide its future growth and stimulate production of ecologically clean, competitive agricultural products. Measures of financial stimulation to develop this sector of economics are also being undertaken. Thus directing documents are adopted and extensive crediting with privileging terms was launched for farmers – land owners.

At local level also, measures on stimulating economic development and development of society in general are being undertaken. So, the farmer unions were created on sites and they are beginning to resolve the existing problems themselves.

Representatives of the private sector and also farmers are being involved and going to be involved in future to develop not only NAP on combating desertification but also other

programmes and activities. They are also involved in development of Project Proposal (PDF) on “Capacity-Building for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management”.

It should be also emphasized that realization of projects on establishment of national parks within the Programme on poverty reduction and the development of ecotourism are beginning to show their output in form of extension of traditional national occupations such as carpet weaving, pottery, production of iron, wood and other souvenirs.

There are recurring articles, interviews in mass media and also speeches at television and radio which deliver information about all problems of nature protection existing in the Republic and information about activities conducted to resolve the problems including activities on solving problems in combating desertification. As a consequence the information on problems occurring in connection with anthropogenic influence on land resources on sites is collected at NCA.

It is also necessary to stress the fact that high emphasis is placed on issues of ecological education and training of growing generation in the Republic. So, the Centre on Ecological training is functioning within the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources has been closely cooperating with that Centre for several years. This Centre is also engaged and actively participating in preparation of projects and programmes within the Convention to Combat Desertification.

The increase in activity of scientific organizations to combat desertification also should be emphasized.

4. The process of consultations to support preparations to implement national action plans and agreements on partnership with developed countries – Parties to Convention and with other stakeholders, particularly to mobilize and coordinate internal and international resources:

The “Additional Measures on Accomplishment of Tasks Derived from International Conventions and Agreements on Environment Protection to Which Azerbaijan Republic Joins” were ratified by the Decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic from 30 March of 2006. The analysis, prepared by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, of situation on accomplishment of tasks derived from obligations to 15 international Conventions and agreements on environment protection was presented in this document. Pertinent ministries and agencies had an assignment to provide within 2 months the draft of planned expenditures necessary to accomplish the tasks of certain measures of according Conventions and agreements.

At present the Project Proposal (PDF), which is to be submitted to GEF in June of this year, is being elaborated. This work was launched on initiative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and direct support of UNDP office in Azerbaijan. Financial support was provided by GEF – 15 thousand US dollars and UNDP – 10 thousand US dollars. The experts of all stakeholder ministries, agencies, NGOs and international consultants are taking part in preparation of Proposal.

Particularly it should be emphasized that through the UNDP office in Azerbaijan the Government of Norway allocated 650 thousand US dollars for realization of “Capacity-Building for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management” project.

Also the fact that the GEF did not provide any practical assistance beginning from 1998 (Azerbaijan joined) up to present and no progress in this direction is expected. There are procedural difficulties in access to financing from various financial institutes.

5. Measures undertaken or planned within the framework of National Action Programmes, aimed at improvement of economic situation, conservation of natural resources, promoting their sustainable use, rehabilitation of degraded lands, extension of knowledge on desertification and combating it, monitoring and assessment of desertification and drought:

In detail analysis of origination of desertification processes was conducted during the process of preparation of NAP.

As a result of analysis of soil degradation reasons and of origination of desertification processes the main effort was made for clarification of anthropogenic factors, for planning the measures on their elimination and also prevention of these processes.

Proper and rational use of all natural resources is of substantial significance within the context of the UNCCD.

The project on “Irrigation-distribution System and Improvement of its Management” is realized in Azerbaijan with financial assistance from the World Bank. The total cost of the project is 39.3 million US dollars, 35.2 million of which is rendered by World Bank as a credit with the remaining amount of 4.1 million US dollars allotted from state budget of Azerbaijan Republic. The project will last from 2004 – 2010. The main objectives of the project are: reconstruction of irrigation and collector-drainage systems within economies. Realization of this project will allow to eliminate the possibilities of secondary salinization and also to use the irrigation water in more rational ways.

The mentioned project complies with the priorities determined as preliminary within the NAP by its nature.

In the same way, the project on rehabilitation of forests and plantation of new forest massifs at inconvenient (degraded) lands complies with the NAP.

Within the framework of this project several new forest economies were established and tens of new work places were created.

The emphasis was placed and is being placed on problems of renewable energy sources. So, on the initiative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources the pioneer project on introducing the equipment acquiring biogas from animal residues (manure and etc.) is being implemented since 2003. Taking into account that Azerbaijan has a limited area of forests this project is relevant for rural sites (also taking into account the present development of cattle-breeding).

Conditions of winter and summer pastures are under the special control of NCA. Certain activities are also conducted in this direction. The “National Programme on Effective Use of Winter and Summer Pastures and Prevention of Desertification” was approved by the President of Azerbaijan Republic.

The NCA completely understands the need for introduction of new modern methods for controlling the natural processes. One of the priorities in this sphere is the introduction of early warning systems in order to provide food security and forecast the droughts. Certain activities are conducted also in this direction with relevant scientific organizations.

These and other projects and measures were taken into account in the preparation of the NAP.

6. Financial assignments from national budgets in support of implementation of obligations, also financial assistance and technical cooperation including incoming resources. The procedure of determining needs, directions for financing and establishment of priorities:

A Reserve Fund for Protection of the Environment is established in the Republic and subordinated to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (NCA). The Fund is for implementation of specific measures on nature protection. Financial resources are coming mainly in the form of suits, fines and payments for pollution of environment. This Fund is established to mobilize the resources and direct them into the specific measures on protection of the environment. But these resources are limited.

Besides this, additional resources must be allotted in March of this year by the Decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic for implementation of the tasks derived from obligations of Azerbaijan to all international conventions and agreements on protection of the environment.

Thanks to the initiative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources there is active cooperation with GEF, World Bank, GTZ, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JAICA) and also with some other donors beginning from 2002. There are some practical results in rendering financial assistance for implementation of specific projects and programmes on protection of the environment, including those on desertification. Also the technical cooperation has been put in order – necessary information is provided, training is organized for experts on protection of environment.

Conducting close cooperation with the UNDP local office, financial assistance was obtained from GEF and the Government of Norway to finalize NAP, as well as to prepare the project – “Capacity-Building for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management”.

Currently Azerbaijan exercises heavy needs for technical cooperation with donors in the following areas:

- Increase of awareness on modern technologies to combat desertification;
- Preparation of qualified specialists of necessary profile;
- Obtaining modern equipment for establishment of database and of geographic information system.

At present, work on the NAP and the “Capacity-Building for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management” project and other initiatives on combating desertification will allow to expand the whole spectrum of international cooperation and the acquired experience will allow to mobilize actively own capacities within country engaging the private sector as a potential investor.

It should be emphasized again that GEF did not make any assistance and the absence of perspectives for close cooperation in future is observed.

7. Consideration of criteria and indicators, used for analysis of results, and their assessment:

Various academic and sectoral institutes and agencies have been conducting research on desertification processes and their origination factors for many years. These are: Institute of Geography, Institute of Soil Sciences, Botanic Institute within National Academy of Sciences, and others.

The Monitoring Service of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources is experiencing beginning stage of establishment of united system for monitoring of environment. At present the package of normative and instructive documents on the establishment and managing of united monitoring system in republic is being prepared. Taking into account that various organizations were also occupied with this issue, it is natural that available information and approaches were different i.e. there were no common standards. Various agencies were using different methodologies depending on tasks and objectives which should be unified and transferred to common gauge. The situation is the same for databases which existed in those agencies.

In such conditions the preparation of a united package of normative documents and standards allows to unify the monitoring system in total and that on desertification in particular.

Azerbaijan has still not finished its preparation of NAP, but meetings, deliberations and consultations with stakeholder agencies, organizations and also with NGOs were conducted repeatedly, so in general there are no difficulties in exchange of information. However there are imperfections in coordination between various ministries and agencies, the effort made to remove these imperfections through collaborative work on preparation of NAP and other projects on combating desertification.

Azerbaijan Republic joined the Convention in 1998, but remarkable activity of works was outlined from 2002.

The measures on combating erosion, salinization and chemical pollution were continuous, yet they were held on little scope, volume of practical land cultivations increased. All these are taking place in step with global economic and social changes happening in Azerbaijan Republic.

However we understand that this is insufficient to solve the problems of desertification in practice and in turn this is related to objective and subjective causes (the war, occupation of 20% of territories and disturbance of ecological equilibrium there), the presence of 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons.

New indexes included in accordance with decision 10/COP.5:

The priorities of scientific-technical activities to combat desertification play substantial role in preparation of NAP. This sphere of activities is taken into account as no activities have any perspective without scientific progress.

However, right now there are certain activities in this direction. The Institute of Geography within the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan is conducting activities on observation of desertification processes. As a result of these activities the “Classifier of landscapes of Azerbaijan to create a desertification map” was established. Forecasting on desertification processes was made for the timeframe till 2010. All these and scientific materials of other institutes are being used in preparation of the NAP.

We hope to use more widely the new indexes and recommendations of the Committee on Scientific and Technology (CST) of the Convention in future.

As a whole there are many problems in implementation of the obligations on combating desertification which Azerbaijan Republic has undertaken.

Notwithstanding the above, we hope that we will properly direct the efforts with the assistance of the UNCCD Secretariat management.

In conclusion we would like to express our gratitude to the Secretariat of UNCCD, Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo and all foreign partners for the assistance to the Azerbaijan Republic in implementation of the Convention.

BELARUS

This document is the second National Report of the Republic of Belarus on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The document describes key measures on UNCCD implementation undertaken by Belarus at national and international levels since the first National Report was released in 2002.

The main factors of land degradation in Belarus, as before, include water and wind erosion, radioactive and chemical contamination, decrease in fertility of agricultural lands, and degradation of ameliorated peat-bog soils due to unsustainable land use practices.

The area of deflation-prone and deflated soils in 2000—2005 was 3.9 million ha (18.8% of the country area), down 0.1 million ha from 1990—1999. Eroded and erosion-prone soils occupy 1.4 million ha (6.8%, down 0.25 million ha from 1990—1999). Degradation of drained peatlands is recorded within an area of 0.22 million ha (1.0%, up by 30.000 ha). The area of lands contaminated with radionuclides due to the Chernobyl disaster covers 4.4 million ha (21% of the country area). Soils are affected by chemical contamination across 0.21 million ha (1.0%). Over the past four years Belarus has been striving to mitigate a magnitude of natural and technogenic factors of land degradation. These efforts have been supported by organizational, institutional and economic measures aimed at implementation of the UNCCD.

The Belarusian State land use policy is implemented in accordance with the National Strategy of Sustainable Development (NSSD-1997), passed by the Government in March 1997. The efforts of national authorities at all levels have been directed towards enhancing regulatory mechanisms and improving State-controlled management of land resources. The most urgent measures for Belarus have included rehabilitation of the areas contaminated with radionuclides, prevention of water and wind erosion, protection of drained lands (particularly peatlands), restoration of degraded lands, reforestation of low-yield agricultural and other useless lands. The

elapsed period saw the implementation of the Agricultural Land-Use Programme aimed at redistributing and enhancing management of low-yield lands withdrawn from agricultural use.

With the main objectives of the NSSD-1997 delivered and directions of sustainable development in Belarus in need for re-adjustment, the country embarked on the elaboration of the National Strategy of Sustainable Socio-Economic Development for the period until 2020, approved by the Government in 2004 (NSSD-2020). Among other key areas, the document defines the objectives, basic principles and priorities in the field of sustainable land use for Belarus for the nearest future. The problems of effective land use and priorities in combating land degradation and soil contamination are defined in a special chapter of NSSD-2020 entitled “Rational use of land resources, sustainable development of agriculture and rural regions”. The priorities in ensuring rational land use and preventing land degradation include the establishment of a new system of land management and improvement of land-use regulatory mechanisms.

The bulk of activities on protection of lands/soils and prevention of land/soil degradation are carried out in the framework of national and sectoral programmes, coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Foods, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy and Cartography under the Council of Ministers of Belarus, and Ministry of Forestry. These programmes envisage a wide range of measures to increase soil fertility, water management, mitigate negative effects of degradation and elaborate actions focusing on combating land degradation.

Specific actions in the field of environment protection aimed at promotion of sustainable development practices in Belarus are defined in the National Action Plan on Rational Use of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus 2001-2005, approved by the Government in June 2001. This document defines organizational, economic, legal, and other mechanisms enabling prevention and mitigation of negative impacts on the environment, including land resources.

At the same time, national and sectoral strategies and programmes focusing on protection and rational use of land resources require significant improvements. There is a need for enhanced coordination of efforts by different ministries, agencies, scientific and planning organizations, local governments, and land users aimed at combating land degradation. The decision-making process in this area is still quite ineffective. Civil society, non-governmental organizations and local communities are rarely consulted or involved in the process. It is expected that coordination of efforts of all national stakeholders in the context of the UNCCD implementation will be strengthened through the elaboration and implementation of the National Action Programme to Combat Land Degradation.

A number of legal mechanisms in effect enable effective UNCCD implementation in Belarus. The Law of the Republic of Belarus on Environmental Protection (2002) defines State environmental management policy, describes economic mechanisms and procedures of environmental protection and use of natural resources, environmental monitoring and environmental impact assessment. Furthermore, it establishes a system of informational support, as well as registration and control measures in the sphere of environmental protection. The Law regulates implementation of environmental protection procedures, establishes rights, obligations and responsibilities of economic entities and individuals in the area of environmental protection, and defines criteria for selecting natural sites for special protection. The Law defines land,

including soil, as a component of the environment and is, thus, considered to be the document of principal significance in combating land degradation.

The President and Government of Belarus have initiated the preparation of a new edition of the Land Code. The draft revised Code has been prepared and submitted to the Parliament in 2005. The revised Land Code sets priority on effective land use, protection and improvement of fertility of land resources as one of the key principles of land resources management. At the same time, land protection, combating land degradation and restoration of degraded lands are paid insufficient attention in the draft Land Code.

A number of decrees directly related to combating land degradation were signed early 2006 by the President of Belarus. The procedure of withdrawal and allocation of land plots for the non-purpose use has been changed in order to preserve the most valuable lands, primarily those possessing agricultural, conservation, recreational and historical value. The measures taken are aimed at prevention and elimination of cases of land degradation in settlements and private households, as well as within the areas occupied by industrial, transportation, energy, communication, defence and other facilities.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and the Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy and Cartography under the Council of Ministers of Belarus, as well as their regional and local bodies carry out State control of use and protection of land resources in the country. An effective system of interaction between the responsible controlling bodies is in place.

The regulation on the National System of Environmental Monitoring in Belarus (approved by the Government in 2003) describes procedures for the organization and functioning of an environmental monitoring system and defines eleven types of monitoring, including monitoring of land resources, monitoring of vegetation and local environmental monitoring, which are directly related to the purposes of combating land degradation.

Environmentally-grounded territorial planning and spatial allocation of land-use systems and protected natural sites are carried out in accordance with the National Scheme of Integrated Territorial Organization of Belarus, approved by the Government in 2000. This Scheme determines the country's territorial development for the period until 2030 and builds on activities for conservation and rational use of land resources, including actions focused on combating land degradation. The important constituent part of territorial planning directed at the implementation of land use policy is the elaboration and approval by local governments of Territorial Organization Schemes for administrative districts. These documents are considered as long-term programmes of sustainable land use, on the one hand, and as the instruments of land use management and regulation, on the other hand. As of now such schemes have been elaborated for three administrative districts in the country. The three schemes are referred to as pilot model schemes for improvement of land use practices, protection of land resources, arrangement of intra-district territorial complexes and functional zones, as well as for establishment of local land use regime and control system.

In accordance with a bottom-up approach, the National Coordinating Body undertakes continuous efforts to involve all stakeholders concerned in the process of UNCCD implementation and to raise public awareness about UNCCD-related issues. During the reporting period, the following Internet sites have been established: the site of the Ministry of Natural

Resources and Environmental protection www.minpriroda.by; Belarusian weather site www.pogoda.by, operated by the Belarusian Hydrometeorological Centre; and website on implementation of the UNCCD in Belarus www.unccd.minpriroda.by.

Collaboration with mass media has intensified significantly. Special inserts, thematic pages, and columns dedicated to environmental issues are published by more than 120 district and city newspapers. These newspapers are issued with different periodicity, but more often than once a month.

The joint multilateral TACIS project “Environmental information, education and public awareness” (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus) has been successfully implemented in Belarus in 2002-2004 in the framework of the Aarhus Convention. The Aarhus Centre was established in Minsk in 2005 in order to better accumulate and disseminate environmental information, involve general public in environment-based decision-making and to render legal consulting services to the population.

Supported by the UNCCD Secretariat, the National Coordinating Body in 2002-2005 managed to more effectively use the consultative mechanism with international partners for enhancing collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other instruments in the framework of UNCCD implementation. The Regional Meeting for Strengthening Cooperation in the Field of Land Resources Management in CEE held in Minsk in December 2003 and participation of Belarusian representatives in Conferences of Parties to the UNCCD and Committees for the Review of the Implementations of the Convention (CRICs) have contributed significantly to the facilitation of this process, giving opportunity to hold consultations with representatives of UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the World Bank and other organizations on strengthening cooperation.

The National Coordinating Body, supported by the UNCCD Secretariat and the UNDP office in Belarus, took steps in 2003-2005 which allowed starting implementation of measures under the UNCCD using GEF resources. In 2003-2005 the UNDP/GEF project “National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management in Belarus” was implemented. The project enabled to elaborate and start implementation of the Action Plan on the implementation of the United Nations global conventions, in particular those pertaining to land degradation, biodiversity and climate change. Successful implementation in 2003-2004 of the preparatory stage UNDP/GEF project “Renaturalization of Peatlands in Belarus to Mitigate Climate Change, Combat Land Degradation and Ensure Conservation of Globally Valuable Biodiversity” enabled to start a medium-size project (pilot for the CEE region) that aims at elaborate and introduce methods of renaturalization of degraded peatlands through sustainable management.

In 2005 Belarus joined the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) that focused, among other things, on rendering assistance in integration of global environmental priorities into environmental protection practices at regional and local levels. Thematic oversight and technical advice are provided by the SGP National Steering Committee, selected through a consultative process with NGOs, academia and governmental institutions. An SGP office was opened in Minsk to coordinate day-to-day programme activities.

At present a preparatory UNDP/GEF project “Capacity Development for Sustainable Land Management in Belarus, PDF-A” that aims to develop a medium-sized project, is being implemented.

Belarus became a Party to the FAO in November 2005. This enables Belarus to access FAO’s technical cooperation programmes, including those within the UNCCD priorities.

Unlike obvious improvements in contacts, projects and actions supported by GEF, UNDP and some other international partners, Belarus did not succeed in achieving any progress in cooperation with the Global Mechanism in 2002-2005. A draft proposal to the Global Mechanism on support for NAP elaboration in Belarus was prepared and submitted to the GM authorities during CRIC-1 (Rome, 2002). The proposal, through intensive negotiations, was included in the Joint Work Programme between the Global Mechanism and the UNCCD Secretariat for 2004-2005. Nevertheless, yet real cooperation with the GM has not started.

The Global Mechanism is a special body of the UNCCD established to render assistance to the affected country Parties in the UNCCD implementation, in particular in mobilization of financial resources for implementing the Convention. However, the GM has not undertaken any activities with respect to the Republic of Belarus.

In spite of certain activities of the National Coordinating Body, Belarus still lacks financial and consultative support for the UNCCD implementation from developed country Parties to the Convention. This point was emphasized in the Second Environmental Performance Review for Belarus (UNECE, 2005). Located in the centre of Europe and involved in implementation of different international agreements on continental transit of goods, services and human resources, as well as in a number of global and regional environmental conventions, Belarus expects more active participation of developed country Parties to the UNCCD and international organizations in solving national problems, related to land degradation.

At present the Republic of Belarus continues the process of NAP elaboration. In this context the National Coordinating Body plans to organize regional seminars, a national forum on determination of NAP priorities and other events. Therefore methodical, technical and financial assistance from the UNCCD Secretariat, the Global Mechanism, international organizations and developed country Parties will make a great contribution to facilitating these activities in Belarus.

In the Republic of Belarus programmes and activities directed to the support of sustainable land use and environmental protection are funded predominantly from the following sources: national budget of the Republic of Belarus and budgets of local governments; budgets of national and local environmental protection funds; contributions from State-owned and private companies; personal donations from people, including foreign citizens; bank loans; foreign investments; other non-budget sources.

The establishment and functioning of national, regional, district and city environmental protection funds in Belarus, including the respective funds of Minsk city, are determined by the Law of the Republic of Belarus on Environmental Protection. The resources of these State-controlled special funds are used solely for the purposes of environmental protection.

In 2002-2005 direct environmental protection expenditures in Belarus reached 1.3-1.6% of the State budget. About half of these expenditures were covered by the environmental protection funds of the State budget. The environmental expenditures in 2006 are planned to come to 1.6 % of the State budget. Only 3.5% of these planned expenditures will be allocated to the budget item “Land protection”.

During the reported period foreign investors increased their willingness to fund certain environmental protection projects in Belarus. Funded by foreign investors, projects aimed at protection of the Ramsar areas, biological diversity, and at mitigating climate change as a rule contain objectives related to environmentally safe land use planning and land management.

In the nearest future the main funding objectives in the field of combating land degradation will include identification of additional financial sources, concentration of the available resources, further improvement of the investment climate, development of enabling economic mechanisms in combating land degradation and, in particular, accumulation and direct use of funds allocated to financing actions in the field of improved land management, restoration and protection.

Targeted monitoring of sustainable development factors in Belarus is implemented based on the representative indicators, recommended by the “Agenda 21”, as well as on the complex indicators of sustainable development elaborated by Eurostat.

Benchmarks and indicators used to assess the state of land resources are regulated by a number of legal acts. In particular, distribution of land resources by land-use categories, structure, environmental state, and fertility is characterized in the State Land Inventory. The data on the state of land resources, including those on land degradation processes are registered in the Land Cadastre. The existing state system of land use monitoring, based on recording and improvement of land use parameters within the every land plot, provides timely and proper submission of the respective land use information to the Land Cadastre.

The State land inventory documents include, among other factors, the following information on land degradation parameters:

- area of degraded lands, including those affected by mining, peat and sapropel extraction, as well as by construction activities;
- area of lands occupied by open sands, by ravines, gullies, burned out peatlands, out-of-use agricultural lands, contaminated by radionuclides and other useless lands;
- area of lands under amelioration, fertility improvement, mining, construction, waste disposal, etc.

The system of benchmarks and indicators elaborated in Belarus allows categorizing land degradation processes, determining and assessing the degree of land degradation. This system includes about thirty benchmarks and indicators used to evaluate land degradation.

BULGARIA

Bulgaria is a comparatively small country on the Balkan Peninsula, South-West Europe. In the north, it has a common border with the Republic of Romania, in the east – the Black Sea, in the south – the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Greece, and to the west – the Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro.

The territory of Bulgaria is 110 993.6 sq m, with a total length of its borders 2 245 km, of which 52.6% is land, 30.6%, river and 16.8%, marine.

With respect to climate, the territory of Bulgaria is divided into five climate regions – temperate-continental, transitional, continental-Mediterranean, Black Sea and mountain.

Soil-geographical regions of Bulgaria take into account the variety and specificities of the soils, subject to the impact of the physical and geographical conditions.

The regions divide the territory of the country into three soil zones that cover a total of 7 subzones and zones, 28 provinces and 63 regions.

The soil variety in our country is huge. The maroon soils are 30 % of the area, the black earth – 23 %, the grey forest soils – 17 %, the brown forest soils – 15 %, and the other types of soils – 16 %. More than 50 % of the soils, mainly the maroon, grey and a considerable part of the brown forest soils are with weak anti-erosion resistance.

The relief is various; the mountains are high and low, rocky and folded, at places cut by deep valleys, shallow riverbeds and wide plains.

The forestry fund in our country is 4 063 555 ha or 37% of the total area of the country. The planted area is 86.5 % or 3 648 005 ha. The average forestry of the country is 30%, and 50% of the forests are young. Forest in the mountain regions on terrains which slope more than 20 degrees prevail. They are 53%, and the plain forests are only 4%.

The broken relief and the presence of many mountains are the main reasons for the low percentage of arable lands – only 43% of the total territory of the country, whereas the problem for their protection is of significant national importance.

Bulgaria is a country in which the global warming changes of the climate occur, which are represented mainly in warming, drying and strengthening of the continental properties of the climate in the northern part of the country and the Mediterranean climate in its southern part.

In Bulgaria, many factors, showing that the processes of desertification take place on the territory of our country, are available. They are mainly complex and are related to the processes of degradation, such as soil erosion in all types of display, acidifying, salinization, pollution, destruction, etc.

Soil erosion remains the most widely spread soil degradation process on the territory of the country.

Approximately 60% of the total area of the country and about 72% of the arable area is subject to erosion.

The permanently affected area of water erosion is 4823011 ha.

Urgently needing complex anti-erosion actions – 875000 ha.

Average annual losses of soil from water erosion - 147 million tons.

Affected area of wind erosion – 1657386 ha. (1/3 of the arable land).

Annual losses of fertile soil from wind erosion – 30 to 60 million tons.

Acidifying of soils

About 1500000 ha of arable lands are with soil acidity.

Out of them:

- 630000 ha – weak and average acidity;
- 350000 ha – heavy and very heavy acidity;
- More than 460000 ha – with soil acidity that is harmful for the plants, urgently needing melioration.

Saline soils

The secondary saline soils in Bulgaria are about 35000 ha. Potentially endangered – more than 40000 ha.

They are located mainly in the lowlands and river valleys, and affect the most fertile soils in the country.

Lands with degraded or destroyed soil profile from extraction and initial processing of non-recoverable natural resources - 25513.9 ha

- The greatest part of disrupted and recultivated terrains (88%) is from extraction of fuel-energy resources.

The permanent warming and drying of the territory of our country during the last two decades and the unfavorable similar tendencies for the first decades of this century show that as a result of the change in the climate, the natural conditions have triggered a start to degradation of the phytoecosystems and soils in Bulgaria and outline a tendency to desertification.

There are regions in the country with permanently degraded quality of the lands, such as the region of Mendovo, Melnik, Rozhen, at the foot of the Ograzhden and Pirin mountains. The high level of land degrading in these regions with a tendency to desertification is due both to the anthropogenous factor (forest cutting, forest fires, excessive pasture, deserted uncultivated agricultural lands), and to the drier Mediterranean climate, water, wind, and irrigation erosion, the bad plantation cover, the soil condition (shallow, rocky, with high degree of water erosion, bad structure and low humus content).

Salinization of the soils in the regions around Belozem in the Plovdiv district, the saline flow terraces of the Danube and Maritsa rivers and the lands along the Black Sea coast also outline a tendency to desertification.

In general, the national policy for control of desertification and drought is not defined clearly enough and respectively reflected in the existing strategies, programmes, and plans. For the time being, the legislative basis for the realization of activities for implementation of the Convention is not sufficient.

The main goal of this stage is to achieve compliance with respect both to the cooperation of sector policies and to rewarding the actions for more integrated effect of the overall management of the lands and control of desertification.

Therefore, Bulgaria has focused its efforts on the legal regulation of these requirements. A step towards achieving the goals is the development of a new Soils Act and development and adoption of a National Action Programme, with clearly formulated priorities for their sustainable management and specific strategic actions for control of desertification and sustainable land management, joining the sustainable land management to the local regulation of land management, as well as joining the National Action Programme to the forthcoming plans for development of the municipalities and plans for river basin management.

Some of the planned Programmes in the projects of the National Action Programme include the following:

- Improvement and Supplement of the National Legislation for Sustainable Land Management
- Improvement and Integration of Policies and Strategies for Sustainable Land Management
- Strengthening of the Institutional Capacity and Development of Mechanisms for Coordination, Communication, and Cooperation
- Development of Regional Programmes and Participation in International Processes for Sustainable Land Management
- Control of Erosion Processes
- Recovering and Protection of the Landscape Variety by Implementation of Sustainable Forestry Practices
- Recovering of Irrigation Agriculture and Protection of Water Resources
- Sustainable Use of Land Resources in Non-fostered Regions
- Ecologically Friendly Protection and Use of Waste Agricultural and Forestry Biomass
- Sustainable Management of Arable lands with High Preserving Value
- New Practices for Recovering and Effective Use of Land Resources in the Degraded Territories
- Development and Implementation of Educational Programmes for Sustainable Development at All Levels of the Educational System
- Scientific, Information, and Applied Securing of Measures for Sustainable Land Management
- Participation in International Processes for Exchange of Knowledge, Know-How, and Good Practices for Sustainable Land Management

as well as:

- Actions for improving the economic environment
- Actions for protecting the natural resources and encouraging their sustainable use
- Actions for recovering of degraded lands
- Actions for increase of the knowledge in desertification
- Actions for control, surveillance, and assessment of desertification and drying, etc.

The control of the performance of the commitments of Bulgaria at national level is performed by the Ministry of Environment and Waters in its capacity as a National Coordination Authority:

Ministry of Environment and Waters.
22 Maria Louisa Blvd.
Sofia 1000
Bulgaria
Tel. 940 65 32; Fax 980 96 41
E-mail urbansoil@moew.government.bg

At the regional level, the control is performed by the regional offices of the Ministry of Environment and Waters and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry – the Regional Inspections of Environment and Waters and the Agriculture Council Offices.

The control of performance of the commitments under the Convention is performed also by the members of the National Coordination Council in Control of Desertification with the Ministry of Environment and Waters, within the frames of their institution/organization.

The national Coordination Council was created under Order No RD-176 dated 29 March 2006 of the Minister of Environment and Waters.

It includes representatives of 10 key ministries with direct relation to the sustainable land management and control of desertification, representatives of 6 National Agencies, National Bodies, National Offices, the non-governmental sector, a representative of the municipalities in Bulgaria and the representative of Bulgaria on the Committee on Science and Technology of the Convention.

The chairman of the National Coordination Council is Mr. Yordan Dardov – Deputy Minister of Environment and Waters and political coordinator of the Global Environment Facility for Bulgaria.

At the local level, the control is performed by the municipal authorities. The mayor of the municipality exercises prevention control for non-admission of actions resulting in degrading of environment components and desertification.

In the process of implementation of the Convention, we should be guided by the opportunity of attracting a wider range of interested parties for implementation of the Convention. Therefore, actions and stimuli for development and increase of the capacity for fulfillment of the obligations under the Convention should be developed, considering that its implementation worldwide is commencing a stage of wider realization.

CANADA

Canada has two areas that meet the meteorological definition of drylands. The larger area in the prairie ecozone occupies 46.7 million hectares, including 60% of Canada's cropland and 80% of its rangeland. Its climate is characterized by short, hot summers and long cold winters with low precipitation and high evaporation. This region has been subject to periodic droughts, including the 1930s drought which triggered severe wind erosion, with massive dust storms, leading to the decade being referred to as the "dirty 30s". Drought is a serious and recurring problem for agricultural production and conservation of the landscape resources. The Prairie Farm

Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), which was created in 1935 to assist farmers and communities in their fight against desertification, has been working to develop a near real time system of monitoring precipitation nation-wide.

In the course of the last century, erosion and depletion of the soil's organic matter has reduced soil productivity to the extent that additional fertility inputs are usually required to maintain crop production over large portions of the area. Past response to soil degradation has resulted in significant area of cropland being returned to forage production. Within the last 25 years, changes in cropping systems and the adoption of soil conservation practices (such as reduced and zero tillage) have stopped or begun to reverse the decline in soil fertility and in soil productivity in over 70% of the annually cropped land in the prairies.

Under the Canadian Constitution, the responsibility for agricultural and natural resources is shared between the provincial and federal governments. In Canada, policy integration and sustainable natural resource planning is therefore often achieved through federal-provincial collaboration. Such co-operation often involves extensive consultation, financial assistance and the establishment of formal agreements that provide a framework for partnership-based resource management, such as the Agriculture Policy Framework (APF).

Following the consultation process, the five-year APF agreement between the federal and provincial/territorial governments came into effect in April 2003. It provides a comprehensive strategy to help the sector chart a course to continued prosperity and profitability, by encompassing five elements: business risk management; food safety and quality; science and innovation; environment; and, renewal. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) renews its Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) on a three-year cycle. Currently, the Department's 4th SDS is in the final stages of development. The SDS renews AAFC's commitment to developing sustainable agriculture and reiterates its recognition that sustainability requires the integration of the appropriate environmental, economic and social considerations Canada is developing a series of national indicators under the National Agri-Environmental Health Analysis and Reporting Programme. They include a series of indicators on erosion, soil organic carbon and desertification.

AAFC conducts an extensive research programme in sustainable livestock and crop production systems as well as environmental health. Ongoing research activities aim to develop new, improved crop varieties and more efficient, technologically advanced production systems that will contribute to the sustainability of agriculture in Canada. Key research themes include protection of soils, water and air; conservation of biodiversity and organic nutrients; and, the development of alternative pest-control techniques.

The PFRA manages 87 community pastures across the prairies, occupying more than 900,000 ha. Most were established in response to the drought of the 1930s. They provide grazing for local farms, protect the fragile land from erosion and protect biodiversity. For over 100 years, the PFRA's Shelterbelt Centre has provided trees and shrub seedlings to prairie landowners for farm, field, wildlife and agro-forestry plantings.

The objectives of the National Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Initiative include helping the agriculture sector better identify its impacts on the environment and promoting the growth of stewardship activities within the agriculture industry by developing voluntary environmental plans for farms. The Greencover Canada programme is an initiative to help producers improve

grassland-management practices, protect water quality, reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat. The National Farm Stewardship Programme (NFSP) will provide technical and financial assistance to support the adoption of beneficial management practices by agricultural producers and land managers as identified in the EFP.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has a long history of engaging in development assistance activities. The department is currently active in research and development projects in land and water conservation in China, Egypt, Ethiopia and Chile.

The National Land and Water Information Service (NLWIS) is an Internet-based service being developed over the next four years to provide on-line access to agri-environmental information to help Canadians make responsible land-use decisions.

Canada has developed a comprehensive response to the issues of land degradation in its dryland areas. Risk is monitored, science expertise is applied to solving problems, programmes are developed to get information to farm managers and technical and financial assistance is provided to help them make improvements to land management.

GEORGIA

In 1994 Georgia signed the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). In 1999 the Parliament of Georgia ratified the Convention and on 21 October 1999 Georgia became a Party to the UNCCD.

Georgia is a country with insufficient land resources. Its territory, including the areas of territorial waters (835,1 thousand hectares), amounts to 7628,0 thousand hectares. According to the data of 2005 the area of agricultural lands comprises 3026, 3 thousand hectares (39, 7% of the whole territory), out of which 802, 1 thousand hectares is plough-land and 1796, 9 thousand hectares is grazing land.

Since November 2003 positive trends of socio-economic development have become noticeable in Georgia. A series of reforms was announced for the country development. The activities of the state administrative bodies have become better organized, transparent and well-considered (carefully thought out). Executive and financial discipline became stronger; the State administrative system personnel have been changed partly and grew younger. The environment for the activities in the country in general has become much more attractive as compared with the previous years.

At the same time, the problem of the territorial integrity of the country has not been solved yet; the investment environment should be further improved, the unemployment rate has increased as a large number of state functionaries have been dismissed from their jobs. The reforms of the legal and administrative systems are still going on.

Development priorities which have been identified by the country authorities for the short- and medium-term outlook, mainly relate to the sectors such as self-defence, education, energy, transport, poverty reduction. Environmental problems are less represented in these top priorities of development. Even in those cases where the development of this or that sector of economics is acknowledged as the most important task of State policy (for example agriculture) environmental

aspects are still not paid enough attention. In the field of environmental protection the State course within the short and medium-term period is mainly directed at the optimization of the existing system of management, improvement of the State control (supervision) over the use of natural resources and destruction of the possibilities for corruption.

Desertification is a significant ecological problem for Georgia, which is an agrarian country with insufficient agricultural lands. However, in the conditions of Georgia desertification is limited to geographical area. The forms of land degradation such as deforestation, wind and water erosion, landslides, overgrazing, soil exhaustion, soil contamination and others is spread over the whole country and is accompanied by socio-economic results. Because of that desertification is considered within a broader context of land degradation and problem of sustainable land management.

In Georgia the areas most sensitive to desertification are the regions of Shida and Kvemo Kartli, parts of Kakheti (Dedoplistskaro, Signagi and Sagarejo regions) where desertification processes are activated because of unsustainable use of land resources (improper irrigation and cultivation, overgrazing, deforestation) and climatic factors. Desertification processes are intensified over almost 3000km² of area including Shiraki, Eldari, Iveri, Taribana, Naomari, Ole, Jeiran-Choli valleys, mountain ranges and plateaus dividing them and the most part of Kakheti range hill-side. The desertification zone in Georgia starts at 300-400 meters above sea level and closely borders with "North savannas". The desertification process is very intensively presented in the area of 119 041,5 hectares of land in the Dedoplistskaro region, 46700,0 hectares of area in the Signagi region, 47000, 0 hectares of area in the Sagarejo region, 32000,0 hectares of area in the Gardabani region and 30561,0 hectares of area in the Marneuli region. Active desertification is also noticed in the southern part of Georgia (Akhaltsikhe depression) and Shida Kartli (Kaspi region), where during the last decade the erosion process caused by the wind became stronger due to the destruction of windbreaks, increased frequency of droughts, deficit of precipitation and increased temperature.

As compared to desertification the scale of land degradation is much bigger and it is rather a significant problem for almost all Georgia including the Western Georgia and high mountain regions. According to the latest data, about 35% of agricultural lands are degraded. Land erosion, which has significantly activated during the last years is most representative of the problems related to land degradation. More than 1 million hectares of land is erosion stricken. Out of it plough-lands constitute 380 thousand hectares, pasture lands and hayfields constitute 570 thousand and Black Sea coastal line – 87 thousand hectares. In arid and semi-arid zones of Eastern Georgia about 105 thousand hectares of plough-lands in 18 administrative regions undergo erosion caused by winds. 59 220 hectares of soil is seriously saline, in average -54 340 hectares. Overall area of humus-sulphate soils requiring melioration (land-reclamation) constitutes 15 thousand hectares.

Land degradation in Georgia is mainly conditioned by climatic and topographical peculiarities, activity of geo-dynamic processes, uncontrolled forest cutting and improper agricultural practices (over-pasturing, intensive cultivation, ploughing of slopes, extraction of minerals through open pit mining).

According to recent data from the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia the low-yield agricultural lands occupy rather big areas:

- Saline and brackish soils – 205, 0 thousand hectares (6, 7% of the whole arable lands)
- Acidic - 300, 0 thousand hectares (11%)
- Marshy soils – 210, 0 thousand hectares (7, 3%)
- Eroded soils - 1 mil. hectares (33%).

This is aggravated by the impoverishment of the soil from the nutritional substances necessary for vegetation and the trend of the reduction of humus - the main indicator of fertility - in almost all types of soil.

1. Focal point institution:

Name of focal point	Ministry of environmental protection and natural resources
Address including e-mail address	6 Gulua str. 0114 +99532 275723
Country-specific websites relating to desertification	1. www.moe.gov.ge 2. www.ncsa.ge

2. Status of national action programme (NAP):

Date of validation	April 2, 2003
Body/institution/Government level which validated the NAP	Decree of the President
NAP review(s)	No
NAP has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy (PRSP)	No PRSP was adopted before the NAP
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	No However, considered during the preparation of certain strategies, plans: Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; First National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
NAP implementation has started with or without the conclusions of partnership agreements	No

3. Cooperation within subregional action programme (SRAP)/regional action programme (RAP) frames on issues of desertification hasn't been launched yet.

4. In 2001 the National Coordinating Body on UNCCD- Permanent State Commission -was established by the Decree of the President of Georgia N 282 (15.07.2001) "On the Establishment of the Permanent State Commission on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification". The Commission consisted of representatives of relevant governmental agencies and academic institutions. PSC doesn't include non-governmental representatives due to some limitations imposed by legislative provisions for such commissions. However, currently the Commission is not functioning.

5. Total number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accredited to the process: 2

Has an NGO National Coordinating Committee on desertification been established; if yes, how many NGOs or civil society organizations participate in it?	No
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6. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD: 21

Name up to five most relevant acts and laws and/or regulations.

Title of the law	Date of adoption
1. Law on Soil Protection	1994
2. Law on Conservation of Soils and Restoration-Improvement of their Fertility	2003
3. Law on Land Conservation and reclamation	1997, with amendments in 2000 and 2001
4. Law on Mineral Resources	1997
5. Law on Oil and Gas	1999

7. The consultative process within the framework of the UNCCD has not been carried out as partnership agreements were not initiated.

List of consultative meetings on UNCCD implementation (please provide information where appropriate):

Name of consultative meeting	Date/year	Donor countries involved	International organizations or agencies of the United Nations system involved
1.REC Caucasus Conference "Draught and Desertification"	2002	Germany, USA	World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme (WFP)

8. Projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD.

Name of project	Project implemented within the framework of the NAP/SRAP/RAP? (Yes/No)	Project implemented within the framework of	Timeframe	Partners involved	Overall budget
1.National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management	No	UNDP/GEF	2002 December-2006		198 000USD
2.Enabling Activities for the Preparation of	No	UNDP/GEF	01.01.2006 -		15 000US\$

Georgia's Second National Communication			01.01.2009		
3.Forest Development Project	No	International Development Association	3 December 2002 - 31 December 2008		Credit - 12.60ml.SDR (15.67 ml.USD) Georgian Ministry of Finance (such as credit agreement signing authoritative body); -5.67ml.USD credit
4.Georgia's Protected Areas Development Project	No	World Bank, USAID	July 2002- to December 31 2006		141300USD
5.Reducing Trans-boundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras River Basin	No	UNDP/GEF/ SIDA	2003-2006		649 629 US\$
6. South Caucasus Water Programme	No	USAID	2005-2008		1 500 000 US\$
7.Costal Zone Integrated Management Project	No	GEF	1999-2006	Govern. of Nederland	2 600 000 US\$

HUNGARY

Hungary is situated in Central Europe, in the middle of the Carpathian Basin; it belongs to the continental climatic zone and is considerably influenced by the Atlantic and Mediterranean streams. According to the worldwide used aridity index, the ratio of annual precipitation to potential evapotranspiration (P/PET), Hungary can be identified as an "affected country" under the terms of the UNCCD. In fact, drought is a considerable risk factor, especially on the Great Hungarian Plain and other parts of the country, and signs of desertification can also be found.

The country has suffered from numerous droughts in its history, and drought events have become more intensive and more frequent during the past decades. Despite the fact that the agricultural sector is the most directly exposed to the harmful impacts of extremely dry conditions, it is also becoming more and more evident that all living organisms, the natural habitat, all other sectors of the economy and a significant part of society suffer from the adverse impacts of drought.

As far as future tendencies are concerned, based on the analyses of climatic data on long term observations and taking into account the recent investigations on the effects of climatic changes in Hungary, it can be stated that an increase in temperature and a significant decrease in precipitation as well as in average soil moisture content is anticipated, and therefore the interest in the fight against drought and desertification is a priority in the country.

1. Focal point institution

The National Focal Point of the UNCCD is located in the Ministry of Environment and Water, Budapest. The relevant contact details of the National Focal Point are as follows:

Dora Kulauzov
Counsellor, UNCCD Focal Point
Department of International Environmental Policy
Ministry of Environment and Water
Fő u. 44-50
H-1011 Budapest, Hungary
Tel: +36-1-457-3388
Fax: +36-1-201-1335
Email: kulauzov@mail.kvvm.hu

In the present situation there is no country-specific website devoted to the problems of drought and/or desertification in Hungary. General information can be found on the homepage of the Ministry of Environment and Water at the following address: www.kvvm.hu

2. Status of the National Action Programme (NAP)

The National Drought Strategy, as a basis of the National Action Programme is now at the very final stage of Governmental acceptance. According to an earlier decision of the Hungarian Government (Decision No. 2142/2005), the responsible authorities have to elaborate the National Action Programme on Drought in 2006, based on the aims and tasks laid down in the National Drought Strategy. The main Governmental body to prepare the NAP is the Ministry of Environment and Water in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, with the involvement of other related ministries and national authorities. Formulation of the National Action Programme is under way, expected approval of the NAP by the Government is the end of 2006.

The Hungarian NAP will be harmonised with the National Development Plan and with other related policies and strategies, especially those dealing with climate change and biological diversity. Hungary takes fully into consideration the principles and provisions of the Aarhus Convention as well.

3. Member of SRAP/RAP

At the moment Hungary is not involved in the subregional or regional cooperation framework organized officially on drought or desertification; there are however several international technical and scientific bodies in which the country is represented.

Hungarian experts have been invited to contribute to the preparation for the establishment of a Subregional Drought Management/Monitoring Centre for South-Eastern Europe promoting the implementation of the UNCCD aims at a subregional level.

4. Composition of the National Coordinating Body (NCB)

For the elaboration of the National Drought Strategy and the National Action Programme, a National Coordinating Body was established by the Ministry of Environment and Water in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. In this Body the representatives of all other relevant ministries and national authorities interested in drought mitigation are involved, together with the representatives of the academic and scientific sphere and the non-governmental organizations as well. The National Coordinating Body has an interdisciplinary and inter-ministerial staff in which engineers, hygienists, economists, catastrophe experts and other relevant professionals are involved as well as hydrologists, meteorologists, agronomists and forestry experts.

5. Total number of NGOs accredited to the process

The total number of members of the NCB is 22, among which 6 representatives belong to non-governmental organizations, especially to technical and/or scientific associations dealing directly or indirectly with the problems of drought and desertification. Among the non-governmental organizations could be mentioned the Hungarian Hydrological Society, the Hungarian Society for Agricultural Sciences, the Hungarian Meteorological Society and the representatives of the St. Istvan University, Gödöllő and the Corvinus University of Budapest.

6. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD

The most relevant acts and laws and/or regulations relating to the UNCCD are as follows:

National Law No. LXXXI of 1995 on the promulgation of the Convention on Biological Diversity

National Law No. LXXXII of 1995 on the promulgation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Parliamentary Resolution No. 47/1999. (VI. 3.) upon Hungary's accession to the UNCCD

National Law No. CVII of 2003 on the promulgation of Hungary's accession to the UNCCD

Government decision No. 2142/2005. (VII. 14.) on the preparation and elaboration of the National Drought Strategy and the National Action Programme related to the fight against drought and desertification in the country

7. The consultative process

Notwithstanding that Hungary has very good contacts with international technical and scientific organizations in this field, and that Hungarian authorities have excellent official cooperation with neighbouring countries, there is no specific partnership agreement with any of the UNCCD Parties on the joint implementation of the Convention. However, Hungarian officials and experts are interested in participation in *meetings and consultative events* concerning drought mitigation and/or the fight against desertification.

Hungarian experts have participated actively in the annual congresses and regional conferences of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), such as the congresses in Montpellier, France (2003) and Beijing, China (2005), and in the 21st European Regional Conference of ICID – 15-19 May, 2005, Frankfurt (Oder) / Slubice, Germany and Poland, where numerous questions of drought and desertification have been discussed.

Furthermore, a representative of Hungary is a member of the Group of Experts (GoE) of the UNCCD and has actively taken part in the elaboration of interim reports, project proposals and other technical papers in the frame of the work plan topics of the GoE. The National Focal Point served as one of the vice-presidents of the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 6) and participated in the work of the Bureau of COP 6 during the period 2003-2005.

8. Projects currently under implementation related to the UNCCD

There is a national research and development project dealing partly with water management and water scarcity problems in agriculture, entitled *Agroecology*, under the leadership of the Research Institute of Soil Science and Agro-chemistry (RISSAC) of the National Academy of Sciences, and with participation of several academic and scientific institutions of Hungary. The project will give a comprehensive outlook on the different problems of agro-ecological systems, and make proposals for a better and environmentally safe operation of these kinds of systems, with special regard to the most effective use of the national water resources and water retention possibilities under different climatic and ecological conditions.

Another project in the preparation and laying down of the foundation of the National Drought Strategy was initiated and sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development between 2001-2003, in which the experts of several research institutions and universities were involved. This material became an important document and starting point for the formulation of the present Strategy.

ISRAEL

This report constitutes an update to the Israeli reports submitted to the UNCCD Secretariat in 2000 and 2002. As such it is designed to supplement rather than repeat the information contained therein and report about recent activities and progress in Israel. It will also highlight those areas in which there has not been sufficient follow through of UNCCD related initiatives reported earlier.

It is important at the outset to consider Israel's climatic conditions. Some 95% of the country is either semi-arid, arid or hyper-arid with only 5% of the lands receiving sufficient rainfall to fall into a dry sub-humid category. Thus, Israel is almost entirely comprised of drylands. As the map below suggests, the greatest risk of desertification exists in the semi-arid zones in the centre of the country, with soil degradation also occurring in the arid parts of the Negev surrounding the greater Beer Sheva region.

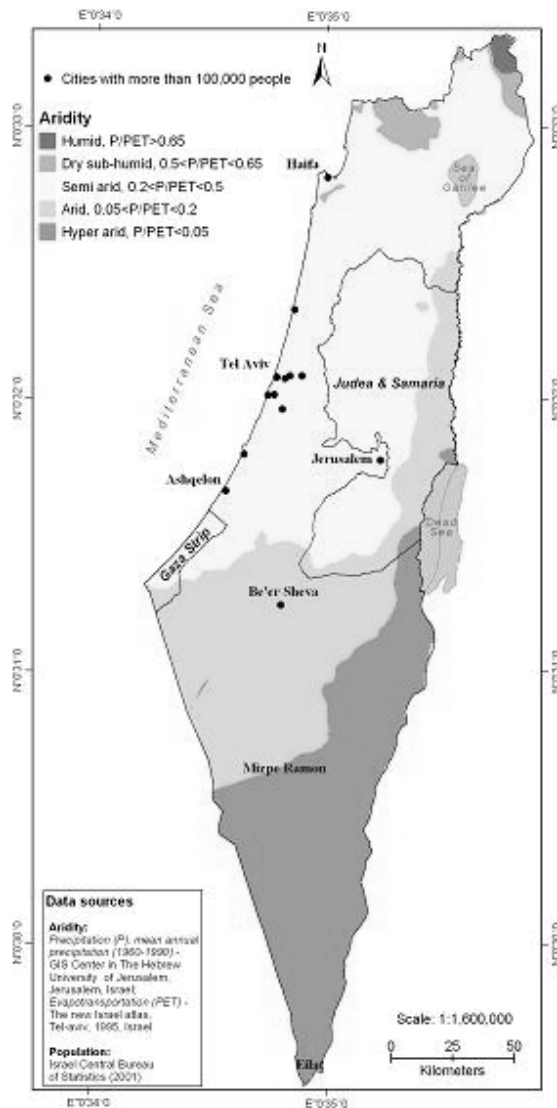


Figure 1: Aridity Index and Classification of lands in Israel. (Source: CLEMDES, 2004)

During the past several years, Israel took several measures which will strengthen its efforts to address desertification processes. Most of these activities were part of planning, environmental, and development strategies or policies for the sustainable use of natural resources. The majority were *not* specifically directed towards implementing a comprehensive national strategy to combat desertification or as part of a renewed local commitment to meet the expectations of the UNCCD. Nonetheless, frequently they make a significant contribution to Israel's ongoing efforts to reduce erosion, increase the productivity of lands in the semi-arid drylands, ensure agricultural yields in general, and promote afforestation efforts throughout the country.

The most salient new Israeli efforts associated with combating desertification can be divided into four general categories, and several sub-categories. These include:

I. New Comprehensive Planning Initiatives for Israeli Drylands:

- Approval of National Masterplan 35 as a new long-term strategic plan that controls urban growth and balances development against conservation

- Government adoption of the "Daroma" (Southbound) development plan to expedite settlement of the Negev region.
- II. Upgraded Sustainable Water Management in the Drylands:
- Upgrading of effluent recycling for agriculture
 - Construction and operation of new desalination facilities
 - Implementation of water conservation policies to prevent overexploitation
 - Commencement of watershed management projects -- Nahal Beer Sheva, Nahal Besor.
- III. Continued Afforestation in the Arid and Semi-Arid Regions:
- Implementation of Masterplan 22 for Forests and Afforestation
 - Transfer of legal control of forests to the Jewish National Fund (JNF)
 - Adoption of a national policy of sustainable forestry to ensure biodiversity, the ecological integrity of Israel's woodlands and the public's involvement in planning and access to forests as recreational resources.
- IV. Policies to Promote Sustainable Agriculture in Vulnerable Regions:
- Implementation of national soil erosion control policies
 - Ongoing promotion of national grazing strategy and associated regulation.

Details about the initiatives in these four areas will be integrated as appropriate into the seven thematic topics stipulated for National Reports under decision 1/COP.5.

ITALY

Italy ratified the UNCCD on 4 June 1997 becoming a country Party as both an affected and a donor country.

Italy has a large economy and a population of 57 million, concentrated on a relatively small territory, with strong regional disparities. High densities lead to strong environmental pressures which, together with the diversity and sensitivity of Italy's natural patrimony and its important cultural heritage, have made environmental protection a matter of serious public concern¹.

1.1 Focal Point

The Focal Point of the UNCCD is headquartered in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DG Cooperation for Development.

Name: Min. Plen. Guido Scalici
 Address, including email: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
guido.scalici@esteri.it

Country specific websites relating to desertification:

<http://www.minambiente.it/st/Ministero.aspx?doc=ministero/comitaticsi/siccita/comitato.xml>

¹ OECD: Environmental Performance Reviews: Italy (2002).

1.2 Status of the National Action Programme (NAP)

The NAP: On 21 December 1999, with Resolution 229/99, the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Economic Programming (CIPE)² approved the National Programme to Combat Drought and Desertification (NAP).

Future Review of the NAP: A process of reviewing CIPE Resolution 229/99 might be soon established.

1.3 Member of subregional action programme (SRAP)/regional action programme (RAP)

Italy is a member of the Group of Annex IV Countries. The other members are: Greece, Portugal, Spain and Turkey (original Annex IV Countries). In 2000, these Countries elaborated the Terms of Reference (TOR) for their Regional Action Programmes. Those TOR are now to be considered relevant for the Sub-Regional Action Programmes.

1.4 Composition of the National Coordination Body + 1.5 NGOs accredited to the process

According to Annex IV, Art. 5 (a):

“In preparing and implementing national action programmes pursuant to art. 9 and 10 of the Convention, each affected country Party of the Region shall, as appropriate:

(a) designate appropriate bodies responsible for the preparation, coordination and implementation of its programme;....”

Consistent with this mandate, the National Committee to Combat Drought and Desertification – (NCCDD) was established in 1997 (see also 3.2).

The NCCDD is headquartered at the Ministry of the Environment and Territory and, so as to ensure multi-disciplinarity, includes one representative for each of the following Ministries:

- Environment and Territory
- Foreign Affairs
- Agricultural and Forestry Policies
- Infrastructure and Transport
- Foreign Trade
- Culture
- Economics
- Education, Universities and Scientific Research

as well as:

- two representatives of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- three representatives of the Conference for State-Region and Autonomous Province Relations
- one representative appointed by environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and by the NGOs Coordination Forum, respectively.

²Established within the Ministry of Economy and Finance, CIPE is organised into six Commissions, one of which is devoted to Sustainable Development.

The NCCDD is supported by a multidisciplinary Commission made up of experts appointed by various national scientific bodies and also open to the participation of other technical, scientific and academic institutions.

Commissione Tecnico-scientifica di cui all'art. 3 DPCM 08/03/2001:

- APAT (Agency for Environmental Protection and Technical Services)
- ENEA (Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and the Environment)
- INEA (National Institute for Agro Economy)
- CNR (National Centre for Research)
 - I. • AISF (Italian Accademy for Forest Science)
 - IAO (Istituto Agronomico d'Oltremare, the technical and scientific branch of the MFA)
- UCEA (Central Unit for Ecology and Agriculture)
- ECOMED (Agency for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean)

1.6 Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD

At the national level:

- Act (DPCM) 26 September 1997 on the establishment of the National Committee to Combat Desertification and Drought (NCCDD)
- CIPE Resolution 22 December 1998 n. 154 "First national communication for the implementation of the UNCCD"
- CIPE Resolution 21 December 1999, n.229 on the establishment of the National Action Programme
- Act (DPCM) 8 March 2001 on the revision of members of the NCCDD
- CIPE Resolution 3 May 2001, n.58 on the funding of the NCCDD activities
- Act (DPCM) 19 agosto 2002 on the nomination of NCCDD Chair
- Act (DM) 24 July 2003, on the nomination of NCCDD and its CTS members
- National Budgetary Law (DPEF) 2007-2008, on the designation of environmental priorities for the National Budget Law, including desertification among the priority areas (under discussion at the Italian Parliament).

At the national level, it is evident that the main acts pertain to the functioning of the NCCDD and to the implementation of the NAP.

At the regional level, some administrative Regions of Italy approved the Italian Regional Action Programme (IRAP) to Combat Desertification. Among those, some Italian Regions established Italian Region Committees, IRCCDD, as requested by the IRAP.

Those administrative Regions are the following:

- Calabria: the IRCCDD was established by the Calabria Regional Act (Del.G.R.) n. 659/2003 and the IRAP was approved by Calabria Region Act (DGR) n. 418/2002;
- Basilicata: the IRCCDD was established by the Basilicata Regional Act (Del.G.R.) n. 742/2001 and the IRAP was approved by River Basin Authority Act 2000;
- Sicily: the IRCCDD was established by the Sicily Regional Act (D.P.Reg.) n. 171/2000 and the IRAP was approved by the Environment and Territory Assessorate Act on 24/07/2003;
- Sardinia: the IRAP was approved by the Sardinia Regional Act (Del.G.R.) n. 14/2/2000;

Marche: the IRAP was approved by the River Basin Authority Act n.3/2000;
Veneto: the IRAP was approved by the Veneto Regional Act (Del.G.R.) n. 388/2000.

1.7 National projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD in the framework of NAP/SRAP/RAP

In the years 2004 and 2005, a number of national projects were funded in the framework of the Agreement between the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory (IMET), the NCCDD and the University of Calabria to improve national and local technical capacity in the establishment and implementation of local action plans and projects³.

From April 2004 to March 2005 the following activities have been carried out:

- 1) Guidelines on the identification of drought sensitive areas. The activity is carried out by APAT and is funded with 55.000;
- 2) Guidelines on the elaboration and monitoring of activities carried out by the Italian administrative Regions and the River Basin Authorities in the implementation of the NAP. The activity is carried out by APAT together with the Sassary University (Department of Ecology) and is funded with 65.000;
- 3) Management and updating of an Italian Clearing House Mechanism. The activity is carried out by APAT and funded with 25.000;
- 4) Assessment and deployment of a desertification risk model to be applied at national scale. The activity is carried out by APAT together with UCEA and is funded with 65.000;
- 5) Elaboration of operational standards for sustainable management and improvement of forestry patrimony in desertification prone areas. The activity is carried out by Tuscia University and the Italian Academy on Forestry Science and is funded with 60.000;
- 6) State and evolution of vegetation cover in Italy through teledetection techniques. The activity is carried out by ENEA and is funded with 45.000.

In addition, other pilot activities at local level have also been funded:

- 7) Soil erosion rate and lithological sublayer relation. The activity is carried out by Arno River Basin Authority and is funded with 30.000;
- 8) Forest coverage in Veneto, Adige River Basin. Evaluation of desertification processes. The activity is carried out by the Adige River Basin Authority and is funded with 35.000.

In May 2006 the second financial period started. The activities are planned to be completed by July 2007.

- 1) Education, training, public awareness. The activity is carried out by ENEA and is funded with 65.000,00;

³ 26 November 2004, "Accordo di Programma tra il Comitato Nazionale per la Lotta alla Siccità e alla Desertificazione, il Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e l'Università della Calabria, con annesso Piano Operativo" on the conclusion of an agreement between the IMET, the NCCDD and the University of Calabria for the year 2004; 26 November 2005, "Accordo di Programma tra il Comitato Nazionale per la Lotta alla Siccità e alla Desertificazione, il Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e l'Università della Calabria, con annesso Piano Operativo" on an agreement between the IMET, the NCCDD and the University of Calabria for the year 2005.

- 2) Administrative Region's experts training to combat desertification. The activity is carried out by the University of Sassari (Research Unit on desertification) together with Basilicata University and is funded with 70.000,00;
- 3) Diffusion of information and awareness on traditional knowledge to combat desertification. The activity is carried out by IPOGEA and funded with 15.000,00;
- 4) Monitoring and functional evaluation of reforestation and olive trees cultivation in combating desertification in Italy. The activity is carried out by Bari University, Istituto per le Piante da Legno et l'Ambiente (IPLA), Piemonte Region, Tuscia University, ENEA, Calabria University and is funded with 120.000,00;
- 5) Methodology on the assessment of drought-related environmental and economic damages. The activity is carried out by Bari University and is funded with 60.000,00;
- 6) Local Action Plans: some implementation pilot experiences in Italian Regions: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Piemonte, Apulia, Sardinia, Sicily. The activity is funded with 255.000,00;
- 7) National Mapping System on environmental vulnerability to desertification. The activity is carried out by the Consiglio per la Ricerca e la Sperimentazione in Agricoltura (CRA) – UCEA and is funded with 80.000,00.

In the framework of financial programmes on scientific and technical development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the Italian Ministry of Research in October 2002 funded a research and development project called RIADE ["Integrated Research for Applying New Technologies and Processes to Combat Desertification"] within the National Programme of Research, Technological Development and High Level Training 2000-2006. The main contractor is Advanced Computer Systems SpA (Italy); scientific partners are ENEA and NRD – University of Sassari. The total cost of RIADE is 7.800.000,00 and 900.000,00 for the high level training activities. MIUR (Ministero dell' Istruzione, dell' Università et della Ricerca) contribution was for 70% of the total amount.

Furthermore, with the aim to support Annex IV countries in the implementation of their NAPs, in 2005, the European Space Agency promoted the "Desertwatch Project" carried out by an international consortium. The Italian NCCDD is supporting the initiative with a contribution of 15.000.

LATVIA

As a United Nations member country from Central and Eastern Europe, Latvia became a Party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (hereinafter – Convention) on 19 January 2003 with particular concern to Annex 5. During that period Latvia was completing accession to the European Union. Latvia became a member State of the European Union on 1 May 2004. Latvia is still finalizing its transition to a full market economy.

The Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Latvia is responsible for the implementation of the Convention. The Ministry of the Environment has prepared its first national report on the implementation of the Convention in Latvia, which summarizes all the activities taken since ratification of the Convention.

Latvia does not belong to the countries where deserts have any influence, but it has lots of impacts from land degradation processes. The main types of land degradation are erosion caused by wind and water, including erosion of the Baltic Sea coast. Other types of degradation are soil compaction; lowering of the soil surface; waterlogging; soil acidification; heavy metals in agricultural soil; soil pollution by pesticides and other organic contaminants; eutrophication by nitrates and phosphates; fertility decline and reduced organic matter content. Land degradation processes are mainly caused by improper land use, especially agricultural practices, and excessive or ill-managed State-run or private logging. Land degradation in Latvia diminishes the richness of biodiversity (including agrobiodiversity), alters traditional rural landscapes and impacts general stability of ecosystems, including the resilience to climate change due to the reduction of photosynthesis, biological activity and weakening of fundamental soil functions.

The legislative baseline in Latvia is notably strong. There are appropriate legislative instruments, and sectoral policies in place to provide an adequate enabling environment. However, these instruments can sometimes be contradictory or leave gaps, and they do not provide a unified vision of sustainable land management in the country. There is considerable expertise, technical capacity and information base in the country; however, this is often specialized and sectoral knowledge, resulting in ad hoc and unlinked activities.

- During 2003 – 2004 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with Latvia “Environmental projects” and Ministry of the Environment implemented the project on Latvia national capacity self-assessment in the field of biodiversity, climate change and soil degradation.
- Since September 2005 the UNDP and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment runs a UNDP/GEF medium-sized project (MSP) on Building Sustainable Capacity and Ownership to Implement UNCCD objectives in Latvia.

Focal point institution:

Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Latvia

Peldu iela 25, Riga LV – 1494, Latvia

Web site: www.vidm.gov.lv

Latvia National Focal Point

Ms Evisa Abolina

Environmental Protection Department

Tel. +371 7026513

Fax. +371 7820442

E-mail: Evisa.Abolina@vidm.gov.lv

PORTUGAL

1994 - Portugal signed the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in the year that it was opened for signature.

1996 - Portugal ratified the UNCCD the same year as it entered into force.

1999 - The Government approved the **National Action Programme (NAP) to Combat Desertification (NAP)** and the establishment of the **National Coordination Commission (NCC)**. The general objectives of the **NAP** are:

- Soil and water conservation
- Keeping working-age population in rural areas
- Recovery of areas most threatened by desertification
- Awareness by the population of the desertification problem
- Making the fight against desertification an integral part of general and sectorial policies.

2000 - Starting of NCC functions with regular meetings on average every three months. The Commission is composed of 10 members representing of 4 ministries and another 25 members of the regional subcommissions. In total, 27 members belong to the Administration, 6 to non-governmental organizations, and 2 to universities.

The main functions of the **NCC** are:

- To present proposals to be included in the measures and policy tools relating to the objectives of the NAP;
- To propose the elaboration of studies to support the implementation of the NAP;
- To follow the implementation of the NAP;
- To promote coordination between institutions;
- To run the National Observatory for Desertification;
- To prepare activity reports.

The NAP has no full-time staff, except for the President (since 2004), nor does it have a specific budget.

2002 – Implementation of 5 pilot areas.

Due to limited technical and financial resources and to the vast area susceptible to desertification, 36% of continental Portugal, the NCC decided to concentrate its action in the field in 5 pilot areas where it would be possible to demonstrate that critical situations can be reversed and their effects mitigated. The activities in the pilot areas progress at different rates according to the developmental state of the regional coordination structures.

2003 – Updating the Map of Desertification Sensitive Areas.

Availability of a web page for the NAP <<http://panda.igeo.pt/pancd>>.

Following the above activities the OCPCD (Organization of Portuguese Scientists to Combat Desertification) was created, an informal organization of technicians and scientists. After the catastrophic forest fires that covered more than 425 000 hectares, the NCC presented a proposal to the Government on measures to prevent the predictable erosion after the first rains on bare soils (the proposal was not applied).

2003-2004 – 3 of the 5 pilot areas finalized their Activity Plans. Of the 2 remaining, one is in the final stages and the other one has not yet started on it.

2004 – Beginning of Portugal's participation in the European Space Agency project, Desertwatch, for monitoring desertification in the Mediterranean region by satellite imaging. At present, the field work in the 5 pilot areas is being validated.

2004-2005 – Emergence of different management tools/plans of interest in the fight against desertification.

2005 – Another catastrophe affected the country: drought. In September it covered the whole territory, 97% with severe to extreme drought, 3% with moderate drought.

The NCC presented the Government with a proposal to create a permanent system of observation and drought management.

2006 – In view of the several events to commemorate the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD), the NCC agrees as its objectives:

- To raise the awareness of people about risks of desertification, and all its implications, in Portugal
- To promote the participation of civil society
- To promote coordination between public institutions.

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The Republic of Moldova (RM) joined the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1998. The purpose of the present report is to delineate outcomes achieved in the framework of UNCCD implementation and the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification fulfillment in the RM for the period starting with 2002.

The RM is situated in the South-Eastern part of Europe and occupies a substantial area of the territory between the Dniester and Prut rivers and a narrow strip on the Dniester River left bank. It has common borders with Romania on the West and with Ukraine at the North, East and South. Moldova covers a special geographical position, being situated at the intersection of three natural areas. The climatic conditions are characterized by instability – after periods of drought follow periods with intensive heavy rains. The showering character of rains and complex relief in conditions of limited infiltration of soil cover determine intensive erosion. Washed soils, ravines and landslides essentially decrease the productivity of land fund.

The main natural treasure of our country is the soil, the weight of food industry complex representing 35-40% of gross domestic product (GDP). In the rural area around 54% of the country's population are employed in this sector. Thus, effective and rational use of land is an indispensable condition for a prosperous economy and for assuring the wellbeing of the population.

According to the Land Survey of the Republic of Moldova, on 1 January 2003 the total surface of land represented 3 million 843 thousand ha. Agricultural land covers 2 million 543 thousand ha or 75%, including arable land – 1 mln 843 thousand ha or 54.4%, orchard and

vineyard plantations – 301 thousand ha or 9%, grasslands – 380 thousands or 10.7%. At the moment, around 0.51 ha of arable land and orchard/vineyard plantations, including 0.43 arable lands has been given to each citizen.

The surface of State forest fund constitutes 354 thousand ha (10.7%), the optimal one being 20-25% (mean afforestation in the European countries represents 36%). It is represented by forest vegetation areas found under the supervision of State forest bodies, also part of the forest fund (under mayoralty administration), agricultural associations and other owners (30 thousand ha), and also by wind protection stripes, tree and bush plantations that are not in the forest fund.

Overexploitation of agricultural fields and utilization of environment unfriendly technologies have lead to a substantial decrease of productivity and have had a negative impact on the soil. The soil state is essential for the development of a productive agriculture and food industry, oriented towards export. Currently, however, the productivity of agricultural lands is declining and this threatens agro-industrial sector development and affects the national economy as a whole.

Eroded lands cover a surface of 858 564 ha or 33.9% from agricultural lands. Each year this surface increases on average by 0.9%, and the annual losses of fertile soil are estimated at 26 mln tons.

The prejudice caused to national economy by production loss through soil degradation amounts to around 3.1 billion lei (251 million USD) annually. Erosion also has social implications as it strongly affects families that practise subsistence agriculture. These families belong to the poorest group of the population and therefore do not have the financial resources to deal with this problem.

Soil degradation has at its base many causes that are linked together. Lack of information and modern technologies, especially limited access of rural population to information on effective land use, leads to incorrect farming technology use and to neglect crop rotation. Reduced mineral or organic fertilizer application has caused a negative balance of humus and nutrients in the soil. Use of mineral fertilizers has decreased from 191 000 tons in 1991 to 72 700 tons in 2003. Other factors like reduced application of pesticides, land salinization, deep ploughing and illicit cutting of forest protection bands have led to erosion.

Moldova possesses few underground water resources. Total assimilation reserves represent 1.5 million km³. On average each inhabitant receives 100 l/day and in Chisinau 350 l/day, the basic requirement being 1000 l/day, according to United Nations standards. The poorest in water resources are the southern districts where in some regions each person receives only 17-18 l/day.

Predominance of the agricultural sector makes Moldova's economy highly dependent on meteorological-climatic conditions. Analysis of data provided by the State Hydro-Meteorological Service of Moldova in the study period of 115 years (1890-2004) shows that massive drought occurrence in Moldova is a common phenomenon.

During recent decades droughts have occurred with a frequency of 6-7 years in the northern and central part and 3-4 years in the southern part of the country.

Drought outcomes hold a social-economic character and highly influence the surrounding environment. Some of these outcomes are: soil degradation, reduced harvest of agricultural crops, decrease of water and forest resources, interruption of rhythmicity in industrial activity, worsened population health and death increase.

Adhering to the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Republic of Moldova shall:

- 1) Give priority to combating desertification and reducing drought effects by earmarking necessary resources;
- 2) Elaborate strategies and priorities in the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies, aimed at combating desertification and reducing drought effects;
- 3) Address the desertification issue and give special attention to social-economical factors that generate desertification processes;
- 4) Stimulate increase of public awareness and facilitate local population contribution to efforts aimed at combating desertification and reducing drought effects;
- 5) Create a favorable framework through legislation consolidation, and – where it does not exist – to adopt necessary laws and to establish long-term policies and action plans.

ROMANIA

National strategies and priorities established within the framework for sustainable development plans and/or policies:

Since Romania's political shift in 1990, ongoing political, economical and social changes are supported by a number of national strategies, plans and programmes which sometimes are ambitious and overlapping in scope, but as a general rule they all are approaching the conciliation of economical development and social needs with environment protection, and recognize the need of conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, while a current reform of the public administration is implemented. Main national approaches relevant for drought, land degradation and desertification, sometimes within larger frames of development, agriculture, forestry, land use policies and other frameworks, are: National Sustainable Development Strategy, Programme for the Implementation of the National Plan to Combat Poverty and the Promotion of Social Inclusion, National Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development, National Development Plan 2007-2013, National Programme for Environmental Protection (2000), National Action Plan for Environmental Protection, Regional Environmental Action Plans and Local Environmental Action Plans, National Strategy on Flood Risk Management, 2005, National Programme for the Rehabilitation of Pastures for 2005-2008, Policy and Strategy of Development of the Forestry Sector in Romania (2001-2010). The National Strategy and the Action Programme to Combat Drought, Land Degradation and Desertification (NAP) is the strategic national document that states the issues and dimension of drought, land degradation and desertification in Romania. It was elaborated in 2000 and approved at the time at ministerial level. The document reveals the issue and need for a systematic approach to deal with the drought and land degradation phenomenon at national level. The NAP was organized along several axes, that comprise several targeted actions needed to enhance the implementation of the Convention: legislation improvement; institutional development; human resources; development of the scientific basis for research, planning and

information; rural development and landscape reorganization in the areas at risk of desertification; land degradation and droughts. The NAP has a very limited participatory component in its preparation, and currently there are discussions on the need to revisit it and adapt it to the current development stage of Romania. NAP objectives are approached by sectoral projects of different concerned sectors of activity: forestry, land improvement, agriculture, livestock rising, pasture improvement, etc. Limited coordination has happened in its implementation as authorities and implementing agencies have been in a permanent restructuring process, but its objectives are mainstreamed within different consequent national strategies and plans.

Institutional measures taken to implement the Convention, including legislative and institutional frameworks arrangements, linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies:

A National Committee to Combat Drought, Land Degradation and Desertification is established as a consultative body under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development. It is led by the Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development (MAFRD) and vice-chaired by representatives of other ministries. Recently, towards ensuring the coherency of public policies, the Government established 10 Permanent Interministerial Councils and a Council for Strategic Planning under the Public Policy Unit of the General Secretariat of the Government, as one of these councils includes the National Committee as a specific body dealing with drought and land degradation. Key tasks of the National Committee are coordination of the elaboration and implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Drought, Land Degradation and Desertification and mainstream its objectives into the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and National Development Programme; coordinate the implementation of the National Action Programme (NAP); analyse the necessity for programmes and projects of research and development; analyse the opportunity for regional or international cooperation; update and submit the strategy and national action programme to the Government for approval, by MAFRD, and identify and mobilize relevant funding for implementation; coordinate the elaboration of procedures for the monitoring of NAP implementation; initiate public awareness campaign and report to the Government on the stage of the implementation of relevant activities.

Institutional responsibility for UNCCD implementation at national level belongs to the Department/Secretariat of State for Forests within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development. The National Focal Point of the Convention is ensured by the Technical Secretariat of the National Committee. The Institutional framework for the implementation of the Convention is mainly ensured by the MAFRD which is responsible at national level for policy elaboration and application of the strategy and government programme in the field of rural development, forestry, land improvement, soil conservation and property consolidation. Within the territory there are deconcentrated/decentralized units subordinated to the ministry, either at regional or county levels which are in the services of county prefectures. The Ministry of Environment and Waters Management is the authority responsible at national level for the policies and strategies in the field of environment protection and waters management and it fulfills a trans-sectoral role in the economic and social development of the country.

Secondary legislation refers to governmental decisions on the establishment and composition of the National Committee. National legislation is very comprehensive; even though there are no specific articles referring to these issues, they are fully applicable to

concerned issues: establishment of agricultural cooperative farms, establishment of the Land Improvement Fund, establishment of the National System of Protection Forest Belts, Land Improvement Infrastructure, terms used in the legislation (definition of rural space, terms of reference for integrated system for administration and control, etc), clarification on land properties, domestic animal husbandry, support to young people living in rural areas, fruit trees and orchards, regime of production of vegetables, organization of grapes and vine production, cadastre and estate records and the regime on the circulation of land properties, regulation for establishing and functioning of the agricultural markets, food safety, rules for the financial support in agriculture and forestry, civil protection in case of natural disasters, compensation and emergency aid in case of calamities for agricultural crops, agricultural credit, regulation of good and production insurance system, water laws, potable water quality supplied for population use, mechanisms for consolidation of small land parcels, exoneration of judiciary taxes and fiscal stamp, laws on educational, health and juridical assistance in rural areas.

Almost all important multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) have been ratified by Romania. MEAs contain requirements that are synergistically approached by institutional, legal, and educational, financial tools, instruments or resources, often relevant for drought, land degradation and desertification issues and approach. A thorough assessment of both thematic as well as capacity cross cutting needs for the implementation of the Rio Conventions at national level has been achieved in the UNDP-GEF supported national capacity self-assessment (NCSA), carried out during 2004-2005. The NCSA final report contains capacity development Action Plans for each convention and a Joint Action Plan for the implementation of the Rio Conventions, specifying 25 priority objectives and actions. The Thematic Report concerning the implementation of the UNCCD, developed in the first phase of the NCSA identified major constraints hindering the fulfillment of obligations assumed under the Convention. On ground synergistic projects occur in the field of afforestation, forest belt establishment, ecological and biological agriculture, production of certified agricultural food, process of certification of forestry, managing the conflicts, ensured by applying national legislation and expert vision.

Drought occurrence in the Balkans and South-East Europe is a recurrent phenomenon that creates serious development problems, especially in rural areas of the region. Noting this situation, the UNCCD Annex V countries in the region, facilitated by the Europe Unit of UNCCD Secretariat, initiated formal discussion for the establishment of a network and a centre with the task of ensuring preparedness, monitoring and management of drought in the region. The Centre will be hosted by a national meteorological service in the region, as decided by the countries participating in the network in a bid during the current year.

In Annex V of the UNCCD, on the issue of scientific cooperation/networking, the Forest Research and Management Institute of Romania was selected to play a key role as the host institution for the development of regional cooperation in the area of reforestation, afforestation and tree plantation in affected areas. Afterwards, the network entitled “Afforestation in temperate zones affected by drought” was established. Its main objectives are to create a communication and sharing experience platform and to share information and database on management and technical issues related to afforestation/reforestation/revegetation/plantation in affected areas.

A high number of research and development institutions are currently active in solving sectoral issues in other fields related to drought, land degradation and desertification. Although, despite the apparent complexity and potential of the research sector, most of the institutions

suffer from lack of funds, personnel and updated equipment, as there is low capacity to adapt to emerging market economy and access funds in open competition. Regarding international cooperation there is no systematic scientific cooperation in the field of drought, land degradation and desertification; even at project level the cooperation is weak.

Participatory process in support of the preparation and implementation of action programme, particularly processes involving civil society, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations:

The capacity of the National Committee, as a whole or by its members, in influencing and mainstreaming UNCCD implementation objectives is based on large involvement in the elaboration/discussions/forums/negotiations on strategically operational plans, environmental national and local plans, economic development strategies, national development plan and as reviewers of the projects proposals. Regional structure and local authorities are little involved in drafting and implementation of strategies and projects proposals or implementation, even this situation is changing. Educational efforts, awareness actions and improved legislation are made to increase the communication between local and national stakeholders and actors, and develop partnerships.

According to the constitution the right of citizens to any public information may not be restricted, consequently public authorities, based on their competencies are obliged to correctly inform the citizens on public business and on business of personal interest.

Awareness at national or local levels is achieved by organizing the World Day to Combat Desertification (as 1 day event, and benefit from inputs from invited stakeholders and policy makers at national level), scientific and technical meetings, professional meetings. Awareness actions are well publicized at national level, such as annual ceremony of “Planting trees” within the “Forest’s Month”, national TV channel broadcasts, TV contest “Together for Nature”, awareness of nature conservation in schools and high schools, magazines and newspapers, mass media (radio and TV) broadcasts and talk shows and professional shows.

The private sector is considered as a strategic partner in the approach of structural changes in rural areas of the country, and public-private partnership is considered as one viable way to involve private management in public services. Towards the promotion of public-private partnerships the legislative relevant framework has been adopted and harmonized, even guides for best practices on public-private partnerships are promoted.

Although equal opportunity between men and women is stated de jure in Romanian legislation, civil society is signalling de facto non-compliance.

Alimentary and alcoholic beverages products originating in traditions of rural life, that may be identified with a geographical denomination are protected and recognized in Romania by law, while few of them are identified as originating in drought areas or areas of growing aridity. Technologies for soil preparation, crop irrigation, harvesting and processing of agricultural, orchard and vineyard products are not inventoried, but regions or zones of the countries are recognized for their specific approach.

Consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes, and partnership agreements with developed country Parties and other interested

entities, particularly mobilization and coordination of both domestic and international resources:

On its way to European integration, Romania is committed to fully comply with European Union (EU) standards in different fields, so-called *acquis communautaire*. To aid Romania (and other candidate countries), several pre-accession programmes target economic reconstruction and agricultural and rural development.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development is developing a series of projects relevant for drought, land degradation and desertification combat, with international organizations or on a bilateral basis (World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Netherlands, Spain, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Central European Initiative (ICE), Organisation pour la coopération économique de la Mer Noire (OCEMN), Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), OIZ, ICC, CSI, Organisation mondiale de la santé animale (OE) FEZ, International Seed Testing Association (ISTA), SISH, International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Organisation internationale de la vigne et du vin (OIV), etc).

Measures taken or planned within the framework of national action programme, including measures to improve the economic environment, to rehabilitate degraded land, to enhance knowledge on desertification and its control, and to monitor and assess desertification and drought

In Romania, issues related to drought and land degradation (D&LD) have been recognized and represent a continuous concern for decades. Over time several committees and bodies responsible for D&LD issues have been established, with more or less visible impact at the regional or local level. Many of these committees and commissions had reduced impact, as they were established or activated under crisis situations, without any strategic approach or vision.

The National Action Programme to Combat Drought, Land Degradation and Desertification was drafted in 2000 a revision is planned (without any precise deadline), based on the new economic and social situation of Romania, although relevant actions are already included in operational sectoral plans, integrated with measures to be used in agriculture, forestry and rural development.

There is no any major improvement on renewable energy sources in the country, even though high national potential is recognized for windmills and solar panels. Legislation, institutional arrangements, associated environmental tools on renewable energy resources, already in place, encourage and stimulate the use and production of woody biomass for energy production.

In Romania, irrigation is key in order to maintain a continuous agricultural production because of high variable natural conditions. The main issues in the irrigation sector are the communist legacy of over-investment in irrigation infrastructure, uneconomic irrigation schemes (based on subsidized electricity) designed to serve large State farms and actual lack of an effective institutional framework. The demand for irrigation declined sharply in the early 1990s, as the water supply varied significantly. Nevertheless, the Government has provided irrigation subsidies to farmers.

At the national level there is the traditional activity of vegetable improving and selection (varieties of different crops, new crops - including genetically modified organisms (GMO) with specific restrictions) and improving and promoting technologies to cope with drought, such as: agricultural technologies, systems and agro-technical methods for improved water use efficiency and mitigation of drought impacts and elaboration of integrated zonal systems for efficient use of limited water resources by irrigation of main crops.

Degradation occurs over several types of land use and ecosystems because of both intensive land use and poor management practices or even land abandonment, processes much accentuated as climate change occurs in the driest areas of the country. For almost half a century, serious concern about the promotion of more effective ways and means to prevent and combat land degradation has been given attention by agriculturists, foresters and other specialists, as over time appropriate guidelines and recommendations were provided for different fields of economic activity. The current EU accession of Romania brings enhanced integration and a sustainable approach to the activities related to land use management.

The National legislative framework is very comprehensive and it covers all issues related to natural resources use and their sustainable management. These regulations fully apply for the areas affected by drought and land degradation. Such laws are: land improvement/rehabilitation; forest belts establishment; orchards, vegetables, wine and vinery, livestock, protected areas, forest code, support for people/communities in case of natural hazards, etc.

In dry regions of the country the percentage of forests is less than 10 %. These forests are under pressure of natural phenomena (insect outbreaks, decline and drought), high request for wood fuel and sometimes illegal cutting, non efficient use of quality wood, shift from natural to artificial stands, other human pressures. The present authorities are making tremendous efforts to ensure proper administration and management of these forests. Because of large areas of degraded land, available agricultural land belonging to private owners and favorable legislation, it is acknowledged there is an increase of areas planted with forest trees.

Most of the pastures situated in the dry areas have very low productivity and are degraded; they are all or very poorly managed, or overgrazed and not maintained. Currently, financing of the pasture rehabilitation is achieved by sustainable economic and fiscal tools, which ensures a certain pace of yearly rehabilitated area. Large shares of private grazing pasture, low owner financial capacity, limited advisory and awareness and lack of incentives create serious issues related to sustainable management of pasture in Romania, especially in dry areas of the country.

Rural development is a concept only recently introduced into Romanian policy and practice, and it hardly replaces the centralized ruling and thinking; consequently there is a serious need for structural change of communities and individual people, and for production and processing practices. Change is very difficult as the population is aged, less educated and less open to the new, concerned with daily troubles and minimal life needs, based mostly on agriculture and limited type of crops. Change of approach in rural areas and promotion of rural development based on farms and services improvement is ensured by a large number of projects, but by far the most powerful drivers of change are EU pre-accession instruments (such as SAPARD) that make substantial funds available to enable the change of rural approach and

promote sustainable rural models based on modernizing of farms and services, an action that will continue after adhering due to structural and cohesions funds.

Educational programmes at all levels focus on the development of integrated approaches of actions towards sustainable management. On the other side, awareness of local authorities and people, especially in rural areas, is very poor. Training of professionals from institutions or authorities is limited.

Agriculture is under continuous restructuring as several parallel processes occur: finishing of property restoration on lands (agricultural, forests, etc); improvement of general cadastre; ongoing process of transformation of former centralized and large areas of agriculture to small and medium-sized flexible farms/farming systems; change of subsistence agriculture to market oriented one; implementation of principles of Common Agricultural Policy, ensure legal and juridical assistance for landowners, offer of affordable bank credits and insurance systems in rural areas. National legislation (within the EU integration process) encourages the aggregation of lands; association of owners for better resource management; constructing of product chains; use of human or natural alternative resources. Machinery and new technologies (for irrigation, cropping, weeding, fertilizing, very productive crops, etc) are available on the domestic market.

New guides for good practical guidelines in agriculture and other land uses and resources were recently promoted (these introduce an environmental approach to the crop management), and others are expected. Research projects funded in the National Programme for Research, Development and Innovation close with technical guidelines that must be approved by the partner institutions or homologated by the national competent relevant authority, and further applied in practice.

Technical staff and services to fight against land degradation are covered by private and State organizations, or even individual persons, but certified and attested by a specific Attesting Commission of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The National Meteorological Administration develops the Operational Agro-Meteorological Programme which includes monitoring of agro-meteorological parameters, drawing up of Agro-meteorological Bulletins and disseminates information/ technical recommendations to users, farmers, agricultural base companies, other publications, mass media. The National Institute of Statistics (NIS) collects and provides statistical data regarding the assessment of evolution of general situation regarding land degradation. Currently, NIS is implementing a new system, Structural Agricultural Investigation, which will offer statistical data regarding farms and collective farms (general information, land use, income and support, irrigation and fertilization, livestock, number of employees etc.), correlated with the EU investigation system, the national system for the monitoring of forest vegetation and a system for soil-land monitoring where basic observation are performed and intensive observation is specific areas (eroded lands, conservation areas).

Financial tools and mechanism:

Several instruments finance works related to improvement of degraded lands, such as: a) fund for improvement of land, b) allocations from the local budget of the communes, towns, municipality and districts, c) sponsor's trading companies, d) external financial non-reimbursable sources or external loans on the long term, e) voluntary contributions of natural or

legal persons interested in land improvement works, f) Forests Conservation and Regeneration Fund, g) legal duties owed by natural and legal persons, culpable of soil degradation, h) Fund for the crediting of the investments in agriculture, i) legislative support for Agricultural Farm establishment, j) adoption of the list of the species and financial aid for domestic production of certified origin; k) annual aid to support soil works and payment of diesel for soil works; l) support from the State budget to producers to purchase new agricultural machinery; m) subsidies, n) agricultural life annuity, o) Environment Fund.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian Federation has the largest territory in the world (17 mln km²), which is situated as in Europe though in Asia, and is at the sixth place for population number (144 mln persons). Administratively the country is divided into 7 Federal Okrugs, which in their turn are subdivided into 89 subjects of Federation.

The Russian Federation is big in agricultural production. At the same time, the industrial sector of the economy has grown significantly in the last years, accounting for one third of GDP.

Ecological problems occupy an important place among many of the global problems of modern time – poverty, terrorism, and spread of new diseases. The Government of the Russian Federation participates in programmes related to the environment and sustainable development as well as it is ready to adopt new international instruments in the field of the environment protection.

Namely because of this the Russian Federation is a full member of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (hereinafter UNCCD) along with such international agreements of global character as the Framework Convention on Climate Change (hereinafter FCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (hereinafter CBD).

The Russian delegation made a significant input to the negotiating process relating to the development of the text of the UNCCD and its Annexes in the period 1993-1994. In spite of the fact that the Russian Federation did not sign the UNCCD in 1994 Russian specialists and scientists took an active part in the work of its bodies as observers, promoting the implementation of UNCCD principles in areas subject to desertification, drought or land degradation throughout a wide area of our State.

The Russian Federation acceded to the UNCCD (Regulation of the Government of Russian Federation of 27.05.2003 №303) on 27 May 2003 and since then has taken an active part in the process of practical implementation of the provisions of the Convention by the Russian side, including implementation of the decisions adopted at the recent sessions of the Conference of the Parties.

Combating desertification, drought and land degradation in the Russian Federation is of current importance and has extremely important significance to the national economy.

Socio-economic relations in Russia in the last 70 years were developing in conditions of strict State centralized economy and management. Now the painful reconstruction of the systems of

State administration, economy, social relations and people's psychology, changing of land property form is taking place, causing a number of ecological problems. This period of transition causes additional difficulties in addressing desertification problems also.

The specifics of social conditions typical for Russia are as follows: higher density of rural population; comparably low heat supply (resource aspect); high-humid soils (resource aspect); low profitability of farming (regional problem); reduction of economic value of territory due to complexity of soil cover; ploughing up of shallow soils; ploughing up soda solonchaks; abolishment of valuable plant associations; degradation of soils and territories resulting from hostilities; low culture of construction and exploitation of irrigation systems; soils induration through use of heavy agricultural machinery; socio-politically stipulated actions, as the result of which the almost full loss of agricultural lands took place (for example ploughing up of shallow soils during the period of virgin lands development campaign).

Natural conditions typical for sub-humid zone of Russia in general are as follows: big share of non-sprinkled tillage as part of agricultural lands; characteristics of degradation of high-humid soils; presence of large masses of solonchak soils and alkanization of soils; natural rise of ground waters level on dry tillage massifs; soda geochemistry; soil drought of Siberian chernozems; slitheization of soils; suffosion; thermokarst; strong gullyness; presence of vast low-drained territories; underflooding caused by the Caspian Sea level rise. Specific character is that Russia is one of the few arid regions in the world with negative winter temperatures and a short vegetation period.

Territories, which are subject to desertification, drought and land degradation to different degrees, cover an area of over 1 mln sq. km in Russia; approximately 70 mln ha are subject to land erosion and deflation, at 73 mln ha the level of acidity is raised, over 40 mln ha are at different stages of salinization, 26 mln ha are swamped and over 100 mln ha are subject to desertification.

Drought, semi-drought and dry semi-humid areas cover a significant part of the Russian territory. According to existing estimates the area of dry and drought areas is over 610 ths km² here.

Even more territory is covered with lands subject to drought effect. Areas with a drought probability of over 25% besides dry and droughty areas include a significant part of the south of Russia, and areas with a drought probability of less than 25% include even more northern territories up to the latitude of Saint-Petersburg in the European part of the region (60° n.l.), part of south Siberia and even Central Yakutia. The forecast for change of CIS different regions aridity and their synchrony are of an extremely important practical significance.

An especially big practical danger at present is drought within the limits of the steppe zone. And namely to the steppe zone belongs the maximum production of phytomass, that reaches 22 t/ha a year. Presence of prolific soils historically predetermined the development of agriculture here. And just in these regions is the grain belt of Russia located.

A significant part of dry and droughty territories of Russia is subject to desertification.

The main plough lands and pastures (except deer pastures) are just situated in dry and droughty regions. Namely here the basic part of agricultural production is originated. The type of desertification prevalent in area extent in many parts of Russia is degradation of the green cover

of pastures, merely in the limits of Kalmykia and Astrakhan oblast – to 60 th sq. km. As the result productivity of pastures is reduced to 40-60%.

Mostly all agricultural lands in the Northern Caucasus are eroded or are erosion-hazardous. In the Volga region, the South Urals and the Western Siberia no less than 25% of plough lands are subject to erosion. Reduction of soil fertility and erosion led to a reduction of plough productivity of 30-40%.

As the specialists estimate only resulting from reinduration of soil by heavy agricultural machinery in recent years, up to some 10-15% of plough lands and 5-10% pastures could be lost. Since 1970 in Russia areas with eroded, salinated and acid soils had increased approximately 2 times, with over-wetted and stony – 3 times, sandy-loam – in 8 times. Organic substances losses are recovered only for one third. In the last 30-40 years rich chernozems of the Russian plain had lost 10-15 sm. of fertile layer.

Due to high level of ground waters and lands salination some 741 ths ha of irrigated and 1080,5 ths ha of drained lands or 15 and 23 % of their total area respectively are in unsatisfactory condition.

Starting 1991 1476,8 ths ha of ameliorated lands were removed to dry lands, including in the following regions: Voronezh – 48,1, Volgograd – 77,1, Kurgan – 46,1, Rostov – 90,7 and Saratov – 200,9 ths ha.

One of the sharpest problems is the use of natural waters in arid and sub-arid regions. It is aggravated by the fact that geographic spread of water resources is extremely irregular, and all biggest river basins are located on the territory of several states. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of water resources use in Russia is extremely low. Also the big problem with utilization of drainage flow, which is forming at irrigated massifs, exists.

It is necessary to clarify the dissemination of water between states considering variations of flow, seasonality and water quality, develop new technologies that provide reduction of water consumption, especially in irrigation, and also reduce water loss. A special task is the introduction of economic mechanisms of water consumption regulating including fees for water.

The most important problem in dry and droughty areas is biodiversity conservation, as one could meet up to 1900 species of vascular plants, 300 species of birds and 70 species of mammals in one region. A rare species share of the total flora composition reaches 12,5%, and the number of rare animal species included in the Red Books varies from 30 to 130 in different areas.

The most important way of biodiversity conservation is establishment of protected territories. Russia established a good enough system of protected territories, but certainly their number is obviously not enough in regions subject to desertification and drought.

Desertification causes a number of adverse socio-economic circumstances. The population income and life level are falling, the number of work places is declining, the social tension is rising and forced human migration is taking place.

The difficulty of desertification problems and some objective circumstances did not provide stabilization of desertification and achieve recovery of the degraded environment. The agro-forest-amelioration fund (land that need agro-forest amelioration) in Russia is 154,6 mln ha.

The Russian Federation has significant experience in combating desertification. Maps of desertification for different regions of Russia and the whole country were made. A forecast of the impact of climatic changes on desertification was made. An assessment of population migration caused by desertification has been carried out. Different methods of soil amelioration and forest recovery, as well as methods of space monitoring of desertification and droughts were developed. Major practical work on amelioration of salinated soils, addressing water and wind erosion, sand fixation, recovery of pastures and forest amelioration is taking place. The action plans on combating desertification for separate regions of the Russian Federation were elaborated with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In an institutional aspect the Association of the regions of Russia under desertification was established. An "Arid Ecosystems" magazine is being issued.

Some actions on combating desertification are included in the Federal and regional State programmes.

Different aspects of addressing this problem are under the competence of more than 10 federal executive bodies, and 200 institutions of the regional level. More than 300 scientific and scientific-production organizations are working in this sphere.

The utmost urgency and importance of addressing the problem of desertification and land degradation in the Russian Federation put it among general problems that constrain ecological, food and economic safety of Russia, and that create social tension in the southern regions of the country.

In this connection combating desertification and land degradation prevention could become one of the priority directions of the State policy of the Russian Federation, as in the sphere of natural environment protection although in the socio-economic field.

The unique programme of action, which would join all strategies and action plans as at the regional though at the federal level is necessary in order to resolve the problems connected with combating desertification in the Russian Federation, in the frameworks of which the integration and coordination of different ministries and agencies actions and plans, as well as concrete regional actions implemented at the level of the subjects of the Russian Federation will take place. Such a programme should become the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAP), which the Russian Federation being the Party to the UNCCD should develop as implementation of one of the main liabilities under UNCCD.

Basic information

1. Focal point institution:

A) UNCCD National Focal Point in the Russian Federation	Mr. E.V. Gorshkov Head of Division Department of International Cooperation in the Field of Environment Protection and Nature Use MNR of Russia tel.: +(7-495) 252.0988, fax: +(7-495) 254.8283 4/6 B. Gruzinskaya street, Moscow 123995 gorshkov@mnr.gov.ru
B) Coordination Centre (at the stage of validation)	ANO "Centre for International Projects" Mr. S.E. Tikhonov Director tel.: +(7-495) 165-05-62, fax: +(7-495) 165-08-90 58b Pervomayskaya street, Moscow 105043 tse@eco-cip.ru
Country-specific websites relating to desertification	There is no specific site related to combating desertification in the Russian Federation now, but materials on this theme are presented at different thematic sites, e.g. http://www.biodiversity.ru (Steppe Bulletin) etc.

2. Status of the National Action Programme (NAP):

Date of validation -	Body/institution/Government level which validated the NAP -
NAP review	Date(s)
NAP has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy	No
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	No
NAP implementation has started with or without the conclusions of partnership agreements	No
Expected NAP validation	2007-2008
Final draft of a NAP exists	No
Formulation of a draft NAP is under way ¹	Yes
Basic guidelines for a NAP have been established	Yes
Process has only been initiated	Yes
Process has not yet started	No

The draft Guidelines, structure of National Action Programme on Combating Desertification and Land Degradation (NAP) are now being developed.

¹ The draft general directions, NAP structure are developed at the present time.

3. Member of Subregional Action Programme / Regional Action Programme (SRAP/RAP) that input the most significantly:

Name of subregional and/or regional cooperation framework		Involvement specifically in topics such as water harvesting techniques, soil erosion etc.
1.	FTP "Ecology and Natural Resources of Russia" (2002-2010) ² , including: 1.1. "Renewal of the Volga" 1.2. "Regulating of the quality"	1.1. Regulating of the water drain system, reduce of pollution level, reduce of level of diversion flow for irrigation 1.2. Fixation of blown sands through afforestation, sowing of grass etc.
2.	FTP "Increase of fertility of soils of Russia for the period 2002-2005"	Sand fixation at lands of agricultural purpose in Kalmykia and Dagestan and other anti-erosion activity
3.	"Agro-forest amelioration and phyto amelioration on area of 21 th ha to recover pastures at the Black lands and Kizliar pastures for the period 2006-2010"	Carrying out of reclamation activities

4. Composition of the national coordinating body (NCB)

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) of the Russian Federation – is the National Coordination Bureau (NCB). Besides, according to interagency allocation of responsibilities on provision of the Russian Federation participation in international organizations of the United Nations system (Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 3 June 2003 №323, with revisions of 17 November 2004) the following institutions are responsible bodies on the UNCCD:

Name of institution		Government (√)	NGO (√)	Male	Female
1.	Ministry of Natural Resources of RF	X		X	X
2.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RF	X		X	X
4.	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of RF	X		X	X
3.	Ministry of Agriculture of RF	X		X	X
5.	Ministry of Finances of RF	X		X	X

MNR of Russia closely cooperates on the problem of combating desertification with other ministries and agencies of the Russian Federation, namely with: The Russian Academy of Science (RAS), the Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences (RAAS), the All-Russian Academic Agricultural Scientific-Research Laboratory (VASKhNIL-ARAASRL), the Institute of Geography of RAS, the All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Agro Forest Amelioration (VNIALMI - ARSRIAFA), etc.

² Implementation of this FTP was completed in 2005 in line with the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of 17.11.2005 № 1952-p.

5. Total number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accredited to the process: 2

1. Development and Environment Foundation (DEF/Russia)	<u>ICCD/COP(6)/9/Add.1</u>
2. Socio-Ecological Union	A/AC.241/9/Add.14
Has an NGO National Coordinating Committee on desertification been established; if yes, how many NGOs or civil society organizations participate in it?	no

6. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD: more than 160

Name up to five most relevant acts and laws and/or regulations:

	Title of law	Date of adoption
1.	Federal Law №7-FL "On the environment protection"	10.01.2002
2.	Land Code of the Russian Federation № 136-FL	25 11.2001
3.	Water Code of the Russian Federation № 167-FL	16.11.1995
4.	Federal Law № 172-FL "On transition of lands from one category into another"	21.12.2004
5.	Federal Law №154-FL "On general principles of organization of local governments in the Russian Federation" ³	2.08.1995

7. The consultative process

Number of partnership agreements that have been concluded and/or are being initiated within the framework of the UNCCD:

	Official name of partnership	Donor(s), international organization(s), and/or agencies of the United Nations system involved	Date of (expected) conclusion
1.	"Combating desertification through land resources sustainable management"	GEF	?

List of consultative meetings on UNCCD implementation:

	Name of consultative meeting	Date/year	International organizations or agencies of the United Nations system involved
1.	Round table on desertification problems in Russia and on issues related to development of Annex V to UNCCD	1998	UNCCD Secretariat
2.	International conference on soils degradation and desertification	1999	UNEP

³ Federal Law of 06.10.2003 № 131-FZ "On general principles of organization of local governments in the Russian Federation" will enter into force in corpore since January 1 2009.

8. Name of up to 10 projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD

Name of project		Project implemented within the framework of the NAP/SRAP/RAP	Project implemented within the framework of...	Timeframe	Partners involved	Overall budget
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Agro-forest amelioration and land-reclamation activity (2002-2005)	no	FTP "Increase of fertility of soils of Russia for the period of 2002-2005"	2002 – present time	Ministry of Agriculture of RF, regions of RF	USD 23'362 mln.
2	Agro-forest amelioration and phyto amelioration on area of 21 th ha to recover pastures at the Black lands and Kizliar pastures for the period 2006-2010	no	FTP "Conservation and reproduction of soils fertility of lands of agricultural purpose and agro-landscapes as the national patrimony of Russia for the period of 2006-2010"	2002 – 2010	Ministry of Agriculture of RF, Republic of Kalmykia	USD 7'96 mln.
3	Biodiversity conservation in Altai-Sayany mountain eco-region	RAP	Energy and the environment	January 2006, 60 months, in implementation stage	UNDP, GEF Ministry of Natural Resources Regional Administrations, WWF Russian Office, local environmental NGOs, research institutes	USD 15'175'000
4	RF educational system support – Capacity-building of MSIIR (U) MFA of Russia	RAP	Activity direction – Addressing poverty	January 2000 – December 31 2006	UNDP MSIIR (U) MFA of Russia	USD 1'951'220
5	Promotion to Russian Federation preparations to G8 presidency in 2006	RAP	Use of globalization advantages for poverty reduction	February 2005 – July 2006	UNDP Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation	USD 75,000

6	Training educational programmes and professional retraining of state officials	RAP	Dissemination of gender approach	April 1 2003 - April 1 2006	UNDP Russian Academy of the State Service under the President of RF Ministry of Health and Social Development of RF; Carleton University	USD 51,500
7	Strategy and Centre of local economic development for Bryansk oblast, which suffered from Chernobyl accident	RAP	Development of sustainable development plans and strategies	March 2004, 3 months, in implementation stage	UNDP Administration of Bryansk Oblast Federal agencies, business representatives, NGOs	USD 80,000
8	Integrated conservation of Biological Diversity of the Lower Volga Wetlands	RAP	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use	January 2006, 60 months in implementation stage	UNDP, GEF Ministry of Natural Resources Institutes of Astrakhan, Volgograd regions and Republic of Kalmykia, occupied with economy and environmental issues; local population	USD 15,805,920
9	Environmental Management Project (EMP) Arkhangelsk oblast Volgograd oblast Vologda oblast Ivanovo oblast Irkutsk oblast Kostroma oblast Krasnoyarsky Krai Nizniy Novgorod oblast Rostov oblast Sverdlovsk oblast Yaroslavl oblast	RAP	World Bank	December 2007	Debtor: Government of the Russian Federation Organization-implementer: MEDT, MNR	IBRD loan: USD 110 mln Total project cost: USD 185 mln

SLOVAKIA

The most significant areas related to the Convention as part of the national action programme (NAP) draft are as follows:

Information issues for strategic decision support

- identification of vulnerable zones with regard to real and potential drought occurrence in the Slovak territory
- continual monitoring and evaluation of drought in the soils and landscape space
- creation and operation of information system on dry areas and drought occurrence on Slovak territory
- to continue provision of partial monitoring system SOIL
- to continue development and operation of partial monitoring system FORESTS inclusive detection by remote sensing
- to continue provision of partial monitoring system WATER
- identification and spatial interpretation of soil/land degradation on Slovak territory
- development and provision of monitoring and evaluation of measures within NAP to the Convention

Creation of the strategic and legal documents

- elaboration and approval of the strategy to mitigate landscape drying and soil degradation
- realisation of technical measures of investment and non-investment nature for mitigation of processes and consequences of soil/land drying and degradation

Creation of new knowledge, education and increased awareness of professional and broader public

- integration of problem of land drying and soil degradation into themes supported by State Programme of Science and Research and ensure its financing
- provision of periodical education/training of soil users in agriculture and forestry
- increase the awareness of broader public regarding reasons and consequences of land/soil drying and degradation and measures to prevent and mitigate them

Support of regional cooperation and aid to affected countries

- support of regional cooperation in area land drying and soil degradation and offer expert aid to affected countries.

1. Focal point institution

Name of focal point	Soil Science and Conservation Research Institute
Address including e-mail address	Gagarinova 10, 827 13 Braislava, Slovak Republic sci@vupu.sk
Country-specific websites relating to desertification	1. www.vupu.sk 2. www.mpsr.sk

2. Status of NAP

Date of validation	
NAP review(s)	June 2005-June 2006
NAP has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy (PRSP)	No
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	No
NAP implementation has started with or without the conclusions of partnership agreements	No
Expected NAP validation	unknown
Final draft of NAP exists	Yes
Formulation of draft NAP is under way	-
Basic guidelines for a NAP have been established	-
Process has only been initiated	-
Process has not yet started	-

3. Member of subregional action programme (SRAP)/regional action programme (RAP)

Name of subregional and/or regional cooperation framework	Involvement specifically in topics such as water harvesting techniques, soil erosion etc.
No participation in cooperation framework	

4. Composition of the national coordination body (NCB)

The name of institution	Government	NGO	Male/female
Ministry of Agriculture	√		F (4×)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	√		M
Ministry of Environment	√		M + F
Soil Science and Conservation Research Institute, Bratislava	√		M
National Forest Centre, Zvolen	√		M
Water Research Institute, Bratislava	√		M
Slovak Agricultural University, Nitra	√		M
Technical University, Zvolen	√		M
Institute of Landscape Ecology of Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava	√		F
DAPHNE Institute of Applied Ecology, Bratislava		√	M

5. The number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accredited to the process:

Has an NGO National Coordinating Committee on desertification has been established; if yes how many NGOs or civil organisations participate in it?	Yes; one NGO participates (DAPHNE)
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6. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD: 9

Name up to five most relevant acts and laws and/or regulations

Title of the law	Date of adoption
Act No. 364/2004 of Code – Water act	2004
Act No. 220/2004 of Code on protection and use of agricultural soil	2004
Act No. 326/2005 of Code on forests	2005
Act No. 188/2003 of Code on application of sludge and river bed sediments on agricultural and forest soil	2003
Act No. 543/2002 of Code on preservation of nature and landscape in wording of subsequent amendments	2002
Act No. 127/1994 of Code on environmental impact assessment in wording of subsequent amendments	1994

SLOVENIA

The Republic of Slovenia (RS) ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD) in June 2001, while the Convention entered into force on 28th September 2001. The RS has not yet begun with activities related to the Convention. For this reason the national capacity self-assessment of the UNCCD analyses the state in the area of land and water management from the view of the Convention requirements.

The Republic of Slovenia has assumed the status of affected country of the Northern Mediterranean and affected country of Central and Eastern Europe; it has been affected by land degradation processes (soil pollution, soil erosion, hydrogeological hazards, soil sealing) as well as by drought. Among European countries Slovenia has one of the lowest shares of agricultural and arable land, and the share of forest areas has also been increasing. Therefore, overgrowing of agricultural land in the RS is an undesired process.

At the level of measures, to mitigate the effects of drought, Slovenia lacks a strategy for preventing or minimising agricultural droughts as well as a system for early warnings against drought. Solving the drought issue is dispersed among different institutions as well as in terms of content (meteorological, hydrological, agricultural approach). Interdisciplinary approaches, balanced policy and research are indispensable in this area. At the level of measures in the area of land degradation, Slovenia is in the process of assessing its state. However, monitoring that would provide important information on the soil quality (soil fertility, soil pollution, inventory of best-quality agricultural land) is mostly not implemented due to the lack of by-laws and financial resources. Slovenia also does not have an elaborated soil protection programme. At the level of principles or the level of strategies all activities of the RS are in line with the Convention's objectives since balanced, sustainable development is Slovenia's main policy in all areas. However, it can be concluded that even the understanding of land degradation differs between sectors, resulting in different political, economic, administrative and expert views. It has been established that pressure from individual sectors exerted on agricultural land in the RS is really severe. A great obstacle in conserving »the best-quality agricultural land« is the fact that no record of such land exists at the national level which would enable a clear overview of the situation. Besides, the methodology of classifying agricultural land into "best" and "other" is

outdated and does not take into account new knowledge and techniques. Therefore, development of a methodology for assessing agricultural land on the basis of its production potential and definition of wider, interdisciplinary criteria for classifying agricultural land, as well as the establishment of an inventory of “highest-quality agricultural land” at the national level are the key measures to strengthen capacities for implementation of the Convention.

The lack of capacity for implementing the Convention is also evident from institutional dispersion of the contents, the lack of qualified and skilled personnel and bad intersectoral cooperation. Both competent ministries (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food) lack employees that could cover soil-related issues. Besides, no institution is authorised to implement any expert study related to agricultural land, which additionally weakens the already weak profession (dependency on rare public tenders for expert studies covering soil). In the RS, measures related to drought and land degradation are implemented separately through different ministries or even separately within individual ministries by thematic areas. A similar situation exists with soil databases (pedologic map, soil fertility, soil pollution), whose management has not been systematically regulated; neither has the method of interconnecting them or connecting them with other environmental databases been defined.

Slovenia should strive for integrated land management from the view of different functions of the soil in the environment (soil as a natural resource is important not only for food production) and base its land management policy on an integrated approach, using existing knowledge and institutional capacities. Encouraging modernisation and adapting the policy of land management to sustainable development would also be necessary. Many basic premises for such a strategy have already been presented in the European strategy for soil protection »Towards a Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection« (COM, 2002). Taking action in this field is urgent since Slovenia has been inactive so far.

SPAIN

El presente resumen se ha enfocado de acuerdo a las principales esferas temáticas propuestas para el proceso de examen de acuerdo a la decisión 1/COP.5.

i) Procesos de participación con la sociedad civil, las organizaciones no gubernamentales y las organizaciones comunitarias.

En el anterior informe se describió el proceso de participación y debate que tuvo lugar para la elaboración del PAN. Tras dicho proceso, que tuvo lugar entre los años 2000 y 2001, se continuó trabajando en el análisis e incorporación de aportaciones y sugerencias recogidas tanto durante como después de la celebración de las reuniones y mesas redondas. Durante este periodo se ha establecido una colaboración con el Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación para tratar aquellos aspectos vinculados al sector agrario paulatinamente incorporados al documento. El PAN ha sido sometido de nuevo en 2005 a consideración en el seno de la Comisión Nacional de Protección de la Naturaleza, que es el órgano consultivo y de cooperación entre la Administración General del Estado y las Comunidades Autónomas en la materia.

Las actividades de participación, comunicación y sensibilización pública que se realizan en España en lo que se refiere a la lucha contra la desertificación y la mitigación de los efectos de la

sequía van adquiriendo poco a poco mayor protagonismo. Se trata de un problema que, a diferencia de otros grandes problemas ambientales, como el cambio climático, tiene una percepción social difícil y está menos extendida. No obstante, ambos asuntos, desertificación y, sobre todo, sequía, están siendo paulatinamente introducidos en las campañas de sensibilización lanzadas tanto desde la Administración General del Estado como desde los gobiernos regionales. También es una cuestión introducida desde hace tiempo, y cada vez con más fuerza, en las agendas de las organizaciones profesionales, tanto agrarias como forestales, y en las organizaciones no gubernamentales, si no en toda su extensión sí en sus diversas facetas.

La toma de conciencia sobre el problema de la desertificación en nuestro país se va a ver reforzada durante los años 2006 y 2007 debido a la participación de España en la organización de dos importantes eventos relacionados con la Convención. Nos referimos, en primer lugar, a la celebración del II Simposio Internacional sobre Desertificación y Migraciones, en Almería (España), del 25 al 27 de octubre de 2006. En segundo lugar, a la aceptación por parte de la Séptima Conferencia de las Partes del ofrecimiento de España como sede de la COP8 (Decisión 31/COP.7).

ii) Marcos o arreglos legislativos e institucionales.

Como ha quedado reflejado en informes anteriores, la coordinación y tratamiento institucional en España para la aplicación de la CLD y del PAN se apoya en la estructura existente de mecanismos de coordinación institucional y de participación pública, entre los que destacan por su relación con el PAN la Comisión Nacional de Protección de la Naturaleza, las Conferencias Sectoriales de Medio Ambiente y de Agricultura, el Consejo Asesor de Medio Ambiente o el Consejo Nacional de Bosques.

La Ley 4/2003, de 21 de noviembre, de Montes, en la redacción dada por la modificación de 21 de abril de 2006 (Ley 10/2006), recoge este marco institucional, en su artículo 41.1: “Corresponde al Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, en colaboración con el Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación y con las comunidades autónomas, la elaboración y aprobación del Programa de Acción Nacional contra la Desertificación. La aplicación y seguimiento del Programa corresponde al Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, al Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación y a las comunidades autónomas, en el ámbito de sus respectivas competencias, de acuerdo con el principio de coordinación”.

Este principio de coordinación viene obligado por el hecho de que el sistema político español es el de un Estado con una gran descentralización de competencias en todos los ámbitos de gestión. En los últimos años se ha seguido avanzando en este proceso de descentralización, lo que exige un refuerzo constante del soporte institucional para la coordinación de las actuaciones de las Administraciones Públicas. En la aplicación de las políticas de desarrollo sostenible y de integración del medio ambiente en las distintas políticas sectoriales, que son las políticas en las que se enmarca la lucha contra la desertificación, se han seguido reforzando los foros y órganos de cooperación y acuerdo institucional. Como ejemplos de avances en este sentido se pueden citar: la labor continua de la Red de Autoridades Ambientales (REA) en cuanto a la integración de la protección del medio ambiente en todas las intervenciones financiadas con fondos de la Unión Europea, la aplicación del Plan Forestal Español (PFE) a través de los Convenios entre distintas instituciones y el refuerzo de la coordinación en materia de lucha contra incendios.

En cuanto al marco legislativo, se ha estado trabajando en estos últimos años en la elaboración o modificación de determinadas normativas relacionadas con los sectores más estrechamente vinculados con la lucha contra la desertificación. Como avances destacables en el sector agrario se señalan en el informe, entre otros, la aplicación de la conocida como “condicionalidad”, es decir, la obligatoriedad de cumplimiento de requisitos medioambientales para la concesión de los pagos directos a la agricultura en el marco de la Política Agraria Común. Hay que destacar que durante el proceso de elaboración de los requisitos ambientales han sido consultados organismos de la Administración responsables de la lucha contra la desertificación.

En el marco legislativo del sector forestal se ha aprobado la Ley 4/2003, de 21 de noviembre, de Montes, reformada mediante la Ley 10/2006. Muchos son los avances que implica la aplicación de esta Ley en cuanto a la protección y mejora de los terrenos forestales en España, entre ellos: creación de una nueva figura de planificación, los Planes de Ordenación de los Recursos Forestales (PORF), que se configuran como instrumentos de planificación forestal de ámbito comarcal integrados en el marco de la ordenación del territorio; impulso a la planificación en materia de incendios, proponiéndose la declaración de zonas de peligro de incendio y la obligatoriedad de formular un plan de defensa en cada zona de peligro; obligación de restauración de los terrenos incendiados y prohibición con carácter general del cambio de uso forestal por razón del incendio durante 30 años; incentivos económicos para la gestión forestal sostenible de los montes de propietarios privados y de entidades locales, condicionándolos a la existencia de instrumentos de gestión. En definitiva, la aprobación de la nueva Ley de Montes supone un fuerte impulso a las propuestas de mejora de los instrumentos institucionales y de participación para la ejecución de actuaciones de lucha contra la desertificación, que se incluyen en el Programa de Acción Nacional.

En el sector vinculado a la gestión de los recursos hídricos, y después de la profunda remodelación que supuso la modificación de la Ley de Aguas del año 2001, se ha producido en 2003 la incorporación de la Directiva Marco de aguas de la Unión Europea (2000/60/CE) al Derecho español. La revisión de los Planes Hidrológicos de cuenca (aprobados desde 1998) a que obliga la aplicación de la Directiva, constituye una oportunidad para contar con instrumentos de planificación que pueden y deben integrar actuaciones relacionadas con la protección del medio ambiente, con el desarrollo territorial y con la gestión y protección de aguas y costas. Esta revisión se pretende efectuar en el marco de un importante proceso de participación pública.

iii) Coordinación y movilización de recursos, tanto nacionales como internacionales, incluida la concertación de acuerdos de asociación.

Como ya se expuso en el anterior Informe y ha vuelto a ponerse de manifiesto a lo largo de este documento, el Programa de Acción Nacional contra la Desertificación en España se configura como un elemento integrador de un conjunto de medidas que en su mayor parte son objeto de políticas, programas y planes ya existentes. Ello determina que no se proponga la existencia de un fondo presupuestario específico. Los fondos para la aplicación del PAN provienen de las diversas líneas de financiación abiertas en relación con las acciones incluidas en el programa. La función del PAN será promover el incremento de financiación en aquellas medidas más interesantes e impulsar que los fondos disponibles se apliquen preferentemente en aquellas áreas más afectadas por el fenómeno.

En el Informe se recogen las inversiones previstas para estos años en algunos de los más importantes programas y medidas vinculados a la lucha contra la desertificación, así como

aquellas específicamente dedicadas a la desertificación. Se puede considerar que, en este periodo entre 2002 y 2006, la media de inversión anual en actuaciones vinculadas a la lucha contra la desertificación se ha incrementado respecto a periodos inmediatamente anteriores.

iv) Vínculos y sinergias con otras convenciones sobre medio ambiente y, en su caso, con estrategias nacionales de desarrollo.

La mayor parte de la planificación a nivel nacional en las esferas que tienen mayor interés para la lucha contra la desertificación en España ha sido, o está siendo, desarrollada por el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente (MMA) que, a través de diversos planes, programas y estrategias, elaborados en colaboración con los Ministerios competentes o las Comunidades Autónomas, trata de dar cumplimiento a la legislación ambiental vigente, a los acuerdos entre las diferentes Instituciones y Administraciones Públicas y a los Convenios Internacionales sobre medio ambiente. Otros planes relacionados son desarrollados por el Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, y el Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia.

Ya en anteriores informes quedaron establecidos los vínculos y sinergias existentes, y el alto grado de coherencia entre los principios y acciones que propugna el PAN y los de los marcos estratégicos y de planificación más estrechamente vinculadas con la lucha contra la desertificación. En el informe se destacan los acontecimientos o actuaciones que han tenido lugar en relación con estos planes y los progresos en lo que atañe a su contribución a la aplicación del PAN. Entre ellos se pueden destacar los citados a continuación.

En 2004, se pone de nuevo en marcha un programa de establecimiento de estrategias para la mejora de la sostenibilidad del desarrollo en España, pretendiéndose dar una mayor importancia a la cooperación, la coordinación y la participación del resto de las Administraciones Públicas, Comunidades Autónomas y Administraciones Locales. Se crea en 2005 el Observatorio de la Sostenibilidad en España.

En febrero de 2004 el Consejo Nacional del Clima aprueba la Estrategia Española frente al Cambio Climático. Este documento, que constituye el punto de partida para la elaboración de planes de acción de lucha contra las causas y efectos del cambio climático, incluye acciones para incentivar el crecimiento de la superficie forestal y para evitar los incendios forestales.

En julio de 2002 se aprueba el Plan Forestal Español (PFE), cuyas acciones están en completa consonancia con las medidas de lucha contra la desertificación en el ámbito forestal que propone el PAN. Entre otras muchas actuaciones, en el PFE se propone la reforestación de 3,8 millones de hectáreas y el consiguiente almacenamiento de hasta 60 millones de toneladas de carbono durante los treinta años de aplicación previstos (2002-2032).

La política de gestión de los recursos hídricos ha estrechado sus vínculos con la lucha contra la desertificación y la sequía, con una clara evolución hacia la racionalización de la demanda frente al incremento de la capacidad de oferta. Se está avanzando en la consideración de que la sequía no es un problema coyuntural o meramente esporádico, derivado de la irregularidad del clima, y ante cuya aparición solo caben soluciones de “emergencia”, sino de que se trata de un problema estructural, que debe ser combatido con estrategias mantenidas de gestión, basadas en una planificación en la que estos escenarios queden integrados.

v) Medidas para la rehabilitación de las tierras degradadas y los sistemas de alerta temprana con el fin de mitigar los efectos de la sequía.

Se ha incluido en el epígrafe 6 una sinopsis de las medidas de lucha contra la desertificación, que se están tomando en los sectores de actividad más estrechamente vinculados a la desertificación, como son el sector agrario y de desarrollo rural, el sector forestal y el de gestión de los recursos hídricos. Estas medidas obviamente forman parte del conjunto de medidas y líneas de acción específicas que constituyen el Programa de Acción Nacional. Un resumen de dicha relación se ofrece a continuación:

- Integración de consideraciones ambientales en la política agraria de precios y mercados, mediante la elaboración coordinada entre distintos organismos de la Administración de la normativa para el establecimiento de requisitos agroambientales a los que se condicionan las ayudas directas en el marco de la política agrícola común (“condicionalidad”). Se cuenta en la actualidad con un completo conjunto de requisitos y prácticas, la mayor parte de los cuales constituyen medidas preventivas de procesos desencadenantes de la desertificación.

- Consolidación del programa de medidas agroambientales, que está considerado como uno de los instrumentos más eficaces para la lucha contra la desertificación en el sector agrario. Buena parte de las medidas contempladas en este programa son acciones directas para prevenir y mitigar los procesos de degradación de las tierras, entre ellas la medida de “Lucha contra la erosión en medios frágiles” en la que se han introducido en esta medida muchas de las prácticas incluidas en la llamada “Agricultura de conservación”. Al programa de medidas agroambientales se ha acogido una superficie de más de dos millones de hectáreas

- Programa de forestación de tierras agrarias, que ofrece incentivos para la forestación y que ha supuesto efectos claramente positivos, especialmente en los siguientes casos: la forestación de tierras en barbecho, la posibilidad de repoblar zonas marginales no aptas para su uso agrícola o cultivos leñosos en pendiente, situación muy frecuente en el Mediterráneo, y finalmente la forestación de áreas con vegetación muy escasa de la categoría agrícola de “erial a pastos”, a veces objeto de cultivos itinerantes. Desde que comenzó el programa se han forestado más de 550.000 ha, unas 160.000 entre 2000 y 2004.

- Restauración de la cubierta vegetal y ampliación de la superficie arbolada, utilizando como instrumentos el Inventario Nacional de Erosión de Suelos y la ejecución del “Plan de Actuaciones Prioritarias en materia de Restauración Hidrológico-Forestal, control de la erosión y defensa contra la desertificación”.

- Gestión forestal sostenible, mediante el fomento de proyectos de ordenación de montes y silvicultura de mejora de las masas forestales y la creación de un nuevo instrumento de planificación, los Planes de Ordenación de Recursos Forestales.

- Lucha contra incendios forestales, mediante la creciente dotación de medios en las labores de prevención y de extinción de incendios forestales, a través fundamentalmente de silvicultura preventiva, campañas de concienciación e incremento en las dotaciones terrestres y aéreas de extinción y observación.

- Defensa y protección del monte frente a plagas, enfermedades y daños originados por fenómenos climáticos adversos, como la sequía.

- Elaboración por parte de los Organismos de cuenca de Planes especiales de actuación en situaciones de alerta y eventual sequía, y de un sistema global de indicadores hidrológicos que permita prever estas situaciones.
- Creación del Observatorio Nacional de la Sequía (ONS), una iniciativa del Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y del Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación que pretende aglutinar a todas las administraciones hidráulicas españolas con competencias en materia de aguas, para constituir un Centro de conocimiento, anticipación, mitigación y seguimiento de los efectos de la sequía en el territorio nacional.
- Incorporación en la planificación hidrológica de la gestión y protección de las aguas subterráneas como materia fundamental, que dispone que se elabore para cada cuenca un Plan de Acción de Aguas Subterráneas que permita el aprovechamiento sostenible de dichos recursos y que incluirá programas para la mejora del conocimiento hidrogeológico y la protección y ordenación de los acuíferos y de las aguas subterráneas.
- Actuaciones englobadas en el Plan Nacional de Regadíos (PNR) que se está desarrollando enmarcado en unas directrices que incluyen la incorporación de criterios ambientales en la gestión de tierras y aguas para evitar su degradación, la recuperación de acuíferos y la reducción de los procesos de desertificación. Se ha diseñado además un Programa de Vigilancia Ambiental del regadío en el que se elabora un plan para conocer la evolución de los efectos sobre el medio ambiente de las actuaciones programadas en el PNR y la adecuación de las medidas aplicadas para corregir estos efectos.

vi) Vigilancia y evaluación de la sequía y la desertificación

Se cuenta en España con varios instrumentos cuyo objetivo es el inventario, evaluación y seguimiento de las áreas afectadas por desertificación. La D.G. para la Biodiversidad está desarrollando los siguientes, que forman parte, entre otros, del Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia que propone el Programa de Acción Nacional contra la Desertificación.

- Inventario Nacional de Erosión de Suelos (INES) 2002-2012. Publicadas 15 de las 50 provincias españolas y 8 más están en fase de ejecución. Su realización está coordinada con la del Inventario Forestal Nacional.
- Mapas de Suelos del Proyecto LUCDEME (Lucha contra la Desertificación en el Mediterráneo). Superficie cartografiada de 70.500 km², el 13,93% del territorio nacional; el objetivo es cubrir todas las provincias afectadas por la desertificación en nuestro país. Se ha puesto en marcha la edición digital del Mapa de Suelos. En su elaboración participan Universidades y Centros pertenecientes al Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
- Red de Estaciones Experimentales de Seguimiento y Evaluación de la Erosión y la Desertificación (Red RESEL) del Proyecto LUCDEME. Esta red, puesta en marcha en 1995, cuenta con más de 40 estaciones. La RESEL realiza la obtención de información sobre la desertificación, a escala de proceso sobre el terreno, de forma sistemática y a largo plazo, en localidades representativas de diferentes paisajes afectados por la desertificación en España, principalmente en la cuenca Mediterránea. Se ha iniciado en 2005 la reorganización y homogeneización de los datos y resultados obtenidos, de cara a su explotación como apoyo a las

tareas de seguimiento, evaluación y control de los procesos de erosión y degradación del suelo, así como para la planificación y realización de trabajos de restauración hidrológico-forestal. Está previsto además realizar una página web de acceso público para la difusión y divulgación de los trabajos de la Red desde su puesta en funcionamiento.

- Establecimiento de un sistema de indicadores de la desertificación en España. En 2002 la D.G. para la Biodiversidad puso en marcha una actuación denominada “Identificación de indicadores de desertificación en España”. El objetivo de esta iniciativa es, además de la identificación, el inicio de la aplicación de un conjunto de indicadores de la desertificación que sean válidos para satisfacer las necesidades planteadas, en el marco de las numerosas líneas de trabajo abiertas tanto en el nivel nacional como internacional.

Por otra parte, investigadores españoles lideran el proyecto europeo DeSurvey (A surveillance system for assessing and monitoring desertification), una importante iniciativa internacional sobre evaluación y monitorización de la desertificación.

vii) Acceso de las Partes que son países afectados, en particular las Partes que son países en desarrollo afectados, a las tecnologías y los conocimientos técnicos y especializados adecuados.

Dentro de las actividades desarrolladas en el Programa Araucaria, la Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI) promueve diferentes actuaciones en el ámbito de la formación científica y técnica. En el marco de este programa se ha seguido realizando anualmente, con la colaboración con la D.G. para la Biodiversidad del Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, el “Curso Internacional de Restauración Hidrológico-Forestal, Control de la Erosión y Defensa contra la Desertificación”, que este año ya va por su 13ª edición”. El curso, impartido en España y en el que participan una media de 20 asistentes becados, está dirigido a profesionales de América Latina que ejerzan actividades relacionadas con la ordenación y restauración hidrológico-forestal de cuencas. Ha tenido también continuidad la iniciativa, que comenzó en 2001, de organizar estos cursos en Latinoamérica, en los Centros Iberoamericanos de Formación de la AECI, habiéndose celebrado varias ediciones del “Curso Superior Interactivo sobre Lucha contra la Desertificación”. Además, y con el objetivo de establecer un seguimiento de los resultados de esta iniciativa de transferencia de tecnología, se empezó a celebrar en 2003 el “Taller-Seminario sobre el Bosque como Defensa contra la Desertificación y Reservorio para la Biodiversidad”, en el que participan los asistentes a los cursos anteriores intercambiando los resultados de la puesta en práctica de los conocimientos adquiridos.

CUADROS RESUMEN

1. Institución de enlace:

Nombre del funcionario de enlace	Dña. Mª Jesús Rodríguez de Sancho Subdirectora General de Política Forestal y Desertificación
Dirección postal y electrónica	Dirección General para la Biodiversidad Ministerio de Medio Ambiente Gran Vía de San Francisco, 4 28005 Madrid mjrodriguez@mma.es

Sitios web específicos del país relacionados	1. http://www.mma.es/conserv_nat/planes/programa_desertif/desert.htm http://www.mma.es/conserv_nat/acciones/desertificacion/desertificacion.htm 2. http://www.uv.es/cide/ 3. http://www.eeza.csic.es/eeza/default.htm 4. http://www.cebas.csic.es/
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2. Situación del PAN (únicamente información sobre la situación en su país):

Fecha de validación	No está aún validado
Exámenes del PAN	
¿Se ha integrado el PAN en la estrategia de reducción de la pobreza?	No procede
¿Se ha integrado el PAN en la estrategia nacional de desarrollo?	No procede
¿Ha comenzado la ejecución del PAN con o sin la celebración de acuerdos de asociación?	Buena parte de las líneas de acción que se proponen en el Documento de Trabajo del PAN se están ejecutando.
Fecha prevista de validación del PAN	2007
¿Existe una versión definitiva del PAN?	Sí
¿Se está preparando un proyecto de PAN?	Sí
¿Se han establecido las directrices básicas del PAN?	Sí, aprobadas en 2000
Solamente se ha iniciado el proceso	
¿Se ha comenzado ya el proceso?	Sí

3. Si el país es miembro de un PASR/PAR (use la casilla correspondiente):

Nombre del marco de cooperación subregional o regional		Participación específica en temas como las técnicas de almacenamiento de agua, la erosión del suelo, etc.
1.	Anexo IV para el Mediterráneo Norte	España ha manifestado su intención de poner en marcha las siguientes actividades : - Regional Thematic Network (RTN): “Rehabilitation techniques for degraded soils - Regional Training Centre (RTC): Use one of their existing national training centres as an NM to organize regional training for NM on “Rehabilitation techniques for degraded soils - Reforestation/ Afforestation/tree plantation in affected areas” - Spain stated the possibility of contributing documentation on an “Inventory of the Technologies Operational in Spain to combat Desertification” that it may be developed within the next biennium.

4. Composición del OCN (indíquese si es una organización gubernamental o de la sociedad civil y proporciónese información sobre el sexo de los representantes):

ONG	Hombre/mujer	Nombre de la institución o persona	Gubernamental	ONG	Hombre/mujer
			(Táchese lo que no proceda)		
1.		Ministerio de Medio Ambiente. Dirección General para la Biodiversidad Subdirección General de Política Forestal y Desertificación	v		1 H / 5 M
2.		Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación. Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI).	v		1 H
3		Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación. Dirección General de Relaciones Culturales y Científicas.	v		1 M
4.		Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas, Medioambientales y Tecnológicas (CIEMAT)	v		1 M

5. Número total de ONG acreditadas en el proceso: _____

¿Se ha creado un Comité nacional de coordinación de ONG sobre la desertificación? En caso afirmativo, ¿cuántas ONG u organizaciones de la sociedad civil participan en él?	No
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6. Número total de leyes sobre la Convención que se han promulgado: _____
Indique un máximo de cinco de las leyes o reglamentos más pertinentes.

Título de la ley/reglamento		Fecha de promulgación
1.	Ley 4/2003, de Montes, modificada por Ley 10/2006.	21/11/2003 - 28/04/2006
2.	Ley de Aguas Varias	Varias
3.	Reales Decretos de desarrollo de Reglamento de Desarrollo Rural de la UE.	Varias
4.	Real Decreto 2352/2004 sobre la aplicación de la condicionalidad en relación con las ayudas directas en el marco de la política agrícola común,	23/12/2004
5.	Ley 4/1989 de Conservación de la Naturaleza	27/03/1989

7. El proceso de consulta: No procede.

8. Indíquese un máximo 10 proyectos en curso relacionados directa o indirectamente con la Convención: No procede

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

A. Focal point institution:

Name of focal point	Ms. Gordana KOZUHAROVA
Address including e-mail address	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning Drezdenska 57, 1 000 Skopje, Republic of Macedonia Tel: +389 2 3066930 ext. 132 g.kozuharova@moepp.gov.mk
Country-specific websites relating to desertification	1. www.moe.gov.mk 2. www.ncsa.com.mk

B. Status of national action programme (NAP)

Date of validation	Not yet validated
NAP review(s)	NA
NAP has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy	No PRSP has never been officially adopted
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	No National Strategy for Sustainable Development is currently being elaborated - expected to be completed by mid-2007
NAP implementation has started with or without the conclusions of partnership agreements	No
Expected NAP validation	June 2006
Final draft of a NAP exists	Yes
Formulation of a draft NAP is under way	Completed May 2006
Basic guidelines for a NAP have been established	Yes Law on Environment (2004)
Process has only been initiated	NA
Process has not yet started	NA

C. Subregional And/Or Regional Cooperation Framework

Name of subregional and/or regional cooperation framework	Involvement specifically in topics
1. Sub-regional Working Group under UNCCD for establishment of Drought Management Centre for South-Eastern Europe	Drought , Hydro-meteorological databases Early Warning Systems
2.	

D. Composition of the national coordinating body (NCB)

Name of institution	Government	NGO	Male/female
1. Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts -MANU	√		M
2. Government of Macedonia, Sector for European Integration	√		F
3. Government of Macedonia, General Secretariat	√		

4.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	√		F
5.	Ministry of Economy	√		M
6.	Ministry of Transport and Communications	√		
7.	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWR)	√		M
8.	Hydro-meteorological Service	(√)		F
9.	Ministry of Education	√		
10.	Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food			M
11.	Faculty of Forestry			M
12.	Faculty of Natural Sciences			M
13.	Faculty of Civil Engineering			F
14.	Chamber of Commerce		√	F
15.	Movement of Environmentalists of Macedonia - DEM		√	M

E. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accredited to the process

Has an NGO National Coordinating Committee on desertification been established; if yes, how many NGOs or civil society organizations participate in it?	No
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F. Acts and laws relating to the UNCCD

Name up to five most relevant acts and laws and/or regulations.

Title of the law	Date of adoption
1. Law on Environment	Official Gazette of RM No: 53/2005
2. <i>Law on Nature Protection</i>	Official Gazette of RM No. 67/2004
3. Law on Waters	Off. Gazette of RM, No.4/1998
4. Law on Agricultural Land	Off. Gazette of RM, No.25/1998

G. The consultative process

Number of partnership agreements that have been concluded and/or are being initiated within the framework of the UNCCD (please provide information where appropriate):

Official title of partnership	Donor(s), international organization(s), and/or agencies of the United Nations system involved	Date of (expected) conclusion
1. NA		

List of consultative meetings on UNCCD implementation (please provide information where appropriate):

Name of consultative meeting	Date/year	Donor countries involved	International organizations or agencies of the United Nations system involved
1. NA			

Name of country which has taken over the role of Chef de file (please provide information where appropriate): _____

H. Relevant projects currently under implementation

8. Name up to 10 projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD.

Name of project		Project implemented within the framework of the NAP/ SRAP/ RAP? (Yes/No)	Project implemented within the framework of...	Timeframe	Key Partners Involved	Overall budget
1.	Sustainable Land Management in Macedonia	Yes	Global Environment Facility (GEF) (OP 15) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	2006-2009	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MEPP), MAFWE, NGOs etc.	USD 0.96 M
2.	Second National Environmental Action Plan - NEAP 2	No	European Union (EU) CARDS	2004-2006	MEPP	2.9 M
3.	National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD)	No	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)			1.5 M
4.	Strengthening of the Environmental Management	No	EU CARDS 2004 & 2006			1.8 M + 1.2 M
5.	Structural and Legal Reform of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy	No	EU CARDS	2005-2007	MAFWE	2.9 M
6.	EU approximation and Regional Cooperation in the Agro and Food sector	No	German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)	2004-2008	MAFWE	- M

Name of project		Project implemented within the framework of the NAP/ SRAP/ RAP? (Yes/No)	Project implemented within the framework of...	Timeframe	Key Partners Involved	Overall budget
7.	Macedonian Agriculture Advisory Support Programme (MAASP) + Phase II	No	SIDA	2004- 2007	MAFWE, Agric. Advisory Services	4.0 M + 4.1 M
8.	Project for Improved Agriculture Statistics in Macedonia	No	SIDA	2002-2007	SSO	2.0 M
9.	Institutional Development and Capacity-Building in Forestry and Forest Industry Subsectors	No	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	2004-2006	MAFWE	USD 0.4 M
10.	Real Estate Cadastre and Registration	No	World Bank / International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	2005-2009	SAGW	10.3 M

TURKEY

Turkey is an affected developed country that approved and ratified the Convention to Combat Desertification in 1996 and 1998 respectively. The idea of Turkey for accession to the Convention is not only to promote the implementation of measures needed at national level but is also an expression of solidarity with other affected countries and of its will to co-operate with all stakeholders in the field of key global issues. In this regard, Turkey belongs particularly to those countries of the Regional Annex for Northern Mediterranean which constitutes Annex IV of the Convention. Turkey therefore has also regularly participated in the Regional and Subregional Action Programmes (RAP and SRAP) which are being conducted in a collaborative manner among the respective countries of Annex IV in addition to the other Convention related activities both national and international.

Presently, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF), Turkey is responsible for the coordination of activities on the implementation of the Convention at national level. By doing this, the Ministry closely cooperates with other relevant institutions and stakeholders as well as the National Coordinating Body (NCB). The Ministry is also aware of the importance of giving

momentum to promoting public involvement at all levels on the implementation, maintenance and strengthening of Convention related activities.

The NCB, which is composed of representatives of key institutions such as several ministries, government institutions and NGOs, was established for coordinating Convention related national activities. It has also served as a consulting and coordinating body on preparing the National Action Programme (NAP) pursuant to article 5 of the Convention. In order to effectively coordinate Convention related issues, a specific Division, the Directorate to Combat Desertification, was also established in the MEF serving as the secretariat of the NCB's activities in close contact with the National Focal Point.

The NAP was finalized in mid-2004 as a result of several meetings and consultations with the participation of all related institutions, academicians, NGOs and experts. The programme was approved by Ministerial Decree and was then printed and disseminated.

The Anatolia peninsula, the mainland of Turkey, has witnessed a long historical past during which a variety of civilizations has passed through the centuries so that the natural resources have therefore been overexploited and degraded. Moreover, rapid population increase and industrialization have put great pressure on those resources. This has resulted in an increasing loss of soil quality and fertility, agricultural productivity and of natural habitations. Consequently, the country as a whole has become more and more sensitive to desertification/drought and is easily affected by the arid and semi-arid climatic conditions.

The total territory of Turkey is about 78 million hectares including inland water surfaces. Some 28, 1 million hectares (36 %) is agricultural land while the total area under the forest regime is about 21 million hectares (27 %). Total rangeland together with the alpine meadows consists of 21, 5 million hectares (27 %). Although the total arable land potential for irrigated agriculture is about 8, 5 million hectares, only about 4, 7 million hectares of it has effective irrigation systems at present.

Turkey is one of the richest countries in the region in terms of biodiversity, consisting of about 9,000 species. Turkey contains 75% of the plant species found in Europe. Some important species such as cherries, apricots, almonds, figs, and tulips all originated in Turkey. Over 33% of its flora species are endemic. The Biodiversity Strategy prepared in collaboration with the World Bank in 1997 classified 4 of the mammal species and 13 bird species as threatened by extinction.

Turkey has two basic types of climates: the Mediterranean climate with high temperature and dry summer and mild and wet winter, and the temperate climate with more rain and moisture in all seasons than are formed by the Mediterranean climatic systems. Mountainous topography and sudden changes in altitude also create a variety of local micro-climatic conditions over the country. These climatic characteristics and other specific hydrological, topographic conditions make Turkey quite susceptible to the desertification phenomenon.

In terms of water resources, Turkey is quite a poor country when compared with the world averages, but it is the richest country in the Mediterranean and the Middle East regions. However, the distribution of water is generally irregular and costly. Turkey is therefore seriously affected by dryness conditions especially in the summers.

Erosion is one of the most acute land degradation problems affecting 75% of the total land surface in Turkey. About 73% of the cultivated land and 68% of the prime agricultural land (Classes I-IV) is prone to erosion. Stream bank erosion affects 57.1 million ha while wind erosion is severely affecting another 0.5 million ha of land. The portion of severe erosion is also relatively larger in areas where agriculture is practised. Although erosion preventing programmes were initiated several decades ago, the control measures have been applied only in 2.2 million hectares of the area so far.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Desertification has historically been a problem and remains a concern across a large portion of the western United States. Desertification has been a problem on rangelands and lower elevation forests and woodlands due to unsustainable practices such as overgrazing, particularly during drought conditions. Improved management and restoration has decreased the amount of degraded land in this region. However, the amount of land still requiring improvement is unknown since there is not a current assessment of land condition due to multiple ownership and management entities. Several national efforts (Sustainable Resources Roundtable and the Heinz Centre Report) are under way to correct this deficiency.

The federal Government manages 39% of the land susceptible to desertification in the western United States. Federal lands are managed for sustainability, although agency missions may vary due to different policies and laws. These federal lands provide renewable energy sources, clean water, habitat and ecosystem protection, and economic and recreational opportunities for the public. The remaining 61% of the land in the western United States is owned or managed by private individuals or companies and state governments.

Private lands provide the majority of the agricultural products in the western U.S. Federal and state governments seek to help private producers ranch and farm efficiently and to use technologies that reduce soil loss and that maximize the efficient use of water and other resources. Government agencies and non-government centres provide research capabilities to improve the sustainability of agricultural and rangeland and forest ecosystems.

Drought is a common phenomenon on western rangelands and can heighten the risk of land degradation and other hazards such as fire. The federal Government has a national policy in place to coordinate responses to drought and to seek to minimize its impact. This policy stresses a proactive approach to resolving drought issues in a collaborative setting. Numerous resources are available on the web to assist managers and the public with dealing with drought planning and mitigation.

Even though the lands in the western U.S. are diverse and management entities are numerous, federal, state and other institutions continue to make a concerted effort to maintain the sustainability of all lands and to minimize desertification impacts, including the restoration of degraded lands.

LITHUANIA

I. Main problems regarding land degradation in Lithuania:

Water and, in some circumstances, wind erosion are the main factors causing land degradation in Lithuania.

According to the data of the State Land Planning Institute, all soils in Lithuania have been studied and soil maps compiled at the scale of 1:100000. About 14% of agricultural land is affected by erosion, which causes damage to the valuable layer and fertility of arable lands. Most of the lands affected by erosion caused by water and wind are in the western and eastern parts of Lithuania.

Damage caused by water erosion is very diversified: washing of the fertile soil layer and nutrients from slopes, destruction of crops on eroded slopes, erosion of trench slope roads, sanding of trench beds, silting of water bodies and water pollution. One of the measures to prevent erosion of arable land is the implementation of certain crop rotation systems. Establishing shelter belts of surface water bodies would also help to slow down the erosion process, especially on eroded slopes.

Impoverishment of arable land is conditioned by the choice of irrational ways of farming, not taking into account the peculiarities of a specific area. An important measure to avoid impoverishment of arable land in protected and ecologically sensitive areas is ecological farming based on modern environment-friendly technologies. In 2004, the area of certified ecological farms reached 42,96 ha or over 1% of the total agricultural land in the country.

With the changing economic and social conditions in Lithuania, less land is used for agricultural purposes. This trend is especially prominent in the regions with large areas of infertile land. Afforestation of low-value agricultural land not only helps protect biological diversity, ground and surface waters and to absorb carbon dioxide, but also reduces erosion caused by water and wind.

II. Ratification and Current Status of the Convention:

The Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (the UNCCD) on 3 July 2003 (by adopting Law No. IX-1684).

Regional Implementation Annex V intended for Central and Eastern Europe is in force in the Republic of Lithuania. The above Annex stipulates 8 region-specific conditions under which the following 3 interrelated spheres are relevant for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention:

- *soil erosion caused by water and wind*
- *impoverishment of arable land*
- *reduction of forested areas*

The Coordinating Authority of the UNCCD implementation is the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. At national level, the fields regulated by the

Convention are assigned to the competence of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Environment is responsible for the policy of protection of environment components and the Ministry of Agriculture covers the management of processes affecting soil.

The National Action Programme for the UNCCD Implementation has not been drafted, nor has any targeted financing been provided for. On the other hand, relevant activities falling within the UNCCD scope are integrated into national strategies and corresponding implementation measures. The activities of implementing the fields regulated by the Convention in Lithuania are defined in the following legal acts:

- *Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2004-2008*
- *Rural Development Plan for 2004-2006*

The following strategic documents comprehensively define relevant fields covered by the UNCCD:

- National Long-term Development Strategy (2002). The Strategy describes the vision of the Lithuanian State which provides for the following: „Ecological farming measures in line with the EU directives will ensure the development of environment-friendly farming, the preservation and increase of natural resources.“

- National Sustainable Development Strategy (2003). The Strategy provides a comprehensive assessment of soil processes, defines important tasks and measures of implementation presented in this report by the fields regulated by the Convention:

- *soil erosion caused by water and wind*: „in ecologically sensitive areas (karst region, hilly regions) to farms applying ecological and environment-friendly traditional methods, to develop anti-erosion farming measures and to plant anti-erosion plants.“

- *impoverishment of arable land*: „to provide economic support for the development of ecological farms, to promote scientific research on how to increase the effectiveness of ecological farming and the activities of consulting companies and to promote a more active use of products grown on ecological farms.“

- *reduction of forested areas*: „to forest defensive strips of fields and water bodies, to increase afforestation in Lithuania by 3% by afforesting infertile land.“

- Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy (2000). The Strategy defines agricultural and rural development trends for 200-2006, agricultural and rural development goals, principles and priorities.

- Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania (2005-2007). The Strategic Plan lists strategic objectives related to the protection of environmental components (including soil) – to ensure the proper quality of environment for the Lithuanian population taking into account the norms and standards of the European Union; to ensure rational use of natural resources (including forests) and their further reproduction, to preserve biological diversity, natural heritage values and uniqueness of the landscape.

- Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (2005-2007). The Strategic Plan mentions the strategic objective related to the management of the processes affecting soil – to promote protection of the environment and ecological farming promoting biological diversity and preserving the landscape.

Related legislation and other legal acts:

- Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Land (1994, 2004 version in force)
- Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Environmental Monitoring (1997, 2003 version in force)
- Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Agricultural and Rural Development (2002)
- Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Water (1997)
- Order of the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania on the Requirements of Good Farming Practices (2004)

From 2004 to 2006 the Government of Lithuania in collaboration with UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and GEF (Global Environment Facility) has been running a project on Lithuanian National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environment Management. The analysis was concentrated on three thematic spheres – climate change, biological diversity and land degradation. The primary objective of the project is to identify and assess capacity gaps.

The project results show the main barriers in the implementation of the UNCCD:

- Lack of Integrated Soil Research Programme
- Soil monitoring has no comprehensive and integrated approach
- Insufficient capacity and financial resources

The meeting, held on the initiative of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania regarding the implementation of the UNCCD in Lithuania on 23 May 2005, discussed the relevance of the spheres regulated for Lithuania by the Convention. With the consent of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, it was decided that in 2005-2006 in the context of the Convention, Lithuania was not deemed to be “an affected State.”

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