

"Africa's challenges are being tackled at different levels, and some successes have been recorded. But not fast enough. The concepts of sustainable development, appropriate development models and participatory development are not foreign. We are aware that our children and future generations have a right to a world which will also need energy, should be free of pollution, should be rich with biological diversity and should have a climate which will sustain all forms of life."

Professor Wangari Maathai, Nobel Laureate and IYDD Honorary Spokesperson.

IMPLEMENTING THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN AFRICA

TEN AFRICAN EXPERIENCES



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PREFACE

It has since been established beyond any doubt that combating desertification and land degradation is an important, if not vital, part of sustainable development strategies in countries affected by this scourge. African countries have been implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on the ground for the last 10 years and are well aware of the need to take a holistic approach to desertification. Since it is a complex phenomenon, it must be tackled in ways tailored to each country's specific conditions. The approaches used must reflect local populations' needs and the UNCCD's guiding principles and, ultimately, must help eradicate poverty.

Any sustainable response to land degradation must address the issue's socio-economic, political, institutional, technical and scientific aspects. African countries, that are hardest hit by this phenomenon, have committed themselves resolutely to this long-term battle and, at the same time, are intensifying efforts to preserve natural resources and alleviate poverty.

As the international community celebrates the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) in 2006, it is the ideal time to look at some exercises conducted in Africa as part of the implementation of the UNCCD.

Showcasing this selection of fruitful experiences from various African sub-regions also allows us to appreciate the complexity of the problems facing countries across the continent. It also highlights the need for a multi-faceted approach that can and must be adopted in order to ensure sustainable development. In this regard, we will see that it is imperative to harness the participation of local stakeholders, coordinate actions and pursue a holistic approach if degraded land is to be successfully restored. The examples presented in this brochure also demonstrate how determined African countries are to take charge of their own development, even though many of them find themselves in intensely difficult situations owing to widespread poverty and the lack of financial resources, both of which severely hamper their ability to defeat desertification.

Just as the communities that suffer from land degradation must be involved in the search for a solution, so too do they need the support of the international community. The UNCCD, with its objectives and principles, is the ideal arena for forging long-lasting partnerships to meet the needs of affected countries.


Hama Arba Diallo
Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

BACKGROUND

According to Article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), each Party shall communicate to the Conference of the Parties reports on the measures which it has taken for the implementation of the Convention.

Affected country Parties need to outline the strategies established, provide detailed descriptions of action programmes and include any other information relevant to implementation.

The Conference of the Parties sets out the rules and procedures to be followed to organize and rationalize the way information is communicated. Decision 1/COP.5 established a committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and set out its mandate and tasks. National reports are examined with respect to seven key thematic topics.

1. **Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations.**

The provision of the Convention's base text recommends that the preparation and implementation of action programmes must be rooted in participatory processes embracing all the stakeholders involved in managing natural resources.

2. **Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements.**

The purpose of these is to supervise and coordinate initiatives aimed at devising and implementing national action programmes (NAPs). They constitute a consultation arena that should serve to bolster collaboration between all the various stakeholders and formalize partnerships.

3. **Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusion of partnership agreements.**

Countries that have finalized the preparation of their NAPs are actively committed to forging partnerships and raising financial resources from cooperation partners.

4. **Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies.**

It is essential to integrate the NAP into socio-economic policies in order to increase the effectiveness of programmes for combating land degradation.

5. **Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought.**

The preparation of NAPs has led to the capitalization of knowledge on natural

resources. This has contributed to identifying major problems encountered and proposing possible solutions.

6. **Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment.**

NAPs should include monitoring and assessment tools that help ensure cohesion between all activities aimed at combating desertification. They should also make it possible to estimate the impact of these actions and identify the necessary measures to rectify any weaknesses in the actions taken as well as to consolidate their gains.

7. **Access by affected Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.**

The need to build capacities for taking ownership of appropriate technologies at local level has a significant impact in combating desertification.

The elaboration of the third series of African national reports was financed by a Global Environment Facility (GEF) regional project entitled "Supporting Capacity Building for the elaboration of national reports and country profiles by African country Parties to the UNCCD" that was co-funded by the World Bank (implementing agency) through the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and by the countries concerned. The project was executed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with support from the UNCCD secretariat. The national reports were submitted to the third session of the CRIC, which was held in Bonn, Germany, from 2 to 11 May 2005.

It was evident from this third round of reports that there is much to be gained from sharing the African experiences described in this brochure. When selecting the countries to include, the geographic distribution of the continent and the themes identified by the CRIC for reviewing the national reports were considered.

Rationale

The two regions (the Upper West and Upper East Regions) covered in this report lie within the Sudan Savannah zone, which is characterized by a uni-modal rainfall regime lasting 4-5 months and a long dry period of 6-7 months in the year. This long dry period, coupled with high population growth and bad farming practices, has contributed to land degradation not only in these regions, but in the country as a whole. This report is a summary of case studies of the activities of some civil society groups in combating land degradation in the Upper West and Upper East Regions.

Statement of the problem

One of the causes of land degradation in Ghana is bush burning, which is a result of inappropriate farming methods, negative cultural practices and poor grazing management practices. Recent information shows that about 22,000 ha of forest land are lost every year through bushfires, fuel-wood harvesting and charcoal production.

The effects of land degradation include malnutrition among children. It is estimated that malnutrition among children in the two regions severely hit by soil degradation increased from 50 per cent in 1986 to 70 percent in 1990 (Environmental Protection Agency, 2002). In the northern parts of the country, where there is a long gap between the rainy

and the dry seasons, income levels of the communities are generally low. In order to avert or reduce these effects, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), communities and some government agencies have undertaken projects in the Yameriga in the Talensi Nabdum of the Upper East Region and in Goziri in the Upper West Region. In some communities, the initiative has come from the people themselves.

Challenges

The intervention by the Catholic Church in the Upper West Region on bushfire control and initiatives by the Yameriga community, have brought associated challenges. Getting people to change their negative attitudes, and sustaining bushfire control and proper land management practices, are some of the challenges. The people of Goziri need to ensure that after the withdrawal of external intervention, they will be able to control bushfires or prevent them spreading from neighbouring communities.

Who has managed the process as a whole?

The process of getting communities to take ownership of their initiative on sustainable environmental management practices has been encouraged through effective involvement of the traditional authorities.



After a bushfire

How community-based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs initiated the process

In the case of the women of Yameriga, the lack of alternative livelihoods, the absence of fuel wood, and low yields of crops and medicinal plants prompted them to initiate the process. This initiative had the support of traditional and religious bodies. In the case of the Goziri community of the Upper West Region, the initial intervention came from the Catholic Church with the support of the local chief, thus creating cooperation between the Christian faith and traditional authority.

How the participatory process was organized

The Yameriga women established their

first tree nursery in 1997. The first attempt yielded positive results with the development of a ten-acre teak plantation. This process of getting the people mobilized for natural resource management could not, however, be sustained, as the women tended to see the lack of support from the elderly or respected people in society as a hindering factor. The management of the initiative was therefore limited to a committed few. The intervention of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began in 2000 with a series of sensitization and awareness-raising programmes. The Agency encouraged the women to involve the elderly, the respected and opinion leaders in the community in their activities. They were encouraged to form a Community Environmental Management Committee (CEMC) with the active participation of men and the local chief.

The result of this new approach was the establishment of a second tree nursery and a four-acre mango plantation. Furthermore, in the case of the bushfire management project in Goziri in the Upper West Region, after the withdrawal of the Catholic Church's support, the EPA, with the support of the local chief, encouraged the people to establish a CEMC to take charge of bushfire control and the general environmental management of this traditional area.

The results of the efforts of the people of Goziri have been laudable and worthy of emulation because for 15 years,

since the inception of the process, no village within the area has had any incidence of bushfires. Traditional medicine men now have access to plants and other important trees they require for their practice. There are signs of the reappearance of threatened wildlife species, which were hitherto virtually non-existent; a typical example is the edible forest snail.

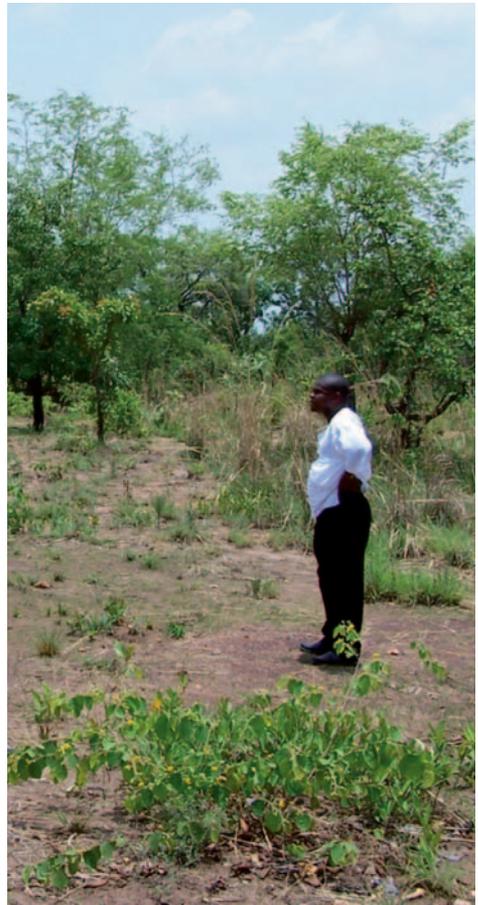
Results and sustainability

The EPA intervention in the Yameriga community was inspired by the sustained interest of the women despite the lack of immediate benefit. The absence of drinking water in the community was an obstacle as the women spent most of their time in search of water. With the intervention of the EPA and support from the Northern Savannah Biodiversity Project, a Global Environment Facility (GEF) / World Bank funded project, the people were provided with a hand-dug well and a fenced nursery. The community now has a source of water and a tree nursery that provide a means of livelihood.

With the intervention of the EPA in the Goziri community, the encouragement to form a CEMC, and sustained action to control bushfires, the community has become a source of reference for any intervention on bushfire management in the northern part of the country.

In conclusion, participatory processes involving civil society in combating

land degradation cannot be sustained without the active involvement of the traditional rulers and the formation of CEMCs at grassroots level. Coordinating these committees, however, requires the support of the local government authorities who provide the social amenities and infrastructure that facilitate resource management.



Following afforestation

Zimbabwe:
the Muposhi project example

Land, agrarian and environmental law reforms

In the period 2001 to 2003 Zimbabwe carried out land, agrarian and environmental law reforms to redress equity issues and mitigate poverty and environmental degradation aimed at benefiting the landless people of the country. The land reform focused on land redistribution and the reorganization of communal areas in order to reduce high population densities, which exceeded the capacity of the land to support them. It also focused on tackling the problem of over-cultivation, which had resulted in land degradation and high poverty levels, particularly in the marginal semi-arid regions where 70 per cent of the peasant farmers eked out a living. The subsequent agrarian reform set out to increase agricultural production and enhance the economic development of the country. Civil society participated in the land, agrarian and environmental law reform processes. Among them were the Women and Land Lobby Group, the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union, the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association and the Institute of Environmental Studies.

The Women's Group participated in parliament at national level to integrate the gender aspect into the land and agrarian reforms before, during and after the fast track resettlement

programme. The aim was to ensure that women who had previously been marginalized with respect to access, control and ownership of land would now benefit from the land redistribution process. The Group worked closely with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee in the areas of law, justice, gender and youth, and in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Local Government and National Housing and the Ministry of Lands, to ensure that the policy framework took gender needs into account.

Environmental law reform

Due to sectoral disparities, environmental degradation was most acute in the communal lands sector due to poverty, landlessness and land-use pressure, coupled with ineffective institutional arrangements for natural resource management. The magnitude of the constraints called for reforms not only in the land and agrarian sector, but also in the environmental sector in order to redress the wide range of challenges. In this context the Environmental Management Act (EMA) [chapter 20:27] provided an opportunity for implementation of the national action programme at community level. The legal framework made provision for the participation of a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to environmental management at various levels, from national to local community, and including the private sector and NGOs.

To achieve these objectives at grass-roots level, the Women's Group is involved in promoting irrigation projects, as well as sustainable land and water resource management and utilization projects in the dry areas of Zimbabwe. Project activities include training workshops on land degradation, agricultural extension, agroforestry and organic farming. These have resulted in a pilot project which benefited 50 households through improved food security and livelihoods. The Group took a more proactive involvement in the reform programme by means of a strong awareness-raising effort. This included dissemination of information through the mass media on legal, policy and administrative frameworks governing access to, and management and utilization of land. The campaign was aimed at the general public, especially female-headed households which constitute the bulk of the poorest due to lack of access to a productive resource base. Following the enactment of the Environmental Management Act (EMA), the Department of Natural Resources selected the Muposhi Project in Shurugwi District as a pilot demonstration project to implement the national action programme to combat desertification (NAP). The Shurugwi District was experiencing a variety of problems, such as inappropriate institutional structures for environmental management at community level, inadequate land and economic resources for the growing population, and environmental degradation. The latter included river-

bank erosion, siltation, gully erosion and wetland depletion covering 2.4 per cent of the total area. In addition, 3.1 per cent of the total land area suffered from gold panning and mine dumps. These problems at rural district council level were amplified at community level. This is illustrated by the Muposhi Project, where environmental degradation, the destruction of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity that occurred between 1949 and 2004 resulted in perennial water depletion. Its consequences could be seen in the disappearance of forests and of species such as crocodiles and other wildlife, resulting from silted rivers and gullies as well as soil erosion.

Giving priority to awareness and educational activities

To mitigate the above problems, the Department of Natural Resources implemented an awareness and education programme and a capacity-building programme within the legal provisions of the new act under the auspices of the subregional action programme of the UNCCD. The programme was aimed at integrating the NAP in conformity with the implementation of the new EMA (chapter 20:27) at district level, by providing the local institutional framework. The process included harmonizing the existing natural resources committees as well as facilitating the integration and rationalization of environmental committees.

Some of the activities carried out included the following:

- Capacity-building of traditional leaders and local government institutions for efficient environmental planning and management through the EMA statutory provisions;
- Instituting more effective law enforcement by devolving from central government agencies to district and community levels;
- Public awareness highlighting the relevance of and opportunities offered by multilateral environment agreements (MEAs) (UNCCD, NAP) in sustainable development at community level in the context of the EMA;
- Promoting community-led initiatives to combat land degradation, alleviate poverty and improve management of water and land resources for sustainable livelihoods.

Birth of new opportunities

The piloting approach by the Department of Natural Resources gave birth to a number of opportunities. One of these was the empowerment of local institutions at ward and village levels, with statutory rights in environmental management of their own natural resources. Another was the creation of partnerships between the Department and the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association, and later on between the Department and Africa 2000. Moreover, the project served to mobilize and motivate Shurugwi Rural District Council. They proved willing to be a piloting

partner in order to meet their own objectives and to create new and effective institutions to manage natural resources in resettled areas and communal lands. The project also promoted the idea of development-oriented traditional leadership, with a list of community initiatives ready for implementation by resource users at village level, such as Muposhi.

A successful example of implementation, to be duplicated

As a result of the successful implementation of the Muposhi project and empowerment of the rural district council, NGO partnerships for resource mobilization were cemented between Africare, the Red Cross and the Muposhi community. Further exposure to European Union micro-projects, meanwhile, was seen as bringing potential investment to adjacent communities to duplicate the pilot and Southern African Regional Accreditation Cooperation (SARAC). The Muposhi community was empowered through acquired skills in sustainable management and in utilization of natural resources. Food security and income generation was increased by means of a variety of initiatives, including the creation of apiaries, a plantation, a nursery, a water-harvesting project based on sand abstraction, a gardening project and a locally-based produce marketing network, as well as land rehabilitation through gully reclamation.

Last but not least, the Department of Natural Resources in partnership with the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association and Africa 2000 extended the project to eight provinces and 58 dis-

tricts to facilitate institutional development through empowered environmental committees and sub-committees.

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Gully erosion



Burundi, a predominantly agricultural country

With the restoration of peace, the fight against land degradation has begun

The new millennium ushered in an era of hope following the social and political crises that reigned from 1993 to 1999. That period had been marred by civil war, which in addition to posing obvious threats to people's safety, also slashed their output and incomes, causing widespread poverty. This suffering was compounded by the embargo that was imposed in 1996 and led to international cooperation being suspended for the next three years.

The political negotiations in Arusha, which culminated in the signature on 28 August 2000 of the national peace and reconciliation agreement, generated optimism. The marked increase in

public safety meant consultations on the goals and priorities of the national action programme (NAP) could take place throughout the country. Poverty, however, continued to spread. The proportion of people living beneath the poverty threshold rose from 35% in 1992 to 60% in 2001.

The process of devising and validating the NAP began in 2000 and lasted for three years. It was validated in December 2003 before being reviewed, so that it could dovetail with other strategic frameworks. The new version was adopted by the Council of Ministers in September 2005.

Rooting the NAP in sectoral development strategies

The process of formulating the NAP for combating desertification was set in motion at the same time as the

The Interim Strategic Framework for Economic Growth and Poverty Eradication (CSLP), which was adopted in March 2002, is based on six pillars:

1. promoting peace;
2. stimulating clean growth that helps reduce poverty;
3. increasing access to basic social services;
4. re-integrating conflict victims and disadvantaged groups into the economic fabric;
5. fighting HIV/AIDS;
6. promoting the participation of women in development.

Interim Strategic Framework for Economic Growth and Poverty Eradication was being drawn up. This provided a perfect opportunity for ensuring effective cohesion between these instruments of development, and the opportunity was duly seized.

Two of the six pillars of the Strategic Framework relate to the sustainable management of natural resources and the fight against land degradation; it is clear, then, that the NAP's objectives have been taken on board.

The first of these pillars deals with stimulating clean growth that helps reduce poverty. One of the components of this is "the rehabilitation of degraded land with a view to restoring soil fertility, notably through the use of liming materials and through integrated agricultural, forestry and animal husbandry activities."

The second relevant pillar relates to women's participation in development. Women in Burundi are at the forefront of natural resource management. As they are principally responsible for agricultural work, it is they who implement the water and soil conservation measures popularized by the relevant services. As a result, one of the key ways to achieve the NAP's aims involves providing training and information to women to bolster their effective participation in development.

Burundi's National Environment Strategy has several points in common with the NAP, and several areas where a useful synergy between the two could be achieved. The section of this strategy that deals with the state of the environment and natural resources is the one that has the most in common with the NAP, since it emphasises soil's vulnerability to water erosion, which is exacerbated by the topography and the lack of any mechanism for protecting and conserving water and soil.

Finally, the national food security policy is designed to fulfil six objectives, including increasing food availability on a sustainable basis. This meshes well with the NAP, because one of the strategies for boosting food availability is to rehabilitate land fertility and conserve water resources and soil.

Bringing existing laws into line with the conventions that have been ratified

After it ratified the UNCCD, Burundi had to check that its legislation conformed to it. Where it did not, it had to be modified accordingly.

The Environment Code reflects the principles of the UNCCD. Article 29 of this stipulates that preserving soil from erosion is a national and individual ecological duty. In addition, the code contains several provisions taken from ratified conventions, notably the UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The Land Code had to be revised to comply with the UNCCD. One innovation that was introduced aimed to safeguard the tenure of small farmers, especially widows and orphans. The establishment of a Communal Land Commission and a special department in the communal authority for handling land ownership issues has made it a lot easier to establish whether or not an individual owns a plot of land. In the event that an individual can prove ownership of the land, the land affairs official issues a land ownership certificate – this serves as a title deed.

The Forestry Code was also overhauled to support the implementation of the UNCCD and an innovation was inserted to foster the community management of woodlands. This bolsters the responsible managements of forests and also helps secure land rights.

Thanks to all of these efforts to mainstream, the NAP has become a pivotal framework for other strategies. It also serves as an investment tool, since it is part of the 2005-2007 public investment programme.

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The new Forestry Code treats forests as a common good that must be protected. They may only be exploited if due attention is paid to the impacts on the environment. Also, in an effort to support the implementation of the NAP, Article VII of the Forestry Code enshrines provisions for protective forests, national forests, tackling erosion and conserving and rehabilitating mountain land.

The national action programme (NAP) is a national strategic framework for action in combating desertification in Kenya. It has been integrated into the socio-economic policy frameworks, including the national Economic Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation, the Manifesto for the National Rainbow Coalition, the governing coalition party, the draft constitution and the Arid and Semi-arid Lands Policy. The NAP has also been included in a number of sectoral environmental protection plans. Additionally, it is being implemented under various sectoral and cross-sectoral activities.



Dried-up water points following prolonged drought

National Environment Management Authority 1999: A general and coherent legislative framework

The country has put in place policy and legal frameworks which, among other things, give poverty eradication and environmental management very high priority. These include the Poverty Eradication Plan, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation

2003-2007, Ninth Development Plan (2002-2008), Water Act 2002 and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and Environmental Management and Coordination Act 1999. The Act provides an overall legislative framework on management of the environment in the country. It has also created the National Environment Management Authority, which is mandated to coordinate and supervise all matters relating to the environment in the country.

The National Environment Management Authority

The National Environment Management Authority is the national coordination body (NCB) in Kenya. This authority became operational in 2002. It is a government parastatal with the necessary legal and institutional framework for the implementation of the UNCCD. It is not only semi-autono-

Private sector involvement

Partnership between the NCB and the private sector has improved. The private sector has contributed towards the Desertification Community Trust Fund which includes participation in activities of the World Day to Combat Desertification. Production of gum arabic in the arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) districts has enhanced the protection and conservation of natural vegetation in the districts and has also increased incomes of the local communities. Promotion of eco-tourism by the private sector has further strengthened the need for, and importance of, environmental management for sustainable development.

mous in its decision-making processes, but also has the necessary legal backing through the enactment of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act, 1999.



Exposed roots: the result of soil erosion

The NCB is composed of government ministries and departments, NGOs, research and academic institutions and the private sector. This body has strengthened and increased its pool of expertise available in the various task forces, including the National Steering Committee on the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification. This authority not only acts as the NCB, but also provides the role of focal point for desertification. It is also the focal

point for the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and is the Global Environment Facility operational focal point. This gives the National Environment Management Authority the advantage of facilitating implementation of the relevant United Nations conventions.

Enhanced community participation in environmental management

The launching of Provincial Environment Committees and District Environment Committees, as well as the recruitment and appointment of Provincial Directors of Environment and District Environment Officers, has facilitated implementation of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act at grassroots level. These committees are responsible for the coordination and supervision of all matters relating to the environment. The local communities are members of the Provincial Environment Committees and District Environment Committees, and are therefore mandated by the Environmental Management and Coordination Act to be involved in any decisions relevant to combating desertification.

Various stakeholders, including NGOs and local communities, are involved in the identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives to combat desertification. Several reviews and analyses have been carried out to identify the needs of local

communities in a number of districts. Lessons learned from these reviews and analyses indicate that the communities have the capacity to implement activities to combat desertification with technical and financial support from other stakeholders. For instance, local communities have established committees to monitor and evaluate the implementation of activities to combat desertification at grassroots level. Their contributions have been in the form of labour, local materials and management skills. Such contributions have been a major factor in the successful implementation of activities to combat desertification.

Establishment of the Desertification Community Trust Fund

The Trust Fund was launched in June 2004 with a Board of Trustees appointed by the Government, with representation from the private and public sectors and from civil society.

The Fund has benefited from a significant contribution by the private sector, and this should be enhanced through prudent use of the Fund to enable communities in the drylands to implement their initiatives on sustainable livelihoods. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees is from civil society. The Fund is to facilitate research on desertification, enhance environmental management and capacity-building, raise public awareness, and provide environmental awards and grants for promo-

tion of the environment.

Local people will have access to the Fund through project financing by the Board. First, they have to present their project proposals which are then submitted to the Board for consideration and subsequent approval for funding. Grants and awards will be given to facilitate the promotion of environmental management, while capacity-building will enhance sustainable management of the environment.

The Environmental Management and Coordination Act has also established the National Environment Restoration Fund as a supplementary insurance for the mitigation of environmental degradation where the perpetrator is not identifiable, and where the Government is required to intervene to control or mitigate environmental degradation. This fund has not yet been launched and hence is not operational.

Some successful initiatives at field level

In 2002, a local community in the Baringo district was given support to rehabilitate degraded lands. The vegetation that grew after rehabilitation has been used for grazing livestock and has increased livestock production for the community.

In 2003, the Shaffaa community of the Langobaya Location, Malindi district, were given funds to rehabilitate and extend their water supply. This made water available close to the households, giving women more time for other activities that would help increase family incomes. The water is also used for raising tree seedlings for sale by women's groups in the community, thereby increasing their incomes and promoting tree planting in the area.

During 2004, the Ongata Naando community in the Narok district benefited from assistance in protecting their water resources from wildlife destruction. The community agricultural areas under threat of destruction by wildlife will be protected by a solar electric fence. The protection of water resources and crops from wildlife destruction will reduce human/wildlife conflict in the area. Wildlife will also be prevented from killing the community livestock. Women will be given seed money to buy young steers to fatten for sale, thus empowering them with resources which they can then manage.

These are worthy initiatives that need to be replicated in the other most threatened and affected communities.



A holistic vision

Drought and the degradation of natural resources are major impediments to Niger's economic and social development. It is clear from analyses of desertification in the country that a range of harmful, inter-related factors influences population, food security, poverty, environmental degradation and the energy crises. That is why all development partners, including private operators, resolutely backed the national action programme (NAP) process, which placed emphasis on operationality and a participatory approach.

With a surface area of 1,267,000 km², of which three-quarters are deserts and a population that was estimated at 11 million in 2001, Niger is one of the African countries hardest hit by desertification. In December 2000, the country adopted a National Action Programme to combat desertification and manage natural resources (NAP). This provides the framework for all national interventions on the issue. The national poverty reduction strategy was adopted in 2003, and constitutes the foremost national framework on economic and social development – the NAP is one of its components.

Niger sought to make the most of its limited resources by streamlining the institutions responsible for environmental issues and sustainable development, and incorporating the NAP into the country's strategic development frameworks.

An appropriate national institutional framework: the National Environment Council for Sustainable Development (NECSD)

After ratifying the UNCCD in 1996, Niger made the National Environment Council for Sustainable Development (NECSD) its national coordinating body. The council was responsible for drawing up the National Environmental Plan for Sustainable Development (NEPSD), which constitutes the country's Agenda 21. The Council must ensure that it is implemented, and also carries out monitoring and assessment.

The NECSD executive secretariat is attached to the prime minister's cabinet, making it easier to coordinate environmental issues that involve several ministries. As part of decentralization efforts, and with the backing of Italian, German and French cooperation authorities, the NECSD executive secretariat set up regional frameworks called Regional Environmental Councils for Sustainable Development.

An informal institutional framework for cooperation partners

Following the adoption of the national action programme to combat desertification and manage natural resources (NAP) in October 2000, the government of Niger and its cooperation partners appointed Italy as the "chef de file" for the UNCCD implementation process. In this context, Italy financed a capaci-

ty-building project for the NECSD. This aimed to improve its ability to articulate national environmental interests, conduct negotiations and cultivate partnerships. The Italian cooperation authority also represented bilateral donors in talks with the government regarding funding environmental actions and combating desertification.

The NECSD capacity building project endeavoured to give a better structure to the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on environmental issues and the fight against desertification. This entailed getting civil society more involved in preparing and holding consultations with development partners.

A participatory approach to determining the type of consultation to be held with cooperation partners

The government of Niger, in tandem with its development partners as represented by Italy as "chef de file", circulated a questionnaire to ascertain the views of the various stakeholders on what sort of sectoral consultations should be held with partners and what form they should take. As a result of this survey, round table consultations were introduced. These featured all partners and looked at government proposals in relation to environmental and anti-desertification strategies and programmes.

Participatory preparation of sectoral consultation on the environment and the fight against desertification

Preparation for these consultations began with the establishment of a multi-disciplinary committee featuring representatives of the relevant ministerial departments and cooperation partners, represented by Italy for desertification, Germany for biodiversity and France for climate change.

It included NGO representatives and, on behalf of multilateral partners, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The following documents were compiled as part of the sectoral consultations: the NEPSD, which includes the NAP; the Rural Development Strategy, which is derived from the Poverty Alleviation Strategy Framework for the rural sector; and the 2006-2011 Medium-Term Action Plan, which covers issues related to the environment and desertification control of the Rural Development Strategy.

The round table talks of 17 and 18 November 2005

After preparing the substance of the sectoral consultations and conducting information tours, the Niger government met with its partners on 17 and 18 November 2005. Thirty technical and/or financial partners took part in this dialogue. Italy spoke on behalf of itself, France, Germany, Denmark, Switzer-

land and the European Commission. Discussions focused mainly on the mechanisms for institutionalizing and monitoring and evaluating the Medium-Term Action Plan. In institutional terms, the new body for coordinating the Rural Development Strategy appeared to clash with the NECSD; the majority of the partners therefore requested clarification, stressing, in particular, their eagerness to see continuity. In broad terms, the partners reaffirmed their commitment to helping the implementation of the Medium-Term Action Plan, and asked that the documents presented take account of the concerns that were expressed.

The total budget of the Action Plan is estimated at 168,500,000,000 CFA francs. The government of Niger is to provide three million dollars of this.

Monitoring results of the round table discussions

It was agreed that commitments taken so far would only be implemented once recommendations had been taken into account, particularly in relation to the institutional issue and the monitoring and assessment of the Medium-Term Action Plan.

After reviewing their documents, it will be up to the government to approach partners with a view to moving on to the next stages, as provided for in the proposed partnership framework.

The bilateral partners' representative - Italy - and the UNDP, acting on behalf of multilateral partners, will provide invaluable support during this phase, helping to ensure that declarations of intent bear fruit. The UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD are also potential facilitators.



Tree planting along crevices caused by floods

Morocco finalized its national action programme to combat desertification (NAP) in June 2001. It was designed to foster cohesion and synergies between sectoral programmes by carrying out actions to support NAP projects, stimulate income-generating initiatives, mitigate the effects of drought and improve knowledge and observation systems. This came at a time when an in-depth review of budgetary procedures was in full swing (covering globalization, contracting and partnerships with NGOs) and the rural development fund had just come into operation.

Desertification affects 93% of Morocco's territory. The arid climate with its ever-increasing periods of drought exacerbates the process, which is further aggravated by the fact that the soil is highly vulnerable to erosion. In addition, the rural populations' fragile living conditions leads them to over-exploit natural resources in a bid to meet their growing needs, all of which serves to degrade the environment further.

Constraints to expanding resources

This was the setting for the implementation of an institutional framework designed to facilitate operational coordination and the establishment of tools for observing desertification and monitoring and assessing the impacts. However, efforts to mobilize financial resources have been hindered by a number of constraints, including:

- (i) The sheer size of funding requirements (resources allocated to desertification on an annual basis are neither ample nor regular enough).
- (ii) Incompatibilities between rigid budgetary procedures and a participatory process that requires flexibility in scheduling and expenditure.
- (iii) The slow pace of the participatory programming process.



Partners' round table on NAP priorities

The strategy adopted

In order to overcome these obstacles, a strategy for raising financial resources to combat desertification was devised in 2003 with the support of the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD. This aimed to (i) undertake a consultative approach to identify priority projects within strategic plans and programmes based on the principles of integration, participation and partnership, all of which would render the NAP more visible to

partners; (ii) identify sources of finance for supporting the implementation of the NAP's priority programmes, and (iii) create compatibilities between the selected priority projects, funding opportunities and development partners' cooperation priorities.

Mobilization and awareness-raising

a) national stakeholders

An extensive consultation exercise got under way in 2003 to determine the priorities of each sector in order to ensure that they are reflected in the actions undertaken.

Civil society was included in this and invited to prepare an action plan in keeping with national priorities. An extensive awareness-raising programme for institutions, NGOs and development partners was launched on the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought in June 2004.

As a result of these consultations, the NAP was expressed through a portfolio of 53 projects that were presented to development partners at workshops and round table discussions in June 2003 and September 2004. Thirteen of these projects were to supplement existing ones, while 34 were totally new. Seven of the projects could be described as 'horizontal' insofar as they dealt with capacity-building and creating income-generating activities. 22 of the projects were in either the Eastern or Souss-Massa-Drâa regions.

b) development partners

After all the various consultations with bi- and multi-lateral partners, two projects for supporting the implementation of the NAP were launched, one with the cooperation of Germany and the other with backing from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The first of these was a local development programme in the Argan tree biosphere reserve in the Draa valley, while the second aims to alleviate rural poverty, desertification and the effects of drought in pilot sites (the PAL-PDS project). Three PAL-PDS sub-programmes were enacted to support the Al Haouz mountain area project, the National Land Planning Programme for Catchment Areas and the valorization plots in Bour. Various other projects have been implemented to pursue the integrated development of woodlands and their hinterland and to ensure rational land planning in catchment areas. These projects are all based on the NAP's priority areas for tackling desertification. They are supported either by the World Bank or the European Union's MEDA programme.

One of the 53 priority projects for supporting NAP implementation focuses on setting up a perimeter for integrated assessment in the pluvial zone of the Nador province in the North of Morocco, financed with Spanish cooperation. Among others, a project for combating desertification in the high Eastern plateau is in preparation, with the collaboration of IFAD and UNIDO and support of the Global Mechanism, and the PDF-B financing of the GEF.

**Continuing and strengthening
consultation**

Thanks to support from the Global Mechanism, several workshops and round table discussions were organized in 2003 and 2004 between national stakeholders and development partners. The purpose of these meetings was to sensitize development partners and better understand their priorities and strategies, especially in terms of funding formats and opportunities and relevant criteria and procedures.

As a result of these discussions, a consultative process on the NAP priorities was launched and focused on the geographic areas development partners were particularly keen to address. In addition, the round table talks in Rabat in September 2004 saw new financing opportunities seized.

Finally, a memorandum from the Prime Minister in June 2003 enhanced the partnership between the state and civil society, and confirmed that NGOs would continue to receive state subsidies. This led to 17 NGOs throughout Morocco receiving funding in 2002 and 2003 to execute projects related to combating desertification.

Consolidating achievements

It is important to consolidate and build on this dynamic with partners, which is currently proving so fruitful. Morocco encourages decentralized cooperation for developing and implementing community-led projects for poverty eradication, rural development and combating desertification.

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Stabilisation of sand dunes

The national action programme (NAP) for combating desertification and land degradation in the kingdom of Swaziland was finalized and adopted as a policy instrument in 1998. Since then, the country has engaged in the mobilization of adequate resources for the comprehensive implementation of the programme. These resources are required to support activities in areas such as policy formulation and capacity-building, as well as in conducting feasibility studies and programmes on the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands.

A number of studies have been undertaken with the support of donors. Some of them included a review of whether the NAP was in line with donor requirements. After completion of these studies, no donor has been able to support the implementation of the NAP. Nothing has been implemented on the ground other than pilot projects in the course of the studies.

Some of the obstacles encountered in mobilizing funds can be summarized as follows:

- There are very few donor representatives resident in the country.
- Due to the size of the country, the private sector is not very strong as most goods are imported.
- The country is categorized by the United Nations as a middle-income country,

thus limiting the chances of donor assistance.

- Competition with other national priority issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS etc.

How to solve the problem: looking for synergies

It was then felt that a review is needed to determine how well the NAP is being integrated into development programmes and policies of the country, as these are the main tools for negotiating with donor partners. The review also included

Terms of reference of the task team:

- Conducting an audit of all major national development strategies and instruments to determine the inclusion of NAP programmes;
- Determining the major obstacles inhibiting mobilization of funds for the implementation of the NAP;
- Where gaps are identified, carrying out a review of the strategies to ensure that the NAP is well established within them;
- Determining the level of collaboration in the implementation of the Rio Conventions together with other relevant activities;
- Proposing a stronger synergistic approach in the implementation of the above;
- Carrying out consultations with relevant stakeholders and role players and explaining all proposals made for improving the implementation of the NAP.

determination of the level of synergy in the implementation of the three Rio Conventions, including other relevant development programmes.

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development was appointed to take leadership of the exercise, as it is the ministry responsible for allocating budgets and negotiating with partners. The task team established to lead the process included the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Communication, the Ministry of Public Services and Information and the Ministry of Finance.



Effects of overgrazing on rangelands

Better visibility for the NAP

As a result of the activities mentioned above, the NAP is now well established in most relevant development policies and strategies. These include: the National Development Strategy, the Swaziland Environment Action Plan, the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan and many others.

Improved coordination of Rio Conventions focal points

Under each Rio Convention, a steering committee has been established. The mainstreaming exercise under each Rio Convention revealed that the three focal points of the Rio Conventions are members of all three steering committees, but each national focal point institution does not have adequate capacity to lead efficiently and effectively a sustainable implementation process. Henceforth, for any programme developed in one area, efforts will be made to ensure that, where possible, cross-cutting issues are jointly addressed and that there is no duplication of activities. All three focal points report to a desk officer in the National Environment Authority where issues are looked into and measures taken to ensure a synergistic approach to implementation.

Toward an optimal mobilization and use of financial resources

Most of the development strategies and policies are short of funds for their

implementation, as there are no adequate resources either nationally or from the donor community. However, the collaborative approach has improved access to resources for a number of programmes, including the NAP. With the NAP now completely integrated into development strategies, it is taken into consideration when negotiating with partners. The problem of prioritization remains an issue, however, due to other urgent requirements such as HIV/AIDS, and caring for orphans and vulnerable children; NAP programmes still rank lower in the lists submitted to partners.

A clear share of responsibilities among stakeholders

There is a good working relationship with non-governmental organizations

(NGOs), though they also need financial support to implement programmes. A plan of action has been put in place and some resources have been made available by the Government to improve the capacity of the focal point. Such an exercise needs to be carried further, with the involvement of partners, NGOs and, most importantly, the communities who are at the centre of the problem. There is a need to keep them involved and to develop best strategies to make them understand that the problem of land degradation is theirs, and that they have to do something about it.

As much as we need donor assistance in the implementation of the NAPs, we have to ensure that we are also in a position to do the little that we can with our limited resources.

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Gully erosion in the middlelevel of Swaziland

Poverty is a structural phenomenon in Cape Verde, since it is caused by the scarcity of natural resources and the weakness of the productive base. Combating land degradation has, therefore, always been a major concern of Cape Verdean populations and is the reason why the government has geared all rural policies since independence towards tackling desertification. In order to enhance its activities in this regard, it harnessed the participation of local communities to draw up a national action programme to combat desertification (NAP). A range of integrated and decentralized projects underpin this programme.

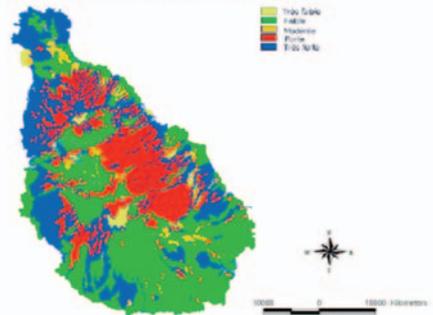
In-depth evaluation of the state of natural resources

Soil erosion is continuing to cause environmental damage on all islands of the archipelago, with direct effects on people's quality of life. The population itself exerts pressure on the environment in several ways, such as inappropriate agricultural and pastoral farming practices, deforestation and unsuitable irrigation techniques.

Climatic factors compound land degradation. Several research studies have been carried out to improve knowledge of water erosion by gathering statistical data on the quantities of soil lost and its influence on vegetative cover. These indicators help determine the aridity index.

For the purpose of describing soil de-

Carte de la vulnérabilité des sols



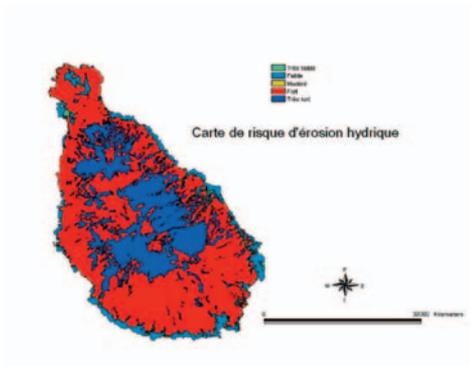
gradation in Cape Verde, we focused on the study of one island, namely Santiago. This study highlighted the impact of water erosion, which it identified as one of the primary causes of land degradation. The study used a model built on four factors: soils, land use, topography and precipitation. Depending on how these factors are combined, risks of water erosion may be classified into one of five categories (very low, low, moderate, high or very high).

An action plan that dovetails with an overall framework

All the projects under way were identified and their achievements and shortcomings chronicled. On the basis of this, a 2004 National Environment Action Plan (NEAP II) was devised to run for the period from 2004 to 2014. It incorporates all the objectives of the NAP.

A programme-approach was preferred to a project-approach in order to take stock of and build on completed ac-

tions and pilot projects at local and national level. Action programmes in progress were adjusted so as to reflect the crosscutting aspect of environmental considerations. Furthermore, a comprehensive inventory was compiled of all natural resource management projects, which were, where necessary, re-focused to increase their effectiveness.



Modest but sustainable progress

Eight priority sub-regional NAP sub-projects were elaborated, dealing mainly with (a) natural resource management, (b) water management, (c) managing environmental information and (d) improving living conditions. These sub-programmes include a total of 190 municipal projects and five national projects. The country's development partners were invited to examine all of these during a round table discussion in 1998. Some of the projects have already been completed or are in progress, the new ones having been built into the NEAP II.

Some of the actions have already materialized. For example, the reforestation programmes applied in Cape Verde from 1975 to 2004 managed to afforest some 90,000 hectares, an impressive result bearing in mind that the country had only 3,000 hectares of woodland in 1975 (more than 5,000 hectares were afforested from 2002-2004 alone). Support provided to small farmers has led to the introduction of new irrigation technologies and improvements in fodder recovery and seed launches in pastoral farming areas. Also, maize-gro-

The national focal point's driving role

The establishment of a ministry for the environment, agriculture and fishing and of an environment board maximized coordination of activities, helping to deliver more appropriate and proportioned responses to desertification and the effects of drought.

The second National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP II), for 2004-2014, shows how well consultation can work. It is a strategic document that was formulated with the active participation of civil society and local authorities. It aims to attain the following objectives: (i) promote the effective use of natural resources, especially energy, water, soil and components of biodiversity; (ii) promote the use of more efficient, less polluting technologies for harnessing natural resources; (iii) encourage local participation and engagement in the sustainable use of the environment and natural resources; (iv) ensure the sustainable management of biodiversity, and (v) act as a policy guide for fostering food security.



Construction of a contour ridge

wing on slopes in high-altitude areas, which causes severe land degradation, is becoming less common; it is gradually being replaced by higher-yield horticultural crops grown using techniques that cause less erosion.

The country's private sector plays an active role in protecting land and improving productivity by assisting farmers through the provision of seeds and nursery plants, plant-protection products and equipment. This was previously done by the state.

The implementation of the various activities identified for the NAP, which are all related to soil and water, has had a positive impact on soil conservation, protection and restoration. Around 43% of the country's arable land now

benefits from this type of structure for protecting soil and conserving water.

Despite such positive strides, the fact remains that many of the soil conservation activities identified in natural resource management programmes have been seriously hampered by a shortage of financial resources.

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Djibouti: Restoring Day Forest

Day Forest is 1.2 million years old

This forest is a relic of a bygone era when the climate was much more clement. It is located in the Tadjourah district (in the north of the Republic of Djibouti) at an altitude ranging from 1300 m to 1783 m along the Goda Mountains, where the plateau is fringed by the Goh and Hamboka cliffs. The forest features Mediterranean- and Ethiopian-type tree species, most notably the juniper tree. In terms of vegetation, the showpiece of the Day Massif is its forest of conifers, which run into the dense mountain forests of Ethiopia, though it retains features distinctive of an arid climate.

The dying forest

This forest contains the majority of the country's biodiversity. The most common plant is the *Juniperus procera*, which is associated with other species to varying degrees. Even this, however, is becoming more rare. Droughts, deforestation and overgrazing have all caused progressive erosion of the forest. One of the effects of this is that junipers are at risk of disappearing because they can no longer regenerate themselves.

The most ubiquitous herbaceous vegetation are *Cenchrus pennisetiformis*, *Chloris pycnothrix* and *Panicum coloratum*. Broad-leafed weeds are also still abundant, and are valuable sources of fodder, but they are nevertheless

dwindling, again because of overgrazing. They are being replaced by composites such as *Bidens schimperi*, which are not palatable to livestock.

The ecological role of Day Forest

- Regulates the local climate by influencing the hydrology of downstream areas.
- Is a crucial biological and genetic reservoir (containing around 60% of the country's biological diversity)
- Provides medicinal plants, fodder, fuel-wood and building timber.
- Sanctuary for livestock during droughts

The Day Forest has a complex and unique ecosystem that sets it apart from the rest of Djibouti. It seems like a legacy of the *Juniperus procera* forests of the East African RIFT (Ethiopia) and the Arabic coasts (mountain ranges in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, notably in Assir and Taëf). The most northerly massifs are in Sudan. The last remaining juniper forests in the south, meanwhile, are in Zimbabwe. *Juniperus* can also be found in the eastern Mediterranean.

Day Forest is some 1.2 million years old. Its surface area has been slashed from around 7,500 ha in the 19th century to 2,300 ha in 1949 and just 900 ha today.

It has a very particular climate: maximum temperature is 33° C in the hot season, while in the cold season it can drop to as low as 3° C -. It is not unheard of for there to be ice on the water and

for there to be a blanket of frost. Average annual rainfall is 350mm, which can be swelled by nephelinic precipitation (thanks to contact clouds), which can be quite voluminous in certain years (e.g. in 1983, it accounted for 56% of precipitation).



Degraded forest

Since time immemorial, people had been living in harmony with the forest because they adhered to strict traditional conventions (bans on cutting green wood, grazing only allowed for bovine animals, etc.). But in 1943, when World War II was raging, a blockade was imposed on Djibouti and degradation of the forest gathered serious momentum, as it was now expected to cater for the wood and cooking needs of Djibouti City and other areas. The successive droughts of the 1970s made matters worse, particularly as the numbers of livestock increased and less and less attention was paid to traditional rules. The principal problem now is that many

of the forest's main ligneous species - such as junipers, which help harness mist so it can get sufficient water supply - are losing their natural ability to regenerate.

Taking action before it's too late

The Djibouti authorities realize the seriousness and complexity of this problem and have strived to address it by undertaking both preventive and remedial measures. The Day Forest has been designated a protected area. In 2003, a holistic planning project for the forest was drawn up with the support of the French cooperation authority. Its implementation took several forms:

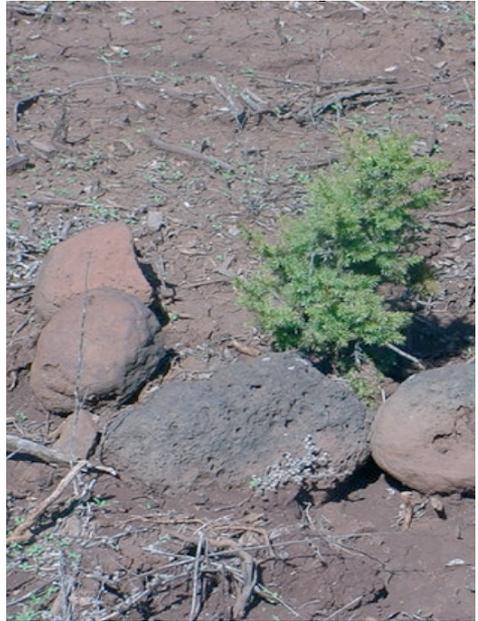
- Three pilot sites were established in the forest to foster natural regeneration, particularly of junipers, while at the same time training and awareness-raising exercises were carried out to encourage the population of the region to participate in the sustainable management of the forest's natural resources;
- A steering committee was set up. It featured all the main stakeholders, including Tadjourah Regional Authority, the environmental board, Djibouti Research and Study Centre, technical departments from the Ministry for Agriculture, the French cooperation authority and the

Day Forest Protection Association;

- A project management committee was also established, and was made up of representatives of the local community and technical bodies involved in the execution of activities;
- The first field activities were aimed at tackling water erosion (construction of gabion and dry stone amenities across some twenty kilometers), and improving the provision of potable water (restoration of three buried tanks and creation of six reservoirs outside the forest).

Early signs are encouraging

In plots where rehabilitation efforts have been introduced, junipers have started to regenerate. If these trends continue, the likelihood is that these activities will be duplicated in other parts of the forest. The population is playing a bigger role in the implementation of activities and an active partnership has been formed between the various players.



Young *Juniperus procera* plant in a protected plot

However, the project's sustainability is still jeopardized by two factors. The first is the need to perform systematic scientific monitoring of the land where rehabilitation efforts are under way – in order to obtain reliable data that can highlight the impact of pilot trials. The second relates to the lack of financial resources for replicating the pilot project's results in other degraded parts of the forest.

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Awareness of the importance of monitoring and evaluation

Tunisia ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 1995 and adopted its national action programme (NAP) in 1998. The benchmark document is the NAP, which deals, amongst other things, with:

- Evaluating the state of desertification in the country;
- Compiling a detailed inventory of actions undertaken by all the various stakeholders and the impacts of these on natural resources and improving local living conditions;
- Implementing a holistic strategy for combating desertification.

A holistic and participatory vision of monitoring and evaluation

Aware of the high strategic importance of coordinating the various participants involved in combating desertification and the need for the NAP to be steered on a consultative basis, Tunisia created a National Committee for Combating Desertification in 1996. This consists of representatives of all the main players, including civil society. It has a permanent secretariat.

In a bid to render agriculture and rural actions more effective than they had been in previous decades, the national committee equipped itself with NAP

steering tools. The monitoring and evaluation system that has been put in place became all the more valuable when, in 2002, the NAP was integrated into the country's 10th Economic and Social Development Plan.

NAP integrated into National Economic and Social Development Plan

Following the integration of the NAP into the 10th Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006), the government earmarked 2,925 million Tunisian dinars for implementing strategies and programmes aimed at conserving natural resources and combating desertification. On the 13 June 2005, the National Committee for Combating Desertification was upgraded to a National Council for Combating Desertification (NCCD).

Building on what already exists

When it came to installing a monitoring and evaluation system, Tunisia decided to take the approach of capitalizing on what had been achieved by the various sectoral strategies relating to natural resource management (water, forests, soil conservation, etc.). It also sought to build on observation of efforts to combat desertification by the Medenine Arid Regions Institute (IRA), the National Remote Sensing Center (CNT) and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS). Tunisia has also drawn on the various conceptual designs created at international level, notably those devised by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the UNCCD and OSS.

The NAP steering apparatus

The monitoring and evaluation system has been designed as an apparatus for steering the NAP, and dovetails with the country's planning instruments (the economic and social development plan) and sectoral strategies regarding natural resource management. It aims to assess the impact of investments made in fighting desertification and enable the compilation of management charts for national policy-makers at different levels. In addition, a desertification information pooling system (DIS) has been set up.

This provides crucial information for national planning, helping ensure sustainable development by helping decisionmakers make appropriate choices.



Training on the ground

Undeniable progress

a) At national level

The desertification issue chart shows the quantities and qualities of the various natural resources, the causes of desertification in each region and monitoring indicators pertaining to the resources.

The NAP indicator grid is where regular desertification observations are logged. It is the tool used for monitoring desertification and evaluating the impact of the NAP.

The Desertification Information System (DIS) can be accessed through the national environment portal (www.environment.nat.tn/sid).

All players involved in the fight against desertification can use it to pool information and exchange data that has been produced, approved and presented in a user-friendly format. The advantages of the DIS include:

- It is an information tool for supporting the implementation of the NAP;
- It is a handy contact point for everyone involved in the fight against desertification;
- It is ideal for presenting existing information, and storing, pooling and circulating fresh information and products that are useful for combating desertification;
- It bolsters existing capacities with regard to new information and communication technologies.

An impact indicators catalogue

NAP indicators, impacts and actions were identified on the basis of the anti-desertification actions enshrined in the 10th Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006). It expands dynamically, since new NAP/CAD actions are added as they go along. It covers the following aspects:

- Physical,
- Biological,
- Socio-economic,
- Institutional,
- Backing and support.



Compilation of management charts

b) At local level

The methodology for monitoring and evaluating impacts at local level was designed to guide development stakeholders' activities aimed at combating desertification.

It was gradually integrated into these stakeholders' work programmes and plans. The information it generates may also be used at national level.

The methodology has two components: an annual impact assessment of activities aimed at combating desertification; and a five-yearly overall evaluation of the state of natural resources. It was tested in the southern state/province/district of Tataouine before being extended to other parts of the country.

Thanks to such capitalization, the full state of desertification was compiled via a topical inventory and mapping of natural resources and the evaluation of sectoral strategies. This paves the way for regular monitoring of the situation. It also makes it possible to draw maps to appropriate scales to assist the planning of actions aimed at tackling land degradation.

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