

National Action Programme to Combat Desertification

India is a party to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and MoEF is the National Coordinating Agency for the implementation of the UNCCD in the country. As an affected party, a 20 years' comprehensive National Action Programme (NAP) to combat desertification in the country has been prepared. The objectives are:-

- community based approach to development,
- activities to improve the quality of life of the local communities,
- awareness raising,
- drought management preparedness and mitigation,
- R&D initiatives and interventions which are locally suited,
- strengthening self governance leading to empowerment of local communities.

For the Tenth Five Year Plan, it is proposed to initiate activities that include, among others, assessment and mapping of land degradation, drought monitoring and early warning system groups, drought preparedness contingency plans, and on-farm research activities for development of indigenous technology, etc will be taken up.

During 2002-03, two regional workshops have also been conducted and the third country report is being finalized for submission to UNCCD. Some external donors have evinced interest in funding the programme.

Under UNCCD, a Regional Action Programme for Asian Countries has been formulated to strengthen the existing capacity of the member country parties and to network with each other for effective measures to combat desertification. Six Thematic Programme Network (TPN) have been identified for this purpose.

India is host country for TPN – 2 “Agro-forestry and Soil Conservation in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas.” The Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI), Jodhpur has been identified as National Task Manager. TPN – 2 has been launched with a web site by CAZRI.

Similarly, India is participating actively in TPN – 1 “Desertification Monitoring and Assessment”. A pilot project is under progress through the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Space Application Centre, Ahmedabad at a cost of Rs 1.39 crores. India has also joined the TPN – 4 “Water Resources Management for Agriculture in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas”. The Ministry of Water Resources has been identified as National Task Manager for TPN – 4 while TPN – 3 on “Range and Pasture Management”

has just been launched with Iran as host country. The remaining TPNs, i.e TPN – 5 “Drought Preparedness and Mitigation in the Context of Climate Change” and TPN – 6 “Strengthening Planning Capacities for Drought management and Controlling Desertification” are yet to be launched.