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الجمهورية اللبنانية

مكتب وزير الدولة لشؤون التنمية الإدارية
مركز مشاريع ودراسات القطاع العام

Republic of Lebanon
Ministry of Agriculture

Republic of Lebanon
Ministry of the Environment



CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION
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PREPARED BY FADY R. ASMAR

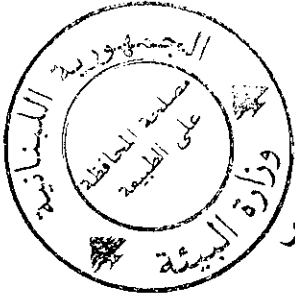
NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR
THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

الجمهورية اللبنانية
وزارة البيئة

بيروت في ٢٧/٥/١٩٩٧

جانب معالي وزير البيئة المحترم
(تسلسلا)

وزارة البيئة
١٢٩ أيار ١٩٩٧
رقم تسجيل ١٦٩٣ ر ب



تقرير حول
المؤتمر الوزاري لتطبيق اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر
لدول آسيا
بيكين - الصين ١٣-١٥ أيار ١٩٩٧

المرجع: القرار رقم ١/٦٨
تاريخ ١٩٩٧/٥/٥

بناء على الدعوة الموجهة من قبل وزارة الغابات الصينية بالتنسيق مع
السكرتارية المؤقتة للاتفاقية الدولية لمكافحة التصحر وتخفيف آثار الجفاف (مرفق
رقم ١)

افتتح في بيكين عاصمة الصين الشعبية المؤتمر الوزاري لدول آسيا من أجل تنفيذ
اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر خلال الفترة ١٣-١٥ أيار ١٩٩٧

وقد مثل دولة لبنان كلا من:
الاستاذ شوقي فاخوري
الاستاذ فريد سماحة
المهندسة لينة يموت
المهندس فادي اسمر

وزير الزراعة
سفير لبنان في الصين
ممثلة وزارة البيئة
سكرتير اللجنة الوطنية لاتفاقية مكافحة التصحر

بلغ عدد الدول المشاركة في المؤتمر خمسا وثلاثون دولة بالاضافة الى ثمانية
عشر هيئة (مرفق رقم ٢ يضم اسماء وعناوين الدول والهيئات المشاركة).



بيروت في ٢٦/٥/٩٧

جانب معالي وزير البيئة المحترم
(تسلسلا)

تقرير حول
المؤتمر الوزاري لتطبيق اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر
لدول آسيا
بيكين - الصين ١٣-١٥ أيار ١٩٩٧

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السكرتارية المؤقتة للاتفاقية الدولية لمكافحة التصحر وتخفيف آثار الجفاف (مرفق
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وقد مثل دولة لبنان كلا من:

وزير الزراعة	الاستاذ شوقي فاخوري
سفير لبنان في الصين	الاستاذ فريد سماحة
ممثلة وزارة البيئة	المهندسة لينة يموت
سكرتير اللجنة الوطنية لاتفاقية مكافحة التصحر	المهندس فادي اسمر

بلغ عدد الدول المشاركة في المؤتمر خمسا وثلاثون دولة بالاضافة الى ثمانية
عشر هيئة (مرفق رقم ٢ يضم اسماء وعناوين الدول والهيئات المشاركة).

بتاريخ ١٢ أيار ١٩٩٧ وقبل يوم من افتتاح المؤتمر رسمياً، دعا سفير لبنان في الصين الاستاذ/فريد سماحة ممثلي الوفود العربية الى اجتماع تحضيري في مقر سفارة دولة لبنان لدى الصين وذلك لتنسيق المواقف للحيلولة دون مشاركة اسرائيل في هذا المؤتمر وكذلك للحيلولة دون استضافتها لمركز اقليمي يتعلق بالمياه أو أي مركز تابع لاهداف الاتفاقية في اسرائيل ،

وذلك بناء على ما قرره مجلس جامعة الدول العربية في اجتماعه في ٩٧/٣/٣١ بدعوة كافة الدول العربية الى تكثيف حضورها واستمرار جهودها في التنسيق مع ممثلي الدول الصديقة خلال الاجتماعات القادمة في بيكين للحيلولة دون استضافة اسرائيل للمركز الاقليمي الخاص بقطاع ادارة المصادر المائية في المناطق الجافة وشبه الجافة.

وما قرره اجتماع التشاور تحت الاقليمي حول تنفيذ اتفاقية الامم المتحدة لمكافحة التصحر (الذي عقد في دمشق-من ٩-١١/٤/٩٧) بالتأكيد على قرار مجلس الجامعة.

وقد تم الاجتماع بحضور ممثل جمهورية بنغلاديش بصفته رئيس المجموعة الاسلامية وممثل جامعة الدول العربية، وممثلين الدول العربية التالية:

١-الجمهورية اللبنانية

٢-الجمهورية العربية السورية

٣-المملكة العربية السعودية

٤-دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة

٥-المملكة الاردنية الهاشمية

٦-الجمهورية اليمنية

٧-دولة الكويت

٨-دولة قطر

٩-دولة البحرين

١٠-سلطنة عمان

١١-السلطة الفلسطينية

وقد كان من أبرز ما اتفق عليه هو الآتي:

أولاً:- العمل على عدم مشاركة إسرائيل في هذا المؤتمر وفي المؤتمرات الأخرى الخاصة بغرب آسيا.

ثانياً:- عدم الموافقة على استضافة إسرائيل أي مركز أو آلية تتعلق باتفاقية مكافحة التصحر

ثالثاً:- تأييد الطلبات العربية بإقامة مراكز إقليمية في إطار هذه الاتفاقية.

كما تم الاتفاق على تشكيل لجنة صياغة لوضع بيان يطعن بشكالية وقانونية اشراك إسرائيل في المؤتمر وتضم كلا من:

- سفير سوريا في الصين.
- ممثل المملكة العربية السعودية
- ممثل حكومة فلسطين.
- ممثل جامعة الدول العربية.

وقد كلفت المجموعة العربية ممثل المملكة العربية السعودية للاحتجاج باسم الدول العربية وبقراءة نص البيان (مرفق رقم ٣ يضم محضر الاجتماع ونص بيان المجموعة العربية).

تم افتتاح المؤتمر رسمياً في ١٣ أيار ١٩٩٧ كما هو مقرراً له. وقد استهل الاجتماع كلمة ممثل دولة الصين وممثل السكرتارية المؤقتة لاتفاقية التصحر والذين رحبوا بالحضور وتمنوا لهم نجاح المؤتمر وحثوا البلدان المشاركة على التصديق على الاتفاقية.

تبع ذلك كلمات الدول في مجال النشاطات الوطنية لمكافحة التصحر .
وأثار ممثل المملكة العربية السعودية نقطة نظام ،(والذي كان قد تم اختياره للتكلم نيابة عن الدول العربية المشاركة) بعد أن أعطيت الكلمة لاسرائيل .

وقد نجح ممثلي الدول العربية بمنع اسرائيل من متابعة كلمتها. وقدم ممثل المملكة العربية السعودية كلمة نيابة عن الدول العربية اثار بها موضوع عدم مشروعية انضمام اسرائيل الى اتفاقية التصحر لدول غرب آسيا حيث انها لا تصنف حسب نظام الامم المتحدة الى هذه المجموعة.

وقد أيد ممثل اندونيسيا طلب الدول العربية وعارضته اليابان بحجة أن الاجتماع تحضيرى وتقنى .

وقد أشار الأمين التنفيذي لمكافحة التصحر السيد/ديالو بأن الاجتماع الحالي غير رسمي وهو يهدف الى تنسيق الجهود في مجال تنفيذ وتطبيق الاتفاقية، وهو لا يحدد الطبيعة النهائية للمجموعات الإقليمية. وسوف يجري تحديد ذلك في مؤتمر الأطراف الذي سوف يعقد في روما. وقد تأجلت اعمال المؤتمر الى ما بعد الظهر لمناقشة هذا الموضوع.

وفي هذه الاثناء دعى وزير الزراعة اللبناني الاستاذ/شوقي فاخوري الى اجتماع جانبي للدول العربية لمناقشة الخطوات التالية التي يجب اتخاذها.(مرفق رقم ٤-محضر الاجتماع الجانبي للدول العربية بتاريخ ١٣/٥/٩٧). وقد حضر الاجتماع ممثلي جمهورية ايران الاسلامية.

وقد كان من أبرز ما اتفق عليه المجتمعون الآتي:
اولا-: التشديد في عدم شرعية قبول اسرائيل في هذا المؤتمر وتضمين جميع الخطب التي سيلقيها الوفود العربية هذا الموقف الصريح.

وتابع ممثلوا الدول القاء الكلمات معربين فيها عن شكرهم لدولة الصين على استضافتها للمؤتمر والى منظمي الاجتماع وتأكيدهم على ضرورة تنسيق الجهود بين دول آسيا والمنظمات الدولية والاقليمية من أجل تنفيذ خطط وبرامج فعالة لمكافحة التصحر، كما استعرضوا مظاهر وأخطار التصحر في بلدانهم واهم الاجراءات والسياسات المتخذة لمكافحة التصحر.

وقد القى الوزير فاخوري كلمة لبنان (ربطاً بنسخة عنها) شكر فيها الوفود على انتخابه نائباً لرئيس المؤتمر، وبين المشاكل الخاصة بالتصحر والتي يواجهها لبنان والى نشاطات الجهات الوطنية في مكافحة التصحر، كما أشار الى رفض لبنان لمشاركة اسرائيل في اتفاقية التصحر لدول غرب آسيا.

وقد القى كل من ممثل كندا والمانيا واسبانيا كلمة أعربوا فيها عن رغبة دولهم في استضافة السكرتارية العامة للاتفاقية، وأوضح كل منهم المبررات والتسهيلات التي يمكن أن تقدمها دولهم في هذا المجال.

ثم تكلم ممثلو المنظمات الدولية والاقليمية (ايفاد IFAD والفاو FAO وبرنامج الامم المتحدة الانمائي UNDP...) وقد تعرض كل منهم لظاهرة التصحر والجفاف في المنطقة وخطارها وما تسببه من فقر وفجوة غذائية وأكدوا على ضرورة التنسيق والتعاون الفعال بين الدول المتأثرة وهذه المنظمات في اطار الاتفاقية الدولية لمكافحة التصحر ودور كل من هذه المنظمات في دعم برامج التنمية الريفية والبرامج والمشاريع المتعلقة بمكافحة التصحر وصيانة الموارد الطبيعية الزراعية في دول المنطقة، كما أوضح كل منهم الاجراءات والخطط التي تتبناها منظماتهم بهذا المجال.

ثم تولى نائب رئيس المؤتمر وزير الزراعة الاستاذ شوقي فاخوري جلسة مجموعة العمل الاولى حيث تم النقاش حول التدابير المتخذة للاسراع ولتعزيز تنفيذ اتفاقية التصحر لدول آسيا ،

من ابرز نتائج مجموعة العمل هذه:

-تشجيع الاقطار الاعضاء لمتابعة جهودها من أجل تصميم واعداد والبدء في عملية برامج العمل الوطنية والتي يجب اعدادها من خلال اسلوب عملي غير مركزي مندمجا تماما مع أطر الاستراتيجيات والاولويات الوطنية لكل قطر، ولهذه الغاية يجب تعيين مركز تنسيق وطني لبرنامج العمل الوطني، وان مركز التنسيق الوطني هذا سوف يشرف على ويقود عمل هيئة التنسيق الوطنية.

-يجب وضع تأكيد على اهمية ضمان عملية تشاورية مستمرة بين جميع فئات ذات العلاقة خلال تحضير برنامج العمل الوطني بحيث يتم اشراك المجموعات المحلية في الحوار.

-ان نظام الامم المتحدة يجب ان يساعد الاقطار وان يلعب دورا فعالا مع المجموعة المانحة بتعبئة الموارد لعملية برامج العمل الوطنية، كما يجب بذل الجهود من قبل المجموعة المانحة الدولية لمساعدة الاقطار في البدء في عملية برنامج العمل الوطني من خلال توفير التمويل اللازم.

-يطلب من الوكالات الثنائية او المنظمات الحكومية مثل ال FAO ,IFAD ,UNEP, and UNDP/UNSO عند الامكان دعم النشاطات المتعلقة ببناء القدرات مثل: التدريب- ندوات عمل..

-في اطار عملية اعداد برنامج العمل الوطني يجب اتخاذ الاجراءات اللازمة لضمان تحقيق التوعية والاطلاع المستمر حول برنامج العمل الوطني وذلك بين جميع الجهات ذات العلاقة.

-تشجيع التعاون تحت الاقليمي والاقليمي والدولي للبرامج المتعلقة بقضايا التصحر لتعزيز تماسك عملية تصميم برنامج العمل الوطني.

كما تولت نائب رئيس المؤتمر الثاني وزيرة السكان والبيئة في نيبال جلسة مجموعة العمل الثانية حول مجال التعاون الاقليمي المقترح لدول آسيا من اجل تنفيذ برنامج العمل الاقليمي من خلال برامج تستند الى 6 شبكات.

اما البرامج الستة المقترحة:

مجال البرنامج (١)

مراقبة وتقييم التصحر
(هذا البرنامج سيعمد الى تطوير عملية
مراقبة وتقييم التصحر من خلال انظمة
او طرق متناغمة، وتقنيات فضائية)

مجال البرنامج (٢)

حماية الاراضي في المناطق الجافة
وشبه الجافة والقاحلة وشبه الرطبة
(ان هذا البرنامج سيتطرق الى قضايا
متعلقة بوقف تدهور الغابات من خلال
تطوير تقنيات واساليب تراعي شؤون
البيئة)

مجال البرنامج (٣)

ادارة المراعي في المناطق الجافة
مع التشديد الخاص في ضبط تحرك
الكتبان الرملية
(يشمل نشاط هذا البرنامج انشاء انظمة
مستديمة لادارة المراعي و انتاجية
المواشي في المناطق الجافة وشبه
الجافة والقاحلة وشبه الرطبة مع
التشديد الخاص في مراقبة تحريك
الكتبان الرملية).

برنامج العمل (٤)

ادارة الموارد المائية في المناطق الجافة
وشبه الجافة والقاحلة وشبه الرطبة
(نشاطات هذا البرنامج تتضمن وضع
طرق مبررة اقتصاديا في استعمال
موارد المياه النادرة في المناطق الجافة
والتخفيف من تدهور الاراضي الناتجة
عن الملوحة، و تطوير الاساليب
المتعلقة باعادة تأهيل الاراضي
المتدهورة. ان مجال البحث سيشمل
مشاكل متعلقة بملوحة التربة
و (WATERLOGGING)

برنامج العمل (٥)

تعزيز القدرات في تخفيف آثار
الجفاف ومكافحة التصحر
(تعزيز القدرات المؤسساتية من أجل
وضع خطة للتنبؤ لحدوث الجفاف
وصولاً الى تطوير أنظمة الانذار
المبكر)

برنامج العمل (٦)

المساعدة وتقديم العون في تنفيذ
المبادرات لبرامج العمل المتكاملة
لتنمية المناطق الريفية
(دعم المبادرات المحلية الصادرة عن
جمعيات متبنية لطرق حديثة ومحددة
في مكافحة التصحر)

سيتم تسهيل عمل هذه الشبكات من قبل البلدان المشاركة في هذا الاقليم عن طريق تحديد هذه البلدان "مراكز وطنية" معنية بأمور التصحر وتسمية هذه المراكز كنقاط اتصال او تنسيق Focal Point لهذه الشبكات وهذه المراكز ستكون مسؤولة عن اعداد برامج عمل وفقا للمهام. ومن أجل هذه الغاية ستعقد تشاورات غير رسمية بين بلدان هذا الاقليم تهدف الى الاتفاق حول امكنة استضافة هذه الشبكات المقترحة.

وان الاختبار، وبناء القدرات المؤسسية، ورفع الوعي، والتعاون العلمي والتقني والاقليمي سيكون أيضا من نشاطات هذه الشبكات، ولهذه الغاية سيتم تعيين لجنة خبراء لدراسة سبل تطوير هذه الشبكات التي تمثل عناصر برنامج العمل الاقليمي. (ربطاً مسودة خلفيات التقرير المتعلق بهذا الاجتماع)

ثم قدم نائبا رئيس المؤتمر تقريرا عن أعمال اللجان والمناقشات التي جرت في الجلسات العامة.

وقد اذاع وزير الزراعة الصيني في الجلسة الختامية ما سمي "باعلان بيكين" لمكافحة التصحر (مرفق رقم ٥) الذي تضمن الثوابت التي توافق عليها المؤتمرين لمعالجة هذه القضية.

وفيما يلي خلاصة عن اعلان "بيكين" حول مكافحة التصحر والتوصيات التي صدرت عن المؤتمر:

مستذكرين ما تضمنته اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر لجميع الالتزامات في تنفيذ احكام الاتفاقية من برامج ومبادئ وأسس تعاون دولي من أجل التخفيف من أضرار التصحر ومعالجته بصورة جزرية وفعالة....

١- يناشدون أقطار دول آسيا التي لم تشارك او لم تصدق بعد على الاتفاقية ان تفعل ذلك قبل الموعد النهائي في ٢٩ حزيران ١٩٩٧ لتصبح طرفا في الجلسة الاولى لمؤتمر الاطراف الذي سيتم عقده في روما من ٢٩ ايلول الى ١٠ تشرين الاول ١٩٩٧.

٢- دعوة البلدان المتأثرة بالتصحّر في آسيا للمباشرة في اعداد وتعديل برامج العمل الوطنية لمكافحة التصحر وتخفيف آثار الجفاف أخذة بعين الاعتبار الآلية الاستشارية والتعاونية المنصوص عليها في الاتفاقية.

٣- يقرون نتائج مجموعتي العمل المنبثقتين عن المؤتمر والمرفقة في هذا التقرير (مرفق رقم باللغة الانكليزية).

٤- يوصون بتقوية التعاون الاقليمي بين الدول الآسيوية من أجل وضع وتنفيذ المشاريع والنشاطات الوطنية الألية الى مكافحة التصحر من خلال منهجية مبرمجة تستند الى ست شبكات.

٥- يوصون ايضاً بتعزيز التعاون الاقليمي من أجل تطوير ودعم مشاريع التنمية المستدامة للموارد الطبيعية.

٦- تقديم جزيل الشكر لحكومة الصين الشعبية للحفاوة والضيافة ولحسن تنظيم المؤتمر ولترحيبها باستضافة شبكة البرنامج المتعلقة بتقييم ومراقبة التصحر لبرنامج العمل الاقليمي لمكافحة التصحر في آسيا

وفي ختام المؤتمر تم توزيع الوثيقة الرسمية على كافة الوفود (مرفق رقم ٦ باللغة الانكليزية) والتي تتضمن تأييد الموقف العربي حيث اعتبر فيها هذا الاجتماع غير رسمي ولا تعتبر مشاركة اسرائيل سابقة يمكن الاعتداد بها. (ربطاً ترجمة النص باللغة العربية).

المهندسة

لينة يموت

اعلان من الامين التنفيذي لاتفاقية مكافحة التصحر حول طبيعة هذا الاجتماع:

١- هذا المؤتمر هو غير رسمي، استشاري، وتحضيري، غايته المساعدة في تنفيذ الاتفاقية في آسيا.

٢- وبناء عليه ، لا يترتب على اشتراك أي دولة فيه تكريس لعضوية هذه الدولة لجهة تنفيذ هذه الاتفاقية في آسيا

ان هذا النص المذكور أعلاه سيعتبر وثيقة رسمية من وثائق المؤتمر.

رئيسي رقم 1

LETTER OF INVITATION

ATTN: MR. LINA YOUSSEF YAMOUT

PASSPORT NO.: 1288222

ORGANIZATION/COUNTRY: LEBANON

YOU ARE KINDLY EXPECTED BY THE MINISTRY OF FORESTRY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO COME TO BEIJING, CHINA ON 11 MAY, 1997 FOR ATTENDING THE ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UN CCD. THE DURATION IN CHINA WILL BE 15 DAYS. PLS APPLY FORTHWITH FOR ONE ENTRY VISA AT THE CHINESE EMBASSY IN YOUR COUNTRY WITH THIS LETTER.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION(0064)

MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

BEIJING

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

MAY, 1997

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD IN ASIA**

Beijing 13-15 May 1997

Tuesday, 13th May

- 08:30-09:30 Registration of delegates
- 09:30-10:00 Opening Ceremony, opening statement by H. E. Mr. Xu Youfang, Minister of Forestry of China
- Welcoming statement by H. E. Mr. Jiang Chunyun, Vice Premier
- Statement by H. E. Mr. Diallo, Executive Secretary of CCD
- 10:00-10:30 Coffee break
- 10:30-10:45 Election of Chairmen and Adoption of Agenda
- 10:45-12:30 The First Plenary Session
- Country reports
- 12:30-14:30 Lunch Break
- 14:30-16:30 The Second Plenary Session
- Country reports (continued)
- 16:30-17:00 Coffee break
- 17:00-18:00 Statement by the Government of Canada
- Statement by the Government of Germany
- Statement by the Government of Spain
- Presentation by international organizations and NGOs
- 18:30-20:00 Reception, hosted by H. E. Mr. Xu Youfang, Minister of Forestry of China

Wednesday, 14th May

- 09:00-10:30 Meeting of Working Group 1
- 09:00-10:30 **Measures to accelerate the implementation of CCD in Asian countries**
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee break
- 11:00-12:30 Meeting of Working Group 2
- Framework for Regional Cooperation in Asia on the Implementation of CCD**
- 12:30-14:30 Lunch break
- 14:30-15:45 Meeting of Working Group 2 (continued)
- 16:00-17:30 Leave for the Great Hall of the People by bus to be met by a Chinese top leader (Only Heads of Delegations are invited to participate in this meeting)

Thursday, 15th May

- 09:30-10:30 The Third Plenary Session

**ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNCCD**

May 13-15, 1997, Beijing, China

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Armenia

Head of the delegation

Mr. Souren Avetissian

Minister

Ministry of Environment

Republic of Armenia, Yerevan, Ministry of Environment, Bagkamian st. 50 b

Tel: (8852)-53-07-41

Azerbaijan

Head of the delegation

Mr. Oktai Djafarov

State Committee on Ecology of Azerbaijan Republic

Azerbaijan Republic, Baku 370001 Istiglaliyet 31 st.

Tel: 92-67-49, Fax: 925907

Bahrain

Head of the delegation

Mr. Khalio Alshaer

Third secretary

Embassy of Bahrain, 2-9-1

Tayuan Diplomatic Building

Tel: 65325017, Fax: 65325016

Bangladesh

Head of the delegation

Ms. Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury

Minister of Environment and Forest

Ministry of Environment and Forest

M/O Environment and Forest, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Tel: +8802 867916 (o) 9342727 (res)

Members of the delegation

Mr. Mustafizur Rahman

Ambassador

Embassy of Bangladesh, Beijing

Mr. Chanthy Srey
Senior personnel (Agri.)
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Pnom Perli, Cambodia
Tel: 017816342, Fax: 85523724684

Canada

Head of the delegation

Mr. Douglas Peters
Secretary of State (International Environment Institute)
Finance (Canada)
140 O'Connor St., Ottawa ONT

Members of the delegation

Ms. Julia Bentley
second secretary
Embassy of Canada
Tel: 653235360x13253, Fax: 65325033

Mr. Pierre Bourque
Mayor of Montreal
City of Montreal
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Mr. Robert Smith
director
City of Montreal International Relations Bureau
Bureau des Relations Internationales, City of Montreal, Montreal, Quebec,

Ms. Shukwei Ho
President
Table Montreal-Chine
Montreal

Mr. Qi Wen
Special Advisor to the Mayor
City of Montreal
Montreal, Canada

Ms. Jan Sheltinga
Director-Desertification Convention Office
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
200 promenade du Portuge, Hull, quebec Canada

Mr. Satish C. Garkoti
Deputy Director
Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India
Paryavaran Bhavan, C. G. O. Complex Lodi Road, New Delhi-11003, India
Tel: 4360171

Indonesia

Head of the delegation

Mr. J. Juwana
Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia
Indonesian Embassy
San Li Tun, Diplomatic Office Building B - Beijing
Tel: 6532.5486, Fax: 65325368

Members of the delegation

Mr. Maryadi
Indonesian Embassy
San Li Tun, Diplomatic Office Building B - Beijing
Tel: 6532.5486, Fax: 65325368

Mr. Etti. D. Husin
Indonesian Embassy
San Li Tun, Diplomatic Office Building B - Beijing
Tel: 6532.5486, Fax: 65325368

Iran

Head of the delegation

Mr. G. Holam Reza Forouzesh
Jihad-e-sajandegi
No. 115 Voliasr st. Tehran, Iran
Tel: 8897108, Fax: 892357

Members of the delegation

Mr. Nasser Nikpey
Senior Advisor
Ministry of Jhade Sajandegi Forest and Range Organization
Tehran Iran
Tel: 98212446516, Fax: 2446516-2446503

Mr. Mostara Jafari
Director
Ministry of Jihad-e-Sazandegi, Research Institute of Forests and Rangelands
Tel: 6026574, Fax: 6026575

Sede Boqer, Israel

Mr. Yoav Sarig
Scientific counsellor
Embassy of Israel
Beijing

Mr. Arie Tenne
Director, International Economic Organization
Foreign Ministry
Jerusalem, Israel

Jordan

Head of the delegation

Dr. Abdulatif Arabiat
Senator
Amman-Jordan, P.O.B. 1408
Tel: 00962 6835481, Fax: 00962 6835481

Member of the delegation

Mr. Abdelmajid Khabour
Head of Land Protection Division
General Corporation for Environment Protection
Amman-Jordan, P.O.B.1408
Tel: 962 6830149, Fax: 962 6830084

Kuwait

Head of the delegation

Dr. Mohammad Al-Sarawi
Professor/General Director
Environment Public Authority
Kuwait, Box 24395, Safat 13104, Kuwait
Tel: 2456833, Fax: 2421993

Members of the delegation

Dr. Mane Al Sudairawi
Researcher
Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (Desertification Group)
P.O. Box 24885, Safat, Kuwait
Tel: (965)-4815202, Fax: 4815202
E-mail: msudrawi@kisir.edu.kw

Mr. Yousuf Al-Sabbagh
Kuwait Embassy

Tel: 976-1-312269, Fax: 976-1-321401

Myanmar

Head of the delegation

Mr. U Set

Ambassador

Myanmar Embassy, Beijing

No.6, Dong Zhi Men Wai Street, Chaoyang District, Beijing

Tel: 65321584, Fax: 65321344

Members of the delegation

Mr. U Khin Maung Mya

Advisor, Forest Department

Ministry of Forestry, Myanmar

90 Director General (Office, Forest Department), Bayintnaung Road, Yangon, Myanmar

Tel: 951-664437, Fax: 951-664459

Mr. Soe Win Hlaing

Deputy Director

Ministry of Forestry

Kaba aye Pagoda Road, Thirimingalar Ave. Yankin P.O. Yangon, Myanmar

Tel: 951-664437, Fax: 951664459

Mr. U Aye Ko Ko

Third Secretary

Myanmar Embassy Beijing

No. 6, Dong Zhi Men Wai Street, Chaoyang District, Beijing

Tel: 65821584, Fax: 65321344

Nepal

Head of the delegation

Ms. Bidya Devi Bhandari

Minister

Ministry of Population and Environment

Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 241591, Fax: 220411

Members of the delegation

Mr. Lokendra Man Pradhan

Joint secretary

Ministry of Population and Environment

Gingha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 245364, Fax: 977-1-242138

Tel: 699500, Fax: 696141

Mr. Khamis Al-Manthri
First Secretary
Oman Embassy, Beijing
Tel: 65322357, Fax: 65325030

Pakistan

Head of the delegation

Mr. Iftikhar Hussain Kazmi
Minister, Charg d'affairs
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Beijing
No.1, Dong Zhimenwai Dajie, Sanlitun Beijing, 100600
Tel: 65532889, Fax: 65322872

Members of the delegation

Mr. Mahboob Elahi
Director General
Ministry of Environment, Local Government and Rural Development
Room No. 807, UBL Building, Blue Area, Islamabad, Pakistan
Tel: 92-51-9201145, Fax: 920-51-9202211

Ms. Rafia Nazir
Counsellor (Commercial and Economic)
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Beijing
Tel: 65322872, Fax: 65322872

Mr. Muhammed Hassan
Counsellor (Technical Affairs)
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Beijing
No.1, Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Sanlitun, Beijing, 100600
Tel: 65323221, Fax: 65322872

Philippines

Head of the delegation

Mr. Ramon Paje
Assistant Secretary
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
Tel: (632)9280851, Fax: (632)9264826

Qatar

Head of the delegation

Mr. Ali Hashim Al-Yousif

Ministry of Agriculture and Water
P.O.Box 15620, Riyadh 11454, Saudi Arabia
Tel: 96614033702, Fax: 96614033709

Spain

Head of the delegation

Mr. Juan Lena
Ambassador of Spain to P.R.China
Tel: 65323728, Fax: 65323401

Members of the delegation

Ms. Inma Gonzalez
Attache
Embassy of Spain
Tel: 65321986, Fax: 65323401

Sweden

Head of the delegation

Mr. Rasmus Rasmusson
Ambassador
Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Global Cooperation)
Box 16121, 10323 Stockholm
Tel: 46-8-4055570, Fax: 46-8-7231176
E-mail:

Members of the delegation

Ms. Sofia Ericsson
First Secretary
Embassy of Sweden
Dongzhimenwai Dajie 3, Sanlitun, 100600 Beijing
Tel: 65323331, Fax: 65325008

Syria

Head of the delegation

Mr. Abdel Hamid Al-Mounajed
Minister of Environment
Syrian Arab Republic, Beijing
No. 6 Sanlitun, Dongsijie 100600, Beijing
Tel: 65321347 or 65321372, Fax: 65321575
E-mail: 65321575

Members of the delegation

Mr. Loutof Allah Haydar
Ambassador of Syria in China

Advisor to Director General
Ministry of State, Koy Hizm.Gn. Md.
06536 Esk.yolu Ankara, Turkey
Tel: 903122877277, Fax: 903122877213
E-mail: onalr@rorqual.cc.metu.edu.tr

Turkmenistan

Head of the delegation

Mr. Akmukhamed Kuliev
Ministry of Nature Protection and Environment
102, Kemine str., Ashgabar, 744000, Turkmenistan
Tel: 009931239-8586, Fax: 9(9312)51-1613

U.A.E.

Head of the delegation

Ismaeel Obaid Alyoasef
Ambassador
Uae Ambassador to China
UAE Embassy
Tel: 65323024, Fax: 65325089

Members of the delegation

Mr. Mohd Jaw aan Alkheili
Under Secretary
Municipality (Forestry Dept.)
Ruler's Representative Office
Forestry Department
Alain, United Arab Emirates
POB 1894, Alain
Tel: 050 6232999
Fax: 050 6378331

Mr. Ali Mohd Alman Souri
Asst. Under secretary for forest
Abudhabi municipality forest section
Abudhabi municipality, forest section, P.O.Box 26062, Abudhibi, U.A.E.
Tel: 790021, Fax: 971-2-774524

Mr. Abdulla Rashed AlMualla
Director of Agricultural Central Zone
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
U.A. E. P.O.BOX 1509 Dubai
Tel: 06-822822
Fax: 06-822777

Yemen**Head of the delegation**

Mr. Farid Ahmed Mejawr
Ministry of agriculture
Yemen Republic
Tel: 282445, Fax: 282445

Mr. Ahmed Hussein.A.
Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Sanaa, Agriculture Street
Tel: 250977 (office), 203512 (home), Fax: 250977,282445

Palestine**Head of the delegation**

Mr. Abdul Jawad Saleh
Minister of Agriculture
POB 3788, Al-Bireh, West Bank, Palestinian Authority
Tel: 9722-9986632, Fax: 9722-9987422

Members of the delegation

Mr. Sufyan Sultan
Head of Environmental Authority
Palestinian Environmental authority
Palestine-west bank-Hebran
Tel: 97229925328, Fax: 97229927922

Mr. Sadi Jaber
Minister Counsellor
Embassy of Palestine

Mr. Darnhofer Till
Deputy Director DEDC/PAC-UNEP
POB 30552, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254-2-623282, Fax: +254-2-623284
E-mail: till.darnhofer@unep.org

FAO

Head of the delegation

Mr. M. Hosny El-Lakany
Director, Forest Resources Division, FAO
Rome, Italy
Tel: (396)522-55870, Fax: 022-55138

Members of the delegation

Mr. Ajmal. M. Qureshi
FAO Representative in China
Jianguomenwai 4-2-151
Tel: 65322835, Fax: 65325042

Mr. Wu Chaolin
Senior Programme Officer
Jianguomenwai 4-2-151
Tel: 65322835, Fax: 65325042

UNDP

Head of the delegation

Members of the delegation

Ms. Trine Lund-Jensen
Assistant Resident Representative
Liangmahe Nanlu, Beijing
Tel: 6532-3731, Fax: 6532-2567
E-mail: trine.lund-jensen@undp.org

Ms. Ma Huiyun
Senior Programme Officer
Liangmahe nanlu, 2
Tel: 65323731-323, Fax: 65322567

UNSO

Head of the delegation

Ms. Sissel Ekaas
Deputy Director
UNDP/UNSO

Sendai Committee of Environment and Food

Mr. Takaaki Koganezawa

Itsutsubashi, Sendai city, Japan 980

Tel: 81-22-2143386, Fax: 81-22-2247947

Jordan Society for Desertification Control

Mr. Ra'ed Awad Issa Mussa



Geneva Executive Center, 11/13 Cheniu des Anemones 1219 Chokloir, Geneva,
Switzerland

Tel: 41-22-9799416, Fax: 41-22-9799036

E-mail: gdekalbermatten@unccd.ch

Mr. Rodrigo U. Fuentes

Consultant

104 Mt natib st. Caocan city Philippines

Tel: (632)3630996, Fax: (632)3630996

Ms. Wang Meiyang

Geneva, Switzerland

Tel: 41229178490, Fax: 41229799031

اجتماع المجموعة العربية الآسيوية الاعضاء في جامعة الدول العربية على هامش اجتماع الوزاري الآسيوي الاقليمي المتعلق بتنفيذ اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر في آسيا
بيكين (١٣-١٥/٥/١٩٩٧)

بناء على ما قرره مجلس جامعة الدول العربية في اجتماعه في ١٩٩٧/٣/٣١ بدعوة كافة الدول العربية الى تكثيف حضورها واستمرار جهودها في التنسيق مع ممثلي الدول الصديقة خلال الاجتماعات القادمة في بيكين للحيلولة دون استضافة اسرائيل للمركز الاقليمي الخاص بقطاع ادارة المصادر المائية في المناطق الجافة وشبه الجافة،

وما قرره اجتماع التشاور تحت الاقليمي حول تنفيذ اتفاقية الامم المتحدة لمكافحة التصحر (الذي عقد في دمشق ٩-١١/٤/١٩٩٧) بالتأكيد على قرار مجلس الجامعة (ربطاً نسخة عن القرارين)،

استهلت هذه المجموعة اجتماعاتها التنسيقية بناء على دعوة سفير لبنان في الصين السيد

فريد سماحة لعقد الاجتماع الاول في السفارة اللبنانية بتاريخ ١٢/٥/١٩٩٧ للتوافق على وضع برنامج عملها في المؤتمر بما فيه التصدي لاشتراك اسرائيل فيه.

وتجدر الاشارة الى ان ممثل بنغلاديش كان مدعوا ايضا بصفته رئيس المجموعة الاسلامية.

وقد ترأس رئيس الوفد اللبناني ممثلاً بوزير الزراعة اللبناني الاستاذ شوقي فاخوري هذه الجلسة

ثم استعرض رئيس بعثة الجامعة العربية للحاضرين:
- قرار مجلس الجامعة العربية
- قرار اجتماع التشاور حول متابعة تنفيذ الاتفاقية (دمشق-سوريا)

واشاد الى أن المطلوب في مؤتمر بيكين العمل على:
١- عدم مشاركة اسرائيل في هذا المؤتمر وفي المؤتمرات الاخرى نظرا للوضع القائم بين اسرائيل والدول العربية نتيجة احتلالها الارض واغتصاب حقوق الشعب العربي وعدم استجابتها لدعوة السلام الذي اقرته الشرعية الدولية ومؤتمر مدريد، وفي حال اشتركت في هذا المؤتمر الحؤول دون اشراكها في الاجتماعات القادمة.
٢- عدم الموافقة على استضافة اسرائيل أي مركز او آلية تتعلق باتفاقية مكافحة التصحر
٣- تأييد الطلبات العربية باقامة مراكز اقليمية في اطار هذه الاتفاقية.

ثم أكد معالي وزير البيئة السوري بأن جميع الاتفاقيات الدولية المشارك بها لغاية الان كانتفاقية بازل-فيينا.. واتفاقيات ال UNDP و UNEP و اليونسكو... لا تدرج اسرائيل نهائيا في قائمة المجموعة الآسيوية وتدرج دائما مع المجموعة الأوروبية، كما أفاد أنه وبسبب عدم المتابعة العربية الصحيحة أو بغياب الوجود العربي في الاجتماعات المنعقدة في نيويورك والهند شاركت اسرائيل في هذه الاجتماعات واستغلت الظرف وطلبت استضافة مراكز لادارة الموارد المائية (عن آسيا).

واقترح سفير الاردن بادراج اعتراض مشاركة اسرائيل في كلمات الوفود التي تلقي اوراقها الوطنية كما اقترح بالمشاركة العربية الكثيفة لاعمال اللجان، وقد تم الاتفاق على ذلك.

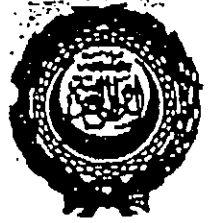
كما تم الاتفاق على تشكيل لجنة صياغة لوضع بيان يطعن بشكلية وقانونية اشراك اسرائيل في المؤتمر وتضم هذه اللجنة كل من:

- سفير سوريا
- ممثل المملكة العربية السعودية
- ممثل حكومة فلسطين
- ممثل جامعة الدول العربية

وقد اختتم الاجتماع بتكليف المجموعة العربية ممثل المملكة العربية السعودية للاحتجاج باسم الدول العربية على اشترك اسرائيل في المؤتمر على ان يتلى هذا البيان في جلسات المؤتمر الاولى.
(بيان المجموعة العربية مرفق ربطا).

المهندسة

لينة يموت



بيان رئيس المجموعة العربية الآسيوية الاعضاء في جامعة الدول العربية

في اجتماعات الدورة الثانية للمؤتمر الوزاري الآسيوي الاقليمي

لتفيذ اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر في اسيا

بكين (١٣-١٥ / ٥ / ١٩٩٧)

السيد الرئيس :

اعتذر سلفا لانني طلبت الكلام حول نقطة نظام ، واشكركم على اعطائي حق الكلام .
بناء على ماقرره مجلس جامعة الدول العربية في اجتماعه في ٣١ مارس ١٩٩٧ ، وما قرره
الاجتماع التشاوري الاقليمي حول تنفيذ اتفاقية الامم المتحدة لمكافحة التصحر (دمشق ٩-
١١ / ٤ / ١٩٩٧ ، فاني اعلن باسم مجموعة الدول العربية الآسيوية الاعضاء في جامعة الدول العربية
المشاركة في هذا المؤتمر الاعراض على شرعية مشاركة الوفد الاسرائيلي في اعمال هذا المؤتمر وذلك للاسباب
التالية :

أولا : ان اسرائيل ليست عضوا في المجموعة الآسيوية المتحدة لدى الامم المتحدة ولا
في اللجنة الاقتصادية لغرب اسيا (اسكوا) كما انها ، ليست عضوا في اللجنة المنبثقة عن الفاو ولا في اية
مجموعة اقليمية آسيوية مرتبطة في الامم المتحدة ولم تشارك في اية أنشطة مرتبطة بالمجموعة الآسيوية .
ثانيا : ان الملاحق الاربعة الخاصة باتفاقية التصحر والمضمنة التوزيع الجغرافي لمختلف
مناطق العالم لا تتضمن تحديدا لاسماء البلدان السببة الى تلك المجموعات كما انها ليست ملزمة لاية
مجموعة جغرافية .

ثالثا : من التعارف عليه دوليا انه يحق لكل مجموعة جغرافية معتمدة لدى الامم المتحدة ان
تقبل او ترفض في عضويتها من تشاء . وصحيح ان اسرائيل قد شاركت في اعمال اتفاقيات الخاصة
بوضع اتفاقية التصحر الا ان ذلك تم بصفتها عضوا في الامم المتحدة .

رابعا : ان الحصول على النتائج الايجابية المرجوة من تنفيذ اتفاقية التصحر يتطلب
الساوان والتسيق الكاملين بين دول المنطقة الآسيوية الامر الذي لا تحققه عضوية اسرائيل فيما يحكم ممارساتها
الحالية في منطقة الشرق الاوسط .

وبناء على ما تقدم فاني اطالب باسم المجموعة العربية الآسيوية باقصاء اسرائيل عن هذا المؤتمر ومنعها
من المشاركة في اعماله . وشكرا .

اجتماع المجموعة العربية الجانبي
على هامش اجتماع بيكين الوزاري
الآسيوي المتعلق بتنفيذ اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر
١٩٩٧/٥/١٣

بعد افتتاح اول جلسات الاجتماع الوزاري الآسيوي الاقليمي المتعلق بتنفيذ
اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر في آسيا،

وبعد ان كلفت المجموعة العربية ممثل المملكة العربية السعودية للاحتجاج باسم
الدول العربية على اشتراك اسرائيل في المؤتمر،

وبعد أن اتيح للوفود المشاركة بالقاء الكلمات، وخلال اعطاء اسرائيل حق الكلام،
قدم الممثل السعودي احتجاجه وسط دعم وتأييد الدول العربية والاسلامية (البيان
مرفق ربطا)، مما أدى الى وقف القاء وزير الزراعة الاسرائيلي ايتان وتعليق
اعمال المؤتمر للبت في الاشكال الحاصل.

وقد رد الامين التنفيذي لاتفاقية مكافحة التصحر السيد ديالو بأن الاجتماع الحالي
هو غير رسمي وهو يهدف الى تنسيق الجهود في مجال تنفيذ وتطبيق الاتفاقية،
وهو لا يحدد الطبيعة النهائية للمجموعات الاقليمية، وأن هذا الامر سيجري
تحديده بصورة نهائية في مؤتمر الاطراف الذي سينعقد في روما.
وقد طلب السيد ديالو وقف أعمال المؤتمر وتعليق المناقشات لساعات بعد الظهر
للبت في احتجاج الدول العربية.

وبناء لطلب وزير الزراعة اللبناني، ترأس الاستاذ فاخوري اجتماع ممثلي الدول
العربية والاسلامية وذلك للتنسيق حول الترتيبات الواجب اتخاذها في جلسات بعد
الظهر فيما يتعلق بهذا الشأن،

وقد تم الاجتماع بحضور ممثلي الدول العربية والاسلامية التالية:

- ١- المملكة العربية السعودية
- ٢- الجمهورية العربية السورية
- ٣- المملكة الاردنية الهاشمية
- ٤- الجمهورية اليمنية
- ٥- الجمهورية اللبنانية
- ٦- دولة الكويت
- ٧- دولة قطر
- ٨- دولة البحرين
- ٩- سلطنة عمان
- ١٠- دولة فلسطين
- ١١- الجمهورية الاسلامية الايرانية

وقد رأى الوزير فاخوري أن ماجرى في الاجتماع الصباحي هو بداية انتصار للقضية العربية وتسجيل موقف للتاريخ وان لم يؤدي ذلك الى استبعاد اسرائيل في هذا المؤتمر، لانه وبمجرد تأجيل الاجتماع للبحث في شكلية انضمام اسرائيل في المؤتمر، سيطلع الرأي العام العالمي على محتويات هذا الموقف العربي. كما أكد على ان الاجراءات التي سيتم اتخاذها للحيلولة دون مشاركة اسرائيل لا تعطل أعمال المؤتمر، حيث ان ذلك سوف يكون له مردود سلبي على الدول العربية بحيث ستعتمد اسرائيل الى استغلال ذلك اعلامياً.

وقد أوضح وزير البيئة السوري بأنه في هذا المؤتمر ليس من الممكن الفصل بين الامور الفنية والساسية، فالامور الفنية التي ستعتمد، تعتمد بالدرجة الاولى على التعاون بين هذه الدول، اذ ان اسرائيل لا تتعامل مع أكثر من ٤٠ دولة، ووجود أي مركز اقليمي في اطار تنفيذ هذه الاتفاقية في اسرائيل سيسقط هذه الاتفاقية.

وأورد ممثل السعودية تساؤلاً حول ردة الفعل العربي اذا ما اتيح لاسرائيل الكلام في جلسة بعد الظهر.

فجرى التأكيد على الموقف القومي المعلى والاعلى الامانة العامة للمؤتمر اعلان أن هذا المؤتمر هو ذات طابع استشاري ولا يترتب على اشتراك أي دولة فيه تكريس لعضوية هذه الدولة باعتبار ان ذلك متروك تقريره للاجتماع التنفيذي (مؤتمر الاطراف) الذي سيعقد في روما في أيلول القادم.

وعرض السفير السوري لدى بيكين اقتراحا محددًا من ثلاث نقاط وهي الآتي:
أولاً: التشديد في عدم شرعية قبول اسرائيل في هذا المؤتمر وتضمنين جميع الخطب التي سيلقيها الوفود العربية هذا الموقف الصريح.

ثانياً: الطلب من سكرتارية المؤتمر اعتبار ما قاله الامين التنفيذي لاتفاقية مكافحة التصحر السيد ديالو وثيقة رسمية من وثائق المؤتمر " ان هذا المؤتمر غير رسمي وذات طابع استشاري ولا يحدد الطبيعة النهائية للمجموعات الاقليمية باعتبار ان هذا الامر سيجري تحديده بصورة نهائية في مؤتمر الاطراف في روما".

ثالثاً: اعتبار حضور اسرائيل في هذا المؤتمر لا يشكل سابقة تعتمد أو يقاس عليها في المؤتمرات القادمة الى ان يتم التحديد النهائي للتوزيع الجغرافي للبلدان.

وقت تمت الموافقة باجماع الوفود المشاركة على هذه الاقتراحات، كما تم الاتفاق على تشكيل لجنة مصغرة لمتابعة قرارات الاجتماع مع سكرتارية المؤتمر،

وتضم هذه اللجنة كل من:

- سفير المملكة العربية السعودية لدى الصين
- سفير الجمهورية العربية السورية
- سفير الجمهورية اللبنانية
- ممثل جامعة الدول العربية
- ممثل دولة الجمهورية الاسلامية الايرانية
- ممثل جمهورية اندونيسيا، وذلك لما ابداه من تأييد لوجهة نظر المجموعة العربية.

واختتم بذلك الاجتماع .

ملاحظة: تجدر الاشارة الى انه في الجلسة العامة التي انعقدت بعد حصول تعليق المناقشات اعلن الامين التنفيذي للمؤتمر تبني المطلب العربي بعدم تكريس قبول اسرائيل عضوا نهائيا في مجموعة الدول الاسيوية لجهة تنفيذ اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر.

-ربطاً لائحة باسماء ممثلي الدول العربية والاسلامية التي حضرت هذا الاجتماع الجانبي

المهندسة

لينة يموت

الجمهورية اللبنانية

وزير الزراعة
عميد السلك العربي
ممثلة وزارة البيئة
المنسق الوطني
لمشروع مكافحة
التصحّر

-شوقي فاخوري
-فريد سماحة
-لينة يموت
-فادي أسمر

المملكة العربية السعودية

سفير
وزارة الزراعة والمياه
وزارة الزراعة والمياه

-يوسف بن محمد المدني
-علي الطخيس
-عبد قاسم الشريف

الجمهورية العربية السورية

سفير
وزارة الخارجية
مستشار في السفارة
السورية
وزير مستشار في
السفارة السورية
عضو الوفد السوري

-لطف الله حيدر
-عبد الفتاح عمورة
-بسام عمادي
-سليمان عاد
-عبد الرحمن غيبه

المملكة الاردنية الهاشمية

سفير

-سمير الناعوري

الجمهورية اليمنية

نائب وزير الزراعة

-فريد أحمد مجور

دولة الكويت

مدير عام الهيئة العامة
للبيئة
معهد الكويت للابحاث
العلمية

-د.محمد الصرعاوي

-د.مانع السديراوي

دولة قطر

رئيس قسم التشجير
والمراعي
مساعد مدير البيئة
رئيس قسم بحوث
التربة

-سعد ابراهيم الكواري

-محمد احمد علي اكبر
-م/علي هاشم السيد عبدالله
اليوسف

دولة البحرين

-ضمرغام عبد الرحمن
-خالد علي الشاعر

سفارة البحرين
سكرتير ثالث بالسفارة

سلطنة عمان

-احمد مبارك شماس

وكيل وزارة البلديات
الاقليمية لشؤون البيئة
سفير

-عبدالله الفارسي

دولة فلسطين

-سعدى جابر
-د.سفيان سلطان

وزير مفوض السفارة
رئيس سلطة البيئة

الجمهورية الاسلامية الايرانية

-محسن اسيري

وزارة الخارجية

كلمة وزير الزراعة الاستاذ شوقي فاخوري
في المؤتمر الوزاري الآسيوي الاقليمي المتعلق بتنفيذ اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر
في آسيا
بيكين (١٣-١٥/٥/١٩٩٧)

أصحاب المعالي والسعادة
سيداتي سادتي،

أود اولاً أن اشكر الوفود على انتخابي نائباً لرئيس المؤتمر وابدئي أن سنوات مرت على نشوء التصحر كقضية تهتم جميع المجتمعات، وكجميع البلدان المعنية بهذا الموضوع فان لبنان يولي التصحر عناية خاصة لأنه مهدد بصورة مباشرة بخطر التصحر نظراً الى العوامل المناخية وسائر العوامل من اجتماعية واقتصادية وسياسية سيما وللأسف في تدهور الموارد الطبيعية.

اننا نجابه كل مسببات التصحر سواء كان ذلك بعامل المناخ او بحسب طبيعة بلادنا الجبلية او من جراء التطور العمراني والصناعي او بسبب تراجع استعمال التقنيات الزراعية الحديثة وسوء توزيع الادوية الزراعية ذات الاساس الكيميائي، تضاف اليها في فصل الصيف مساحات واسعة من الاشجار الحرجية. وبالطبع فان حاجات التطور العمراني وما تفرضه مرحلة ما بعد الحرب من اعادة بناء شاملة ادت الى تفاقم خطر تقلص المساحات الخضراء وبالتالي نشوء بوادر تصحر مضر.

حيال كل هذه الاخطار وللحفاظ على استمرارية لبنان الاخضر كما عرف عبر العصور تصدت الحكومة اللبنانية لهذا الزحف التصحري فبادرت كل من وزارتي الزراعة والبيئة وسائر الوزارات المعنية الى اتخاذ اجراءات عملية سريعة لوقف ارتفاع نسبة التصحر وحماية الموارد الطبيعية، وتجسد ذلك بسن تشريعات من شأنها حماية الغابات ومنع التعدي عليها، كما ان مشاريع عديدة بدأ تنفيذها بالتعاون مع منظمات دولية ومنها:

-مشروع دراسة التنوع البيولوجي في لبنان الذي يجري تنفيذه مع برنامج الامم المتحدة للبيئة.

-مشروع المساعدة في حماية الغطاء الاخضر في لبنان الذي تساهم فيه المجموعة الاوروبية بالتعاون مع المكتب الوطني للغابات في فرنسا.

-مشروع GEF الرامي الى انشاء محميات طبيعية.

-مشروع تطوير وتحسين التقنيات المعتمدة في مجال الري وزيادة المساحات المروية عن طريق انشاء بحيرات وسدود مائية واستصلاح الاراضي، وهذا المشروع تموله منظمة الايفاد IFAD.

وهناك مشاريع عديدة تنفذها وزارة الزراعة وتستهدف انماء القطاع الزراعي في لبنان واعتبار الزراعة كمكون اساسي للاقتصاد الوطني وهذا يستتبع بالطبع اعادة احياء كل المناطق الزراعية وتطوير البنى التحتية الزراعية فيها وتعزيز كل وسائل التنمية الريفية المستدامة، وتبقى الغاية الكبرى من كل هذه الحملة الخضراء هو الحد من هجرة الريف نحو المدينة والحد من كل مسببات الفقر والحرمان التي تسيطر غالبا على حياة المزارعين والقاطنين في الارياف.

اننا نقاوم يوميا في لبنان كل اشكال التصحر ولذلك وضعنا برنامجا وطنيا لاعادة تحريج مساحات كبيرة من البلاد ولذلك جرى تعزيز وتقوية عدد كبير من المشاتل التي تنتج سنويا ملايين الشتول التي توزعها على المواطنين والمنظمات الحكومية بهدف اعادة الغطاء الاخضر في لبنان بنسبة ٢٠/ عشرون بالمائة من مجموع مساحته الاجمالية بعد أن خسر الكثير في هذا المجال واصبحت نسبة هذا الغطاء لا تتجاوز ٦/ ستة بالمائة فقط وهي نسبة تجعلنا جميعا نستشعر درجة الخطورة التي تهدد ارضنا التي طالما كانت نموذج في جمال غاباتها وتنوع اشجارها من بين بلدان حوض البحر المتوسط.

وهذا الواقع فرض علينا حالة استنفار شديدة نتعاون من ضمنها مع وزارة البيئة وكل المنظمات الدولية والمحلية لاعادة هذا الغطاء الاخضر الى طبيعة بلادنا وجعل المواطنين، والمزارعين خصوصا، يتحسسون معنا اهمية الحملة الخضراء التي نقوم بها فيحافظون معنا على كل المقومات البيئية التي تحمي الارض والاغراس، وسيساعدون على تنفيذ برامج التنمية الزراعية والريفية على الوجه الاكمل واستغلال مواردنا الطبيعية والمائية خير استغلال والقضاء على كل عوامل الفقر وسوء التغذية في المجتمعات الريفية.

ولا يفوتنا في هذا المجال الا ان ننوه بمساعدة منظمة الفاو وبرنامج الامم المتحدة للانماء وغيرها من المنظمات العالمية التي قدمت الينا كل اوجه الدعم في حملتنا الخضراء، كما ويسرنا ان نعلن اننا انشانا اللجنة الوطنية لمكافحة التصحر ووضعنا البرنامج الوطني لمثل هذه مكافحة وان وزارة الزراعة هي التي تتولى وضع اتفاقية مكافحة التصحر موضع التنفيذ بعد ان عبأت لهذه الغاية كل الطاقات الممكنة لبلوغ الاتفاقية غاياتها، لاسيما وان لبنان كان من الدول الاولى التي ايدت هذه الاتفاقية وصادقت عليها ولا يزال بلدنا يدعو جميع البلدان الشقيقة والصديقة الى دعم كل الجهود المؤيدة الى تبني هذه الاتفاقية وتنفيذها واعتبارها الركيزة الاساسية لكل جهد وطني يبغى القضاء على التصحر ومسبباته.

ان مكافحة التصحر يجب في نظرنا ان تتطلق من قاعدة اساسية وهي التوعية والارشاد بحيث يجب ان يتحسس المواطنون في كل المناطق بانهم معنيون مباشرة بتنفيذ جميع برامج التنمية ومحاربة التصحر ولذلك فان التعاون مع كل الفئات الشعبية: اوساط الشباب والجامعيين والنقابيين والمنظمات غير الحكومية والتعاونيات والجمعيات البيئية وغيرها يبقى واجبا للانطلاق في حملتنا من أجل عالم أخضر تسوده العدالة الاجتماعية وتحسر فيه تدريجيا كل مسببات الفقر وسوء التغذية والجوع.

اننا في لبنان ندعم جهود الامانة العامة لاتفاقية مكافحة التصحر وندعو بذل اقصى امكانيات التعاون الدولي لتنفيذ احكام هذه الاتفاقية الرائدة ونؤيد بقوة جميع قرارات الجامعة العربية واللقاءات التشاورية التي عقدت في هذا الخصوص والتي شددت على عدم قانونية قبول اسرائيل عضوا في مجموعة دول غرب آسيا التي تعقد مؤتمرها اليوم في العاصمة بيجينغ والى عدم استضافة هذه الدولة للمركز الاقليمي لادارة الموارد المائية او أي مركز آخر للأسباب التي ذكرها ممثل مجموعتنا العربية واضيف الى هذه الاسباب

ان اسرائيل تتشط بعكس اهداف الاتفاقية لانها تساهم باحتلالها لجزء من جنوب لبنان وباعتداءاتها اليومية على هذه المنطقة الزراعية المثالية في القضاء على الزراعة والبيئة هناك وتهجير المزارعين وتشريدهم وحرق الغابات والمحاصيل وتدمير كل البنى التحتية والموارد الطبيعية ومنع الحكومة اللبنانية من تنمية هذه

المنطقة واستغلال ثرواتها المحلية مسجلة بذلك موقفا معاديا ، كما وقفها في كل المجالات الاخرى، لكل مقررات الجمعية العمومية للامم المتحدة ومجلس الامن الدولي وكل نشاطات وبرامج المنظمات والاتفاقيات الدولية ومنها الاتفاقية التي نعقد مؤتمرنا اليوم من أجلها.

انن نحیی اخواننا في وفود البلاد الشقيقة والصديقة المشتركة في هذا المؤتمر ونشكر الحكومة الصينية التي ترعى اجتماعاتنا وندعو الى التوفيق في أعمال المؤتمر كي نتوصل الى قرارات وتوصيات وتدابير عملية تساهم في مكافحة كل اشكال التصحر مكافحة فاعلة ومفيدة.

وشكرا لكم

their financial and technical support to the preparation and implementation of the Regional Action programme.

7. Options for institutional mechanisms to support the regional cooperation process such as the setting up of a steering committee, the establishment of a back-up facility or consultative fora to review progress of the Regional Action Programme will be considered on the basis of the needs and requests from countries and institutions participating in the thematic networks.

8. The Thematic Networks shall establish operational linkages with the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of Parties of the CCD, that is, the permanent Secretariat, the Global Mechanism, the Committee on Science and Technology in order to insure consistency in the implementation process of the Convention.

**Declaration of the Beijing Ministerial Conference on Regional Cooperation to
Implement the Convention to Combatting Desertification in Asia**

13-15 May 1997

Recalling and Affirming Our commitment to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, which entered into force on the 26th December 1996;

Bearing in mind that the commitments taken by the States of the Earth at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 are about to be reviewed by the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and that an early implementation of the Convention's provisions would be an essential element for the successful follow up of Agenda 21;

Mindful that affected country Parties in the Asian region share common environmental objectives despite the diversity of the region's eco-systems and that both anthropogenic and natural factors causing desertification threaten sustainable development in the Asia region, particularly in the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid zones;

Welcoming the outcome of the Regional Conference on the Implementation of the Convention in Asia which took place at New Delhi in August 1996 and the preparatory steps taken by the United Nations bodies, governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations in developing a region-wide strategic programme of action;

Having considered that regional and sub-regional cooperation in Asia is necessary to complement progress undertaken at the national and local levels in the framework of the National Action Programme to combat desertification and drought and that international support is required to strengthen regional efforts through various forms of partnership arrangements that would include;

Recognizing the essential role that non-governmental and community based organizations are called upon to play in the implementation of the Convention.

In the traditional regional spirit of cooperation, the participants of the

Beijing Ministerial Conference agree and resolve that they shall:

1. Urge All Asian States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention before the 29 June 1997 deadline to become a Party at the first session of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Rome from 29 September to 10 October 1997;
2. Invite all affected countries in Asia to pursue the preparation and/or adjustment of National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and mitigate the effects of drought paying due attention to the consultative and participatory process advocated by the Convention;
3. Endorse the conclusions of the two sessions of the working group which are annexed to this Declaration;
4. Recommend to strengthen regional cooperation among Asian countries in ensuring the effective launching of activities through a pragmatic approach relying on the establishment of six thematic networks;
5. Further recommend to review the possible development of sub-regional programme initiatives that would foster transboundary cooperation in the sustainable use of natural resources and assist in linking national and regional initiatives.
6. Express their appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China for the quality of its hospitality, the excellent arrangements for the Ministerial Conference and the willingness to host the Thematic Network on Assessment and Monitoring of Desertification of the Regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification in Asia.

Conclusions of the First Session of the Working Group: Measures to Accelerate the Implementation of CCD

The participants of the Working Group on measures to be taken at the national level to foster the implementation of the CCD in Asia reached the following conclusions:

1. Designing, formulation and preparation of the National Action Programmes (NAP) should be undertaken in an iterative, decentralized and integrated manner with the national strategic frameworks and priorities adopted by the countries. Emphasis should also be put on sustaining a medium to long term process. To this effect the programming capacity of the national focal points and their staff should be built up.
2. Consistent with the countries efforts in preparing the NAPs, the designation of National Focal Points should insure an appropriate level of seniority to facilitate inter-ministerial coordination. This process will assist coordination in the implementation of the NAP as the focal points will have oversight functions at the national level.
3. The NAPs should fully reflect a comprehensive consultative process involving local communities and other major stakeholders of the civil society. Partnership building between affected developing countries and developed countries are an important element to meet the objectives of the NAPs and must therefore be integrated in its ongoing formulation.
4. The United Nations bodies and institutions should, at the request of affected countries, play a catalytic role with donor institutions or countries in mobilizing funds for the NAP process. The international donor community is also urged to support the promotion of the NAP and provide adequate funding to assist the delivery of programmes at the grassroots level.
5. Where ever feasible, bilateral agencies or international organizations like FAO, IFAD, UNEP and UNDP/UNSO, are requested to support activities in capacity building such as training, workshops, technical advisory services or strengthening of local programming capacities, which will enhance the sustainability of local areas development programmes.
6. Within the context of the NAP preparation process, efforts for awareness raising and

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sensitization measures for key stakeholders and major partners should be continuously pursued. This effort would encourage maximum participation from the communities in affected areas and elicit a broad based national contribution in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

7. Relationships with current sub-regional, regional or global programmes dealing with desertification issues should be encouraged to strengthen the coherence of the NAP formulation process.

Conclusions of the Second Session of the Working Group: Framework for regional Cooperation in Asia on the Implementation of CCD

The participants of Working Group 2 expressed their commitment to regional cooperation and took note of the draft background paper on the elements for a Regional Action Programme to implement the CCD in Asia. They reached the following conclusion concerning the first steps of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme.

1. Taking into account the geographic vastness and socio-economic diversity of the region, initiatives must be taken by various institutions that have an established track record in the implementation of activities for combating desertification in Asia. In this context participating countries which have not yet done so are invited to provide additional information for completing the Directory of Existing Institutions Dealing with Desertification in Asia. These institutions should also provide linkages for enhancing collaboration at the national and sub-regional levels.

2. The participants accepted the Thematic Programme Areas proposed in the Background Paper as the initial areas for promoting regional collaboration. Networks shall be built gradually with the involvement of the competent institutions in the region. The Thematic Areas are the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Thematic Programme Area 1: | Desertification Monitoring and Assessment |
| Thematic Programme Area 2: | Agro-Forestry and Soil Conservation in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas |
| Thematic Programme Area 3: | Rangeland Management in Arid Areas including
the fixation of Shifting Sand Dunes |
| Thematic Programme Area 4: | Water Resources Management for Agriculture in
Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas |

Thematic Programme Area 5: Strengthening Capacities for Drought Impact mitigating and Desertification Combating

Thematic Programme Area 6: Assistance for the Implementation of Integrated Local Area Development programmes (LADPs) Initiatives

3. The thematic networks will develop their regional support programmes taking into account the perceived need and priorities of countries in the region and the cross cutting elements identified in the New Delhi Regional Conference:

- a) Science, technology and technical cooperation;
- b) Public participation and consensus building;
- c) Education curricula promotion and awareness raising;
- d) Capacity and institution building;
- e) Regional cooperation on land degradation across different climatic sub-regions;
- f) Research on the enabling macro-policy framework

4. An Experts Group should be set up to review the approach for the development of the Thematic Programme Networks which are the constituting elements of the Asian Regional Action Programme. The Terms of Reference of the Expert Group will include, inter alia: review of the complementarity, scope and coverage of the thematic areas; operational aspects of the establishment and management of the networks; procedure for membership in the thematic networks; identification of the respective task managers of the networks; resource mobilisation for the regional cooperation process.

5. Informal consultations between the countries of the region should prepare a consensus on hosting options for the networks. These consultations would facilitate the task of the Expert Group in identifying task managers which could be a national institution or an intergovernmental institution located in the country.

6. International Organisations, particularly the international and regional financing institutions such as IFAD, the World Bank, the ADB or the EBRD are invited to lend

DECLARATION OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF
THE CCD, MADE ON THE NATURE OF THIS MEETING

In the understanding of the Secretariat:

1. This conference is an informal, consultative, preparatory meeting whose purpose is to facilitate and assist in the future implementation of the Convention in Asia.
2. As such, this meeting does not prejudge in any form the constitution of a formal group in Asia that would be constituted subsequently for the full implementation of the Convention in Asia.

The above text will be inserted in the report of the plenary session.

Republic of Lebanon
Ministry of Agriculture

Republic of Lebanon
Ministry of the Environment

Republic of Lebanon
Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform
Center for Public Sector Projects and Studies
(C.P.S.P.S.)

CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION
COUNTRY PAPER
LEBANON

BEIJING, MAY 13-15 1997

PREPARED BY FADY R. ASMAR

NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR
THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

They usually occur at the end of the summers and are followed a few weeks later, by the heavy showers of rain which cause severe soil losses.

The requirements of the urban development and the rehabilitation and reconstruction operations after the long years of war have led to a particular threat, that of the quarries. Besides the further degradation they are causing, their anarchic development has caused severe scars in the landscape throughout the country.

After several years of total lack of control imposed by the war situation in the country, the Government of Lebanon has realised the importance of linking the environment to the overall development process. Both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment are launching initiatives to save the natural patrimony and promote protection and proper management of natural resources. The Ministry of Environment in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior are working on the identification of new sites for quarries, in order to allow for this type of exploitation without harming the landscape and the environment. Laws prohibiting wood cutting and protecting forests from fires, grazing and mismanagement are issued. The production capacity of the forest nurseries of the Ministry of Agriculture is increased; reforestation activities are being undertaken. The extension services of both Ministries are launching programs for an integrated rural development and for an environment friendly agriculture. Cedar, fir, juniper and cypress forests are declared nature reserves, along with specific fragile and interesting ecosystems that need to be protected.

The drastic reaction of the Government through issuing new laws and legislation prohibiting and severely punishing certain activities, can only be transitional. The real solution resides in planning and management.

International organisations are assisting this process by providing technical and financial support to specific projects, such as Capacity 21, Climate Change, Biological Diversity, Assistance to the Protection of the Vegetation Cover, Forest Fires Prevention and Control, Protected Areas.

The private sector being very active in Lebanon, NGO's are playing an important role in both the protection of natural resources and in the reforestation. In most of the projects supported by international organisations, the role of NGO's in the development process is highly considered. The government is counting on NGO's, on grass root organisations and on community based groups in several sectors. The Ministry of Agriculture is producing forest trees seedlings which are offered to those groups for reforestation activities. The Ministry of Social Affairs is working with an NGO on a rehabilitation program for disabled persons and for affected communities.

The co-ordination of all the projects, the activities undertaken by the concerned ministries and those undertaken on the private level would avoid overlapping and increase the efficiency of all the actors.

stakeholders, grassroots organisations and community based groups. These surveys will be included in the NAP.

The involvement of women groups and that of NGO's with social orientations would certainly increase the efficiency of the programme. NGO's dealing with disabled persons could play a very important role which would fit the spirit of the convention, while effectively integrating the disabled persons in the society and giving them an important role in natural resources conservation and management. Women play a very important role in rural life; they could easily bring their contribution to increase the family's income and therefore help in the prevention of rural exodus. In the Baalbek-Hermel area for example, carpet waving is one of the traditional industries undertaken exclusively by women. This could be one of the activities that should be encouraged and developed. This preparatory phase will therefore work on the sensitisation of such groups for their integration in the implementation process. Training activities would be organised to show the role each and every one can play in natural resources conservation and management, in integrated rural development and finally in combating poverty.

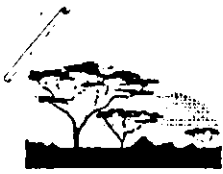
On the other hand, the Umbrella Project could raise funds for the implementation of the necessary structures allowing the disabled persons to have access to some parks and forests. This would increase their interest in the effective participation in natural resources conservation and management, while offering them a range of activities they were deprived from until now.

A national reforestation plan could be elaborated, taking into consideration priority sites, species to be planted, suggested use and planting techniques. This plan would then be used in the training sessions for the NGO's. This would orient their activities and provide them with the consistent material they need.

In all of the activities that should be proposed by the Umbrella Project, the programme should aim at meeting the Convention's basic principles: bottom-up approach; sustainability; flexibility; participatory approach.

The implementation of the National Action Programme for combating desertification will allow for a better co-ordination and organisation of all the on-going activities at the different scales and levels. This co-ordination, by avoiding duplication of works, will increase the efficiency of each and every actor. The implementation of the NAP will also initiate the dialogue between the different parties concerned by and working on the issue of combating desertification.

The Umbrella Project will therefore prepare the field for the NAP by integrating to the possible extent, all the actors involved: The Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Finance, Municipalities, Social Affairs, Education, Higher Education, Electricity and Hydraulic Resources; Universities; Schools; NGO's, Community Based Groups, Women Groups; Research Centres; Official Institutions and Organisms, such as the Directorate of Urban Planning and the CDR; International Organisations. The



(MRASP/Beijing1)

Information Note

**Proposal to establish a regional information network
in support of the Regional Action Programme for Asia**

13-15 may, 1997
Beijing, China

Introduction

1. A major operating principle of the Regional Support Programme proposed for the Regional Action Programme for Asia and endorsed at the New Delhi regional conference in August 1996 is to enable the various thematic programme areas to establish an information and assessment network that includes the exchange of information with participants from various countries across different climactic subregions.
2. Key regional and sub-regional meetings to combat desertification which took place in Yangoon, Almaty, Abu Dhabi and Damascus, clearly endorsed the objective of an efficient manner of collecting, exchanging and analysis of information among the key partners .
3. As contained in the Convention and specifically in Annex II for the Regional Implementation for Asia and under Article 8, there is clear reference to the importance of information exchange of experiences, knowledge and know-how in order to strengthen the Regional Action Programme for Asia.

Specific Goals

4. It is for the above items that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification proposes the establishment of a simple and cost-effective manner of exchanging information managed by the various regional support programmes to be used by the participants of the various thematic programme areas.
5. The Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification aims to strengthen its capacity to assist the region in the area of information brokering bridging the various players of the demand and supply side of the information process.

What is it?

6. The various electronic regional support fora following the adoption of the thematic networks by the Beijing conference would use modern and cost-effective procedures designed to promote and facilitate the exchange of information among its registered members. Through the use of electronic mail and a program called Listserve, it functions like an automatic postoffice for the participants. Messages that could contain information on projects, technologies, conferences and many more can be sent to the Listserve and later retransmitted to all its members.
7. The various electronic fora corresponding to the thematic networks that will be developed and enhanced promises to be extremely cost-effective and will greatly improve the exchange of information among partners in the region, governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations that are involved in specific activities that fall under the thematic areas. In practical sense, it can simply be used by people to keep everyone informed of each others activities.
8. The function and tasks of the electronic forum should evolve in time and should be used as an instrument to improve communication and team effort in the region with the purpose of

addressing the requirements of the Convention to Combat Desertification. In the short-term, we can envision other ways of exchanging and moderating these various thematic fora such as offering it in the World Wide Web in the Internet.

9. The Secretariat proposes to maintain the service through its computer system in Geneva. In order to become a member, interested parties would need a valid internet account that they can obtain from their respective internet provider in the office or the country. Once they have this, they can send an email requesting to be part of the specific thematic forum to the UNCCD secretariat and address it to Michael Ramos (mramos@unccd.ch).
10. In light of the present proposals contained in the framework document for the Beijing meeting, the electronic fora would look as follows:
 - Desertification Monitoring and Assessment (cdasia-dmaf)
 - Agroforestry Management and Soil Conservation (cdasia-amscf)
 - Rangeland and Pasture Management in Arid Areas with particular emphasis in controlling shifting sand dunes (cdasia-rpmf)
 - Water resources management for agriculture in arid, semi-arid and dry humid lands (cdasia-waterf)
 - Strengthening Planning Capacities for Drought Preparedness (cdasia-pcdpf)
 - Implementation of Locally Developed Initiatives (cdasia-ldif)
11. This first proposal is meant to invite comments and suggestions on the potential of the Secretariat's support for the facilitation of electronic processing of the information in the context of the Regional Cooperation in Asia. Should there be any views or advise on the subject, please contact:

Michael Ramos
Tel: (41 22) 9799530
Fax: (41 22) 9799034
Email: mramos@unccd.ch



MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN ASIA

Beijing, 28-30 May 1997

SECOND BACKGROUND NOTE UNDER AGENDA ITEM 2 ON :

COORDINATION MECHANISMS IN SUPPORT TO AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES

As the negotiation process of the Convention to Combat Desertification reaches its conclusion, the attention of political decision makers, development practitioners, scientific institutions and NGOs turns towards its implementation. The identification of mechanisms to match programmes with finance is a central theme of this ongoing debate. The notion of key facilitator or, in French, the notion of "chef de file" is one of the approaches which has been brought forward.

1 PROGRAMMING AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION UNDER THE CCD

1.1 Multi source Funding

Unlike its sister Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification does not benefit from a clearly identified central funding mechanism such as the GEF. Rather it encourages multi-source funding. Hence the focus of financial resources mobilization is shifted from institutions to a process facilitated by the Global Mechanism. It is the effectiveness of this process, that is, the effective mobilization of multi source funding, which will be perceived as one of the key indicators of the Convention's workability and of its ultimate success.

1.2 The challenge

The notion of multi-source funding creates challenges and opportunity: The challenge will be to synchronize programming and fund raising activities in a very careful manner, so that evolving programming initiatives include partnership building between affected and developed country Parties. In this sense the term partnership does not imply a general reference to the desired level of international solidarity; it implies the chief operating principle of the Convention's implementation process. Partnership would match the demand from programming activities with the supply of financial support. Establishing workable arrangements to do this represents a relatively new challenge, implying serious improvements in ODA delivery systems. There lies the opportunity.

1.3 The opportunity

The notion of multi source funding, as adopted by the negotiators of the Convention, can be seen as maximizing the support level that must be mobilized for the world wide combat against desertification. It includes a number of methodological implications. We may summarize them in the presentation of two concepts: positive competition and ongoing coordination. These concepts initially appear - but need not be - contradictory. Competition implies decentralization of multiple fund raising initiatives while coordination would structure these initiatives, taking into account the respective mandates, capacities, priorities and comparative advantages of their various sponsors. The reconciliation of these two concepts would seem to provide the best framework for the implementation of the CCD, both in quantitative and qualitative delivery terms.

1.4 Positive competition

Multi source funding excludes that a single institution, multilateral or bilateral, would exclusively channel finance for the CCD. In the present circumstances such a single institution would, in any case, be necessarily under funded. Restricting funding to one source would discourage active mobilization of other sources. Rather, a healthy competition between various funding agents is likely to translate into improved product delivery. Quantitatively, the programmes will then reach higher funding levels. This is desirable in principle because demands for financial assistance under the Convention will likely exceed available supply. For illustrative purpose, the UNCED Secretariat has estimated the average total annual cost (1993-2000) of implementing the activities of programme 12 of Agenda 21, concerning desertification, at about \$1,2 billion including 1,1 billion from the international community on grant or concessional terms. From a qualitative point of view, the experience gained through various types of interventions from different funding partners will contribute, over the first decade of the implementation cycle, to the identification and development of best practice for partnership arrangements. The amount of wastefulness, inherent in the concept of competition, can be greatly reduced by ongoing coordination.

1.5 Ongoing coordination

Inter-Agency liaison of the classical type does not offer the level of continuous coordination that the implementation process will require. Programmes under the Convention cannot be reduced to the production of a planning document. Rather, programming would consist of a combination of iterative processes, associating in a participatory manner representatives from the affected developing countries, the communities in affected areas and the international community. Programming would thus shape itself through an evolving exercise, where corrective adjustments could always be introduced on the basis of monitoring and evaluation. In this case, rolling budget allocations would sustain the development, improvement and expansion of the programme. There would also be phased interactions and feedback between programme formulation, monitoring and funding. This process must be carried over time through a medium to long term coordinating and consultative function. The notion of "chef de file", has been proposed by the Club du Sahel/OECD to clarify the potential role of leading bilateral or multilateral donors in a context of multi-funding cooperation. It must be understood in the above context.

2 PARTNERSHIP MECHANISMS

2.1 Components of a partnership mechanism

The role of chef de file is only one element of a more complex scheme concerning partnership mechanisms. These mechanisms are to facilitate the launching of the Convention in building up trust and confidence between the partners and in providing the necessary support, financial, institutional and technical. Its components could be described as follows:

- a) a consultative and programming mechanism at national level, steered by the national focal point of an affected developing countries and associating international partners, focused on the national action programme (NAP) process,
- b) a participatory mechanism to insure participation and feedback from NGOs, CBO, and representatives of communities and collectivities of areas affected by drought and desertification into the national consultative process,
- c) a coordination mechanism among the donors at the national level to be animated by the chef de file, and
- d) the provision of enabling funding to secure the smooth development of the consultative process and to provide the necessary support to the programming process .

2.2 Coordination at various levels

The chef de file would thus serve a coordination function. He/she would function somewhat like a network facilitator in charge of delivering a specific output: assistance in the establishment of partnerships including agreements on programme and finance parameter. This may take place at national, sub- or regional levels. This paper focuses primarily on the role of the chef de file in support to a country launching a National Action Programme (NAP) under the implementation process of the Convention. However, some activities, notably in the field of scientific and technical cooperation, would become more cost effective when undertaken at a sub-regional or regional levels. The notion of chef de file might then be applied, mutatis mutandis, to structure the donors' response to the need for external support that will be identified in the context of such activities.

3 THE NOTION OF "CHIEF DE FILE"

3.1 Background

Historically, the notion of chef de file surfaced in an informal note circulated by the German delegation to INCD 7 in Nairobi, August 1995. The chef de file was then seen as a bilateral facilitator, active in:

- a) institutional support for the national structure,
- b) the circulation and exchange of information between the country and its international partners,
- c) the promotion of the participatory approaches advocated by the Convention, and
- d) the elaboration of financial mechanisms for the NAP, including the creation of facilitation funds.

The notion was subsequently reviewed and adjusted in the OECD and other fora. A chief concern has been to put the emphasis on the need to act in a concerted manner, or work harmoniously, without seeing the chef de file as a "leader", which carries a hierarchic connotation.

3.2 Tasks of the chef de file

At present, donor coordination is seen as an essential ingredient for the implementation of the CCD. The role of chef de file would be flexibly defined in each country, based upon the experience and circumstances in that country. The main tasks, likely to be generally applicable are to:

- a) assure coordination /consultation among donors,
- b) liaise on an ongoing basis with the national focal point,
- c) support the exchange of information regarding the consultative/programming process,
- d) facilitate donors assessment of past experience and assist in setting up an inventory of support actions,
- e) explore ways and means to strengthen complementarity of inputs and synergies to prevent duplication,
- f) encourage long term approaches and commitments, including the establishment of a workable monitoring and evaluation process,
- g) focus on elements of the NAP that may include a large percentage of development aid,
- h) assist the partnership mechanism in tracking financial resources flows including enabling funding for the programming process and longer term investments under the NAP,
- i) provide administrative support to discharge the above tasks.

3.3 The designation of a chef de file

A chef de file could be nominated by donor agencies, both bilateral and multilateral, from amongst themselves with the consent of the Government or could be designated by the Government with the consensus of donors. In any case, the agreement of both the Government and the donors would be necessary if the mechanism is to operate effectively. The chef de file would be selected on the basis of ability to conduct the above tasks and need not represent automatically the largest donor.

3.4 Operating principles

In essence, donor co-ordination constitutes an informal process that would include bilateral donors, multilateral donors and representatives of NGOs. The chef de file would operate in the first years of the implementation process with great flexibility (positive competition) and through team work (ongoing coordination). Amongst the number of factors that would facilitate his task, we may list the following.

3.5 Clarification of and consensus on the concept

In the long term, the success of the chef de file will not only depend on his/her abilities or on favorable local conditions but also on the widespread support for this type of mechanism that would emerge in the international community. At present, arrangements with the chef de file concept are in place in the following countries: Mali with Germany; Cape Verde and Chad with France; Senegal and Burkina Faso with the Netherlands. Such mechanisms are also being set up in other African countries. The mechanisms will be tested and improved in the light of these experiences and the Secretariat, together with the OECD, might be called upon to facilitate this assessment. The concept could also be expanded to other continents.

3.6 Bi/Multi tandem

A developed country Party may wish to play the role of chef de file in a given country but may decide not to increase its staff representation in this country accordingly. Yet, in order to be able to fully

discharge this function, its present field staffing might be inadequate. A way around this difficulty would be to devise a kind of bi/multi tandem. The chef de file may associate more closely to his work a specific resident multilateral institution to split the workload. Depending on local circumstances, their respective capacities and programmes, the UNDP or FAO field offices would be normal candidates for this type of tandem role.

3.7 Establishment of a relay system

The chef de file at the national level should work closely with his/her immediate colleagues: government officers, experts, NGO representatives, international civil servants, diplomats from developed countries and bilateral aid representatives. The group of developed country Parties and multilateral Agencies represented in the capital would form the core of the partnership team. But, in many countries, this circle of colleagues will not suffice to represent all the developed country Parties to the Convention that may have an interest, under Art. 6 of the Convention, in assisting the specific country. Actually, bringing assistance to an affected country Party from a developed country not yet present or active in the country would be a clear indication of the added value brought to the country by the Convention. But a mechanism must be set up to relay the requests for financial assistance to partners not represented in the country. The role of the chef de file would be to guarantee the validity and pertinence of the requests that would have been screened through the NAP consultative process; and to assist in identifying sponsors. In this respect, close liaison with the Convention's institutions, the Permanent Secretariat, and the Global Mechanism would be particularly useful.

3.8 Close liaison with the CCD bodies

The COP, served by the Permanent Secretariat, is the supreme body of the Convention and shall make the decisions necessary to promote its effective implementation (Art 22). It will, inter alia, promote exchange of information and monitor the progress of implementation. This review function should be rooted in the ongoing field level developments and lead to a gradual improvement of programmes delivery related to the Convention. This will influence consequent adjustments in the pattern of resource allocations by affected and developed country Parties. The chefs de file might wish to see their experience integrated in this process and work closely with the Secretariat to this effect.



THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN ASIA

Beijing, 28-30 May 1997

FIRST BACKGROUND NOTE UNDER AGENDA ITEM 2

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS: THE FINE EDGE OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DROUGHT AND DESERTIFICATION

1 THE THREAT

Hundreds of millions of people are finding that the earth is moving from beneath their feet as the land turns to dust. More than two thirds of the world's 5,200 million hectares of drylands have already been significantly degraded and the livelihoods of at least 1 billion people - about a sixth of the population of the globe - are at risk. 1,4 million hectares are affected in Asia. More than 110 countries, developed and developing, are threatened by desertification; others are increasingly affected by migration as people leave the degraded land. UNEP estimated that desertification costs the world 42 billion US\$ a year.

2 THE RESPONSE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The international community pressed for a treaty to tackle this growing physical and human crisis at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. After intense negotiations, the Convention to Combat Desertification - the first legally binding international agreement on the problem - was agreed in 1994; the Convention entered into force on 26th December 1996 and the first Conference of the Parties will take place in Rome in September 1997. This instrument breaks much new ground, pioneering a "bottom-up" approach that starts with the people actually affected by the crisis and replacing the concept of aid with one of partnership.

3 A PATHWAY FOR OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT AID?

The future of North-South official development assistance proved to be a major area of concern at the United Nations Social Summit which took place in Copenhagen in March 1995. At the end of this century, prospects for concessional aid flows and assumptions underlying multilateral cooperation development need to be revisited, taking into account the rapid changes altering the international environment. There is a demand for new instruments of cooperation which better channel the resources that the various parties are ready to invest. The Convention meets this need.

4 A BETTER FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Convention took stock of the results and evaluation of decades of official development assistance which flew to affected countries to combat drought and desertification. There has been a shared perception by developing and developed countries that aid lost some efficiency and impact because it was supply driven by the financing agency, handled top down by the programme planners, and, sometimes, delivered without adequate coordination at all levels.

Consequently, the principles of international solidarity and partnership (Article 3 of the Convention), the obligations of affected country Parties (Art.5) and of developed country Parties (Art.6) have to be realized through a concrete process. This process would respond to the Convention's basic approach (Art. 9), which emphasizes the preparation of National Action Programmes (NAPs) through the integration of strategic planning frameworks for sustainable development and a continuous participatory process.

The Regional Implementation Annex for Asia, in its Art. 4, spells out the steps of an institutional and consultative process leading to partnership arrangements between affected country Parties and developed country Parties. It further emphasizes the need for "integrated local development programmes for affected areas, based on participatory mechanisms and on the integration of strategies for poverty eradication into efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought."

5 A COUNTRY DRIVEN AID COORDINATION

Affected Asian country Parties to the Convention will be the key actors in the preparation, negotiation and implementation of NAPs. To this effect, each country will review past actions undertaken to fight desertification at the national level and identify the means required to implement the Convention. In order to build a broad based consensus around planned actions, a consultative process should unfold that will serve as a forum to achieve partnership agreements. The consultative group for the process would bring together specific partners from the aid community, (bilateral and multilateral agencies and NGO participants), the concerned Ministries, the scientific community, the NGOs and representatives of local collectivities in the drylands.

6 MODALITIES OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

Participants in a national consultative group determine the modalities of its management and operation. No blue print should be prescribed. However a possible approach could include the following steps.

To start with, the Government would take appropriate measures to facilitate the launching of the consultative process. This would include the nomination of a national focal point at the appropriate level, training, dissemination of information and promotion of public awareness about the Convention.

The Government would then review national budget allocations to better reflect desertification priorities. It would also rationalize and strengthen existing institutions concerned with desertification and drought, identifying the gaps in capacity building with a view to strengthening the preparation and implementation of the NAP. Finally, it would invite and facilitate the participation of representative NGOs, drawing on their experience with programme delivery for the management of natural resources in the drylands.

7 FROM THE GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES TO THE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

The Government would then facilitate meetings to ensure appropriate involvement, from the outset of the process, of all those that will bear responsibility for the intended activities, beginning with locally driven consultations with communities and local authorities. Special attention would be given to

a critical assessment of past and present action and programming frameworks. Lessons would be drawn and planning better integrated.

At the same time, international partners, most notably developed country Parties, would set up on their own an informal process of consultation to structure their dialogue with the national actors, in order to evaluate and respond to assistance needs. The Second Background Note deals with the critical issue of donor coordination.

8 POSSIBLE FUNCTIONS OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

Art. 13 on the support for the elaboration and implementation of action programmes emphasize predictability, cooperation and increased flexibility in keeping in line with the experimental iterative approach indicated for participatory action at the local community level. In this spirit, the consultative process would:

- (a) Harmonize interventions and approaches to maximize impact of assistance
- (b) Serve as a forum to conclude partnership agreements
- (c) Agree on implementation and evaluation indicators
- (d) Mobilize financial resources
- (e) Reorient assistance mechanisms to fit the Convention's approach
- (f) Maintain an inventory of sources of funding
- (g) Develop new models of scientific and technological cooperation.

9 A FORUM TO BRING THE CONVENTION DOWN TO EARTH

A national forum can take the shape of a single event, or, more probably, would progress through a succession of meetings between national and international partners, in order to sustain the various phases of evolution of an agreed upon NAP. In a sense, the Forum should be seen as a continuous, evolving process. Adoption of the NAP's provisions by the State and the sponsoring countries, in consultation with grassroots representatives, would constitute the conclusion of the partnership agreement, spelling out the role of each parties in the NAP preparation and implementation, specifying the modalities of its financing and execution. Thus, the relevant obligations of Parties (Art 4. Art 5. Art 6 of the Convention), be they affected or developed, would be met.

10 A FORUM THAT MEETS COLLECTIVE CONCERNS

This consultative process is expected to meet the interests of the various stake holders. It provides the State with increased resources and the necessary continuity in aid coordination. It gives due recognition to NGOs and opens for them better access to the development programming process. It associates the local communities to programme decision making concerning natural resources management and gives them enhanced control over resources invested locally. It insures the coherence of the policy framework that was sought by developed countries. To the benefit of all, it promotes flexible interactions and reliable partnership.



INTERIM SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION
SECRETARIAT INTERIMAIRE DE LA CONVENTION DE LUTTE CONTRE LA DESERTIFICATION



**DRAFT BACKGROUND PAPER FOR THE BEIJING CONFERENCE ON THE
ELEMENTS FOR A REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME TO IMPLEMENT THE
CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN ASIA**

Beijing, 13 - 15 May 1997

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DRAFT BACKGROUND PAPER FOR THE BEIJING CONFERENCE ON THE ELEMENTS FOR A REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN ASIA

PRESENTATION

Consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification (CCD), particularly Annex II, the Regional Implementation Annex for Asia, this paper is a background document. It will stimulate the process of considering a Regional Action Programme by the Beijing Regional Conference on the Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Asia. The purpose of the document is to carry forwards the conclusions of the Regional Conference on the implementation of the CCD in Asia which took place in New Delhi in August 1996. Its focus deals with the recommended approach in the formulation of the Regional Action Programme for Asia in combating desertification (RAP for Asia); suggested thematic areas for the setting up of regional programme networks; and the priority pre-implementation activities for the preparation of the Regional Action Programme.

As such, the paper is still presented by the Secretariat of the CCD in draft form and would be finalized in the light of the deliberations at the Beijing meeting.

Continuing regional and subregional exchanges are programmed by the CCD Secretariat with the objective of enhancing regional cooperation in the implementation of the Convention. It is anticipated that the outcomes of these consultative meetings will form part of the ongoing process of formulating the RAP for Asia.

1.0 OVERVIEW

The CCD has recognized the magnitude of the problems caused by pernicious land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It followed the United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD) in Nairobi in 1977 and the historic United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. The CCD was adopted in Paris on June 1994 and entered into force on the 26 December 1996. 16 Asian countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention as of first March 1997.

The challenge is considerable. Despite the vastness of the Asian continent, about 35 percent of the region's productive land are under severe threat of desertification, resulting in an enormous loss of productivity. Within the region the four main zones in which arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas are widespread are in: a) the Near and Middle East; b) Indian Subcontinent and Afghanistan; c) Central Asia; and d) China and Mongolia. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that desertification affects more than 1,341 million ha of productive land. The Global Assessment of Human Induced Soil Degradation (GLASOD) assessed that lost productivity through desertification in Asia is ranked as the worst among the regions in the world. The losses in investment and potential production per unit in Asia were the greatest compared with other regions. More than 50 per cent of the world's irrigated lands affected by waterlogging and salinization are also found in Asia, touching a large population.

Other countries in the region also face a range of land degradation problems such as water and wind erosion, physical and chemical deterioration of soil as a result of a complex interplay of socio-economic forces and human-induced factors such as deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices and overgrazing.

The implication of desertification for the Asian population goes far beyond the desertified areas. The correlations between desertification and food security, desertification and migrations and conflicts or the consequent rural exodus towards the cities need to be further explored. As more lands are becoming unproductive, poverty conditions particularly among the rural population are expected to worsen. In China alone, the population at risk because of desertification is estimated at 400 million! In sub-humid and humid South-East Asia, more than 44 million people are in rural areas which are affected by deforestation and associated land degradation. Since 25 percent of the Asian population growth will be in the rural sector, it can be conservatively estimated that the rural population in Asia and the Pacific will grow at a greater rate than the growth in the area of arable land. As projected, per capita area of arable land, which stood at 0.48 ha in 1950-1955, can be expected to decline to 0.25 ha by 2000. At the same time FAO reckons that world food supply should increase by 75% over the next 30 years to meet the needs of a growing population.

Against this backdrop, the strategic importance of the CCD has become obvious. The imperatives for developing a strategic action programme for combating desertification both at national and regional level need no further underscoring.

2.0 STRATEGIC THRUST OF THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR ASIA

2.1 Legislative and Policy Mandate

Article 13 of the Convention spells out the possible content of regional action programmes, while Articles 5 and 6 of the Regional Implementation Annex for Asia deal with intergovernmental cooperation within the region. These programmes would include affected country Parties, developed country Parties, competent international organizations. Article 6 indicates that regional activities may include:

- a) promoting and strengthening technical cooperation networks;
- b) preparing inventories of technologies, knowledge, know-how and practices, as well as traditional and local technologies and know-how, and promoting their dissemination and use;
- c) evaluating the requirements for technology transfer and promoting the adaptation and use of such technologies; and
- d) encouraging public awareness programmes and promoting capacity building at all levels, strengthening training, research and development and building systems for human resource development.

Article 2 of the CCD calls for consistency with Agenda 21 which broadly recommended the focal programme areas for fighting desertification and drought. In keeping with the thrust

of these areas, the strategic direction of the RAP for Asia would revolve on these areas, viz: (a) strengthening the knowledge base and developing information and monitoring systems for regions prone to desertification and drought, including the economic and social aspects of these ecosystems; (b) supporting countries through policy research and technical assistance in their efforts to combat land degradation through intensified soil conservation, afforestation and reforestation activities; (c) enhancing capabilities of institutions of affected countries to develop integrated development programmes for the eradication of poverty and promotion of alternative livelihood systems in areas prone to desertification; (d) enhancing governments' capacities with sectoral representation from the major groups in developing comprehensive anti-desertification programmes and integrating them into national development plans and national environmental planning; (e) assisting countries develop comprehensive drought preparedness and drought-relief schemes, including self-help arrangements, for drought-prone areas and formulating programmes to cope with environmental refugees; and (f) encouraging and promoting popular participation and environmental education, focusing on desertification control and management of the effects of drought.

2.2 Operating Principles of the Regional Action Programme

To enable countries to respond effectively to these issues, the Convention as its basic approach strongly recommended the formulation of National Action Programmes (NAPs). Its aim was to identify factors within the respective countries that contribute to desertification and the practical measures necessary to combat the degradation process and/or mitigate the effects of drought. As a support mechanism and cognizant of the urgent need for international collaboration, the Convention also called for the development of a Regional Action Programme and Subregional Action Programmes whose purpose is to harmonize, complement and improve the effectiveness of the national programmes. As a guide in designing the RAP, Article 15 of the Convention and the Regional Implementation Annex for Asia (Annex II) elaborated the scope of activities for the preparation of the action plan for Asia. For the purpose of ensuring consistency with the provisions of the CCD, the following operating principles are proposed in guiding the formulation of the RAP:

- 2.2.1. Country ownership of the RAP elements through thematic networks of national focal points - The core element of the RAP are the priority Thematic Programme Areas (TPAs) which shall form the basis for the setting-up of thematic programme (TP) networks. Countries participating in these networks will be nominating focal points and identifying their respective national activities consistent with the thematic areas. This arrangement will help promote country ownership of the activities. Members of a network may wish to design a specialized country institution/agency, a regional and/or sub regional institution to act as a task manager for the network, facilitating programme development and coordination.
- 2.2.2. Management support through a Regional Backup Facility - To provide the operational support for the various TP networks in enhancing the linkage mechanism and other perceived needs amongst the participating countries, a regional backup facility will be constituted following the establishment of the TP networks. The specific mandate, location and functional support for the facility will be established, on a demand-driven basis, upon constitution of the TP

networks by their task managers. Conceptually, the regional backup facility could be comprised of three major units, viz:

- a) Project Preparation Unit which is to be responsible for providing assistance in preparing the investment portfolios of the TP networks and their respective beneficiary countries;
- b) Capacity Building Unit which will manage capacity-building programmes identified and prioritized by the TP networks beneficiary countries, including strengthening of linkages amongst institutions of the beneficiary countries, enhancing information exchange on desertification control and management; and
- c) Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will assist beneficiary countries of the TP network to develop a reliable framework of programme indicators and milestones that can be used for monitoring and assessing the impacts of policies, priorities and programme activities undertaken by the beneficiary countries.

More generally, the Facility would service the regional institutional mechanism under 5 below.

- 2.2.3. Periodic consultations on resources mobilization - Articles 20 and 21 of the convention recognized the critical importance of providing adequate and timely provision of funds to support the requirement for combating desertification. Taking into account the progress of negotiations in the INCD on the global mechanism, a partnership process would have to be worked out at the regional level to ensure that adequate financial resources are rationally mobilized for RAP preparation and implementation in the spirit of Article 7 of the Asia Annex. Periodic consultations between donor institutions/countries and the TP networks will be set up with the end view of agreeing on a procedure where donors would conclude partnership arrangements in order to finance the best proposals.
- 2.2.4. Demand driven consultative process - The established TP networks shall follow a demand-driven consultative process in the formulation of the respective project portfolios. In the light of the other principles, the demand-driven consultative process shall culminate in the finalization of the networks' respective regional support programmes. The process is to be coordinated by the task managers in full cooperation with the national focal points and the involvement of regional institutions and interested donor countries.
- 2.2.5. Public-private partnership - Wherever feasible and viable a public-private partnership will be explored in the preparation of project portfolios supervised by the TP networks. The partnership arrangements can be explored with and between government, business, or non-governmental organizations. The areas of partnership could be in projects where technology has already been proven or innovative endeavours with great potentials such as promotion of use of bio-genetic resources, hydroponic or drip irrigation for intensive agriculture in arid lands, ecotourism etc

- 2.2.6. Operational linkages with the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism - In the light of the ongoing discussions on the proposed programme of work for the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the global mechanisms, the elements of the RAP and the proposed TP networks will be formulated along the lines of current negotiations. The TP networks, in consultation with the Regional Facility, shall establish operational linkage with the CST and the Global mechanism to ensure consistency in the formulation of the project portfolios at the regional level.

3.0 THE PREPARATION PROCESS OF THE BACKGROUND PAPER FOR REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR COMBATING DESERTIFICATION IN ASIA

3.1 Learning from Past Experiences: Building blocks for the formulation of the Regional Action Programme for Asia

Combating desertification is not a new proposition among countries in the region. Quite the contrary, a number of the successful technologies and approaches that are globally adopted for desertification control were developed and tested in the region. The expertise of a number of institutions involved in desertification control and management is even acknowledged. There were recorded successes in many of endeavours such as those that have been exhibited in China, Mongolia, India, Islam Republic of Iran, Israel, and some of the Central Asian States, particularly in the areas of research, actual rehabilitation programs (e.g., soil and water conservation, reforestation and agroforestry range management, sand dune fixation), and other capacity-building programs. The pursuit of these development approaches highlighted the fact that desertification and drought are issues that transcend boundaries. As countries in Asia share the same concern, the establishment of a regional network that can bring together the individual efforts of addressing desertification and drought issues was a perceived necessity. In a way, setting up the Regional Network of Research and Training Centres on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific (DESCONAP) was a first important initiative in responding to this need.

Building from these experiences is the context by which the Regional Action Programme is being developed. After decades of activities in dryland areas in the region and taking into account the rich and diverse experience of countries in the field of desertification control, the consolidation of those lessons is expected to provide the valuable basis in the formulation of the RAP for Asia.

3.2 The Preparatory Work for the Formulation of the Regional Action Programme

Supplementing the review and consolidation of past experiences in combating desertification in the region, consultative discussions with selected countries were undertaken. Under the auspices of the Interim Secretariat of UNEP, several consultative regional meetings were convened involving some of the key institutions and personalities that are committed to address desertification issue in the region. Guided specially by Articles 11 to 14 of the Convention the following significant regional meetings were conducted:

- 3.2.1. The Asia-Pacific Meeting on the Follow-up to the International Convention to Combat Desertification, Yangon, April 1995 - which endorsed several programmes deemed as priority for consideration in the formulation of a regional action, viz.: (i) Programme I - Information, collection, analysis and exchange; (ii) Program II - Research and development programme with a subregional focus; (iii) Development and transfer of technology; and (iv) Capacity building, education and awareness.
- 3.2.2. International Conference in Almaty, Kazakhstan, June 1995 - resolved that the areas for possible international cooperation between Central Asian, other CIS countries and Asian countries be focused on: (i) Water resources utilization in international river basins; (ii) formulation of sound and effective management of land resources that takes into account zonal specification of territories; (iii) desertification monitoring and establishment of early warning systems for unfavourable natural phenomena; (iv) cooperation in research, science and technology; (v) development and improvement of economic tools for environmental management; (vi) improvement of environmental impact assessment; (vii) conservation of biological diversity in arid and semi-arid areas; (viii) development of network of protected areas; (ix) development of environmental zoning and mapping; and (x) rehabilitation of lands affected by the activities of a military-industrial complex.
- 3.2.3. Sub-regional Consultation on the Implementation of the CCD Western Asia, Abu Dhabi, June 1996 - considered the following areas for action at the subregional level: (i) preparation of a detailed assessment and comprehensive appraisal of past and present activities; (ii) the collection and assessment of existing data and information on desertification in the subregion with the end view to formulating a monitoring programme; (iii) establishment of networking between national, regional and international institutions with the view to exchanging knowledge and experiences among member countries; and (iv) cooperation programme for strategic studies, research and development on the fields of socio-economic aspects of the promotion of nomads livelihood with particular emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems relevant for drylands management, management of population dynamics, and incentive programmes for youth mobilization in desertification control activities. This focus was due for further review by the Regional Conference for Western Asia to be held in Damascus in April 1997.
- 3.2.4. Regional Conference on the Implementation of the CCD in Asia, New Delhi, August 1996 - This important forum was the first regional meeting that covered discussion on the preparation of the Regional Action Program for Asia pursuant to Annex II of the Convention. The details of the resolution of the meeting are discussed in section 3.3 of this paper. The Delhi meeting endorsed the concept of decentralized programme networks and the identification of the cross-cutting elements which should be considered/included in the support programmes of each networks. A note on the consideration of the cross-cutting elements is contained in Annex 4.

- 3.2.5. Tripartite Round Table in Amman, January 1997, presented the results of the joint study between the Hachemite Kingdom of Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority on the protection of the ecology in the Rift Valley.

4.0 FRAMEWORK OF THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME

The adoption of the Convention on Desertification and its Annexes in June 1994 called for well-defined activities at the national, subregional, regional and global levels. Thus, the Regional Action Programme for Asia must see international organizations and agencies, regional institutions and non-governmental organizations play a much more active role in support of the Convention. Building on existing efforts and institutional arrangements at subregional or regional level, the RAP will be more responsive to the complex and increasing demands for combating desertification in the region.

4.1 General Objectives of the Regional Action Programme for Asia to Combat Desertification

Articles 2 (Objectives) and 3 (Principles) of the Convention stated the framework and the path for a global and concerted action to fight desertification. Guided by these principles, the formulation of the draft Regional Action Programme for Asia considers the following as its key objectives:

- 4.1.1. to develop a regional framework consistent with the objectives of the Convention, which advocates an integrated approach in combating desertification and drought, addressing the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of the processes;
- 4.1.2. to strengthen subregional, and regional institutions by harmonizing policy directions and enhancing technical collaboration through networking of institutions, technology sharing, application of research findings, provision of training and assistance in preparing or identifying investment priorities;
- 4.1.3. to provide a basis for the consolidation of the national long-term goals for combating desertification and work towards the harmonization at subregional and regional level of efforts in achieving the goals; and
- 4.1.4. to establish the appropriate institutional mechanisms that promote the conclusion of partnership arrangements and involve bilateral and multilateral financial institutions in order to channel substantial financial resources for regional cooperation in Asia;

4.2 Strategy for Achieving the Objectives

All activities proposed under this RAP will support ongoing national action programmes to combat desertification according to the principle of subsidiarity. Economies of scale will be achieved through regional cooperation in the fields of science, technology and capacity building. In addition, programme activities will link with ongoing initiatives in combating desertification in the region, including those undertaken by World Bank, ADB, UNDP, FAO, IFAD, ESCAP/

DESCONAP, UNEP, etc. The proposed action programme will be the first attempt at the regional level to address common issues of desertification under Thematic Programme Areas (see item c).

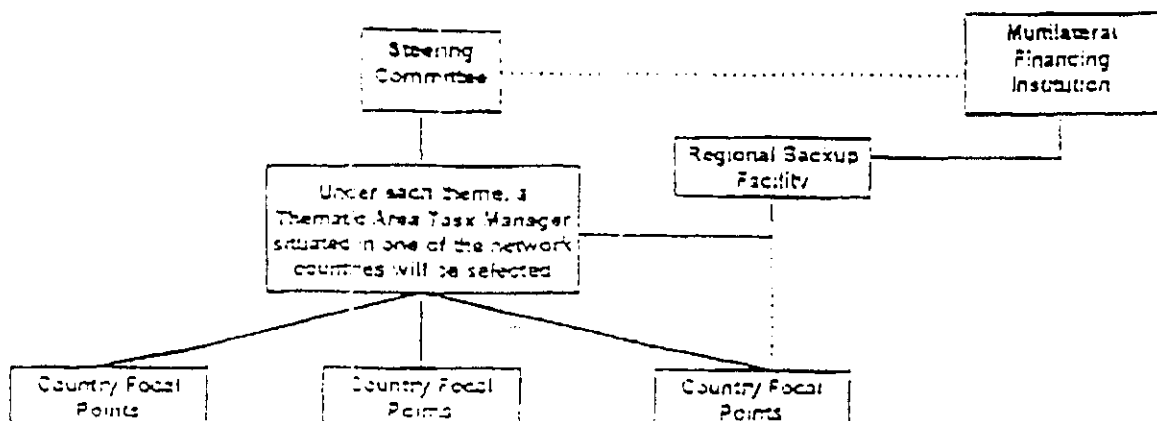
To attain the above stated objectives, Thematic Area Task Managers will be selected for each of the TP networks. Each thematic programme network will develop a regional support programme (RSP) which will implement regional priorities identified through the collaborative networking of the national focal points.

RSP would include studies, analysis of data and exchange of information, training, study tours activities, feasibility studies and project execution, regrouped, as appropriate, under the cross-cutting elements identified in the New Delhi meeting, viz.:

(a) scientific cooperation and technological transfers; (b) capacity and institution building; (c) education and awareness programme; (d) establishing an information and assessment network including exchange of information with countries across different climatic subregions; (e) drought preparedness and mitigation in the context of climate change; and (f) studies on the enabling macropolicy framework. See Annex 4. National activities, consisting of pilot activities, leading to investments where warranted, will be developed to support the overall strategy of the RSP. The initial phase of programme implementation will permit flexibility and allow for the participation of all communities, NGOs and agencies involved in developing the detailed design of RSPs.

The national focal point institutions that will carry out the regional support programmes and their associated national support activities will be selected on the basis of current performance and absorptive capacity. Maximum responsibility for implementation of the RSP will be delegated to the country level. Efforts to counter degradation of arid lands are based on policy changes, technology improvement, and local participation. All three elements will be addressed within the RSPs. The institutions in charge of implementing the RSPs and coordinating the Thematic networks as task managers can be regional, subregional or national institutions. They will be supported by a Regional Backup Facility (RBF) which is to be located in a regional multilateral institutions.

The overall coordination of the TP networks will be through the Facility on behalf of a Steering Committee for the implementation of the RAP. Fig. 1 below illustrates the functional arrangements of the TP networks.



The regional task managers for the TP network will:

- a) provide for improved communication and interaction on combating desertification and natural resource management issues at four levels: within countries, the region, the subregion, say Central or Western Asia, and (where this will strengthen the regional initiative) globally, by:
 - (i) supporting application of research and promoting comparative analysis of key elements (policy, social and technical) which have bearing on the desertification control;
 - (ii) create networking channels for technical exchange, and training on specific topics relating to resource degradation in arid lands. This would include issues of policy, education and technology; and
- b) liaise on a regular basis with the regional backup Facility on one hand and the national focal points on the other hand to define the content of the RSP within the RAP framework and coordinate progress of the work programme with all the stakeholders
- c) ensure interface with similar interregional cooperation initiatives;

The national focal points within the TP networks will:

- a) coordinate national governmental and non-governmental inputs and make an inventory of national resources available for the RSP;
- b) bolster human resources, institutional capacity and financial support required to manage environmental issues and natural resource use in arid lands;
- c) facilitate investment in priority areas by undertaking pilot and feasibility work that would lead to optimal investment in the application of proven technologies to curtail degradation of the natural resource base.

A holistic approach will ensure that technology, policy, and economic considerations that can be used to bring about sustainable natural resource management within the thematic field will be taken into account. Participants in the networks will come from within the identified institutions and from countries with state-of-the-art expertise in relevant issues. Sharing information of country experiences, policies, and technologies will provide a step towards cooperative action.

A low-cost participatory approach is envisaged through the involvement of existing institutions and local communities to implement some programmes. Participating governments start with the designation of national focal points from identified agencies to assist in the programme's implementation. The more specific definition of the roles is defined in Section ____ of this paper.

4.3 Thematic Programme Areas of the Regional Action Programme

On the basis of the preliminary discussions with the focal institutions in countries visited, the major thematic programme areas with strong enhancement of the proposals from each country are discussed below. It is to be understood that these areas are not restrictive and will depend on the perceived needs of the countries that will participate in the network. Annex I presents a summarization of the following discussions. The list of countries identified in the said annex does not in any way suggest participation of country or limit the listing of participants. It is to be taken in the context of being illustrative and would further expand following the Beijing meeting.

Thematic Programme Area 1: Desertification Monitoring and Assessment

Background

Dealing with desertification and understanding the dynamics of drought involve a high degree of uncertainty with complex technical, socio-economic and political variables. For this reason the role of science and technology cannot be over emphasized. Agenda 21 recognized the important contribution of science and technology to environmental monitoring, particularly in the optimum use of satellites for communications, navigation and positioning and meteorology.

Many countries in the region have taken advantage of space technologies, such as satellite-borne remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) for natural resources accounting and environmental monitoring. The current knowledge and understanding of the trends of desertification processes and drought dynamics in the region is a product of space technology applications in meteorology and climatology, satellite communication, the use of global positioning systems (GPS) for environmental and disaster monitoring. There is a need in the region for promotional efforts to bring about awareness, knowledge and understanding of space applications in policy making for desertification monitoring and assessment. This gap can be addressed in the RAP by focusing its action programmes in the areas of: (i) developing the framework for the conduct of assessment and monitoring on the status of desertification at regional and national levels using in combination the various systems of space-based technologies; (ii) support to national focal points that will enhance and improve the linkage of national databases with regional and international databases applying digital and communication technology (e.g., internet, e-mail etc.); (iii) developing a regional framework for the conduct of joint or collaborative information gathering and database consolidation of scientific information on desertification control, land and water management; and (iv) formulation of programmes that will promote the use of information generated by space-based technologies for policy and programme development. (v) transfer of information to field-level end users

Objective

The overall objective of this thematic programme area is to enhance the desertification monitoring and assessment capacities of countries in the region through the establishment of a network and the harmonization of approaches for its conduct in the region.

Regional Support Programme

A desertification and monitoring network will be established with participating countries in the region identifying those respective national institutions involved to be nominated as the focal points for the network. The network will be linked to relevant international institutes on multilateral bodies such as the World Meteorological Organization and other similar organizations doing work on the matter. Upon establishment, the network will be given authority to establish its programme of activities, including the identification and preparation of specific project portfolios to be implemented by members of the network. Working along with the Regional backup facility, the network will set up the protocols and procedures for the identification of priority project portfolios. On the basis of the regional consultations with selected countries in the region the broad area for programming will include information and scientific data exchanges, technical assistance through experts-exchange programmes, study tours and training programmes. More specifically, possible areas of focus shall be on (i) formulation of appropriate sets of desertification monitoring and evaluation indicators from national to regional levels; (ii) development of guidelines for monitoring and assessing developed indicators; (iii) development of a technical assistance and training programme for improving national capacities of key scientific and technical personnel responsible for monitoring and assessment works; and (iv) establishment of reporting and periodic review mechanism.

Thematic Programme Area 2: Agroforestry Management and Soil Conservation

Background

Although the focus of these interventions is on arid or semi-arid lands, it cannot be argued that most of these areas were once forested or naturally vegetated. Over centuries, trees have been cut and the hills converted to grazing lands of grass and scrub. Tree removal, cropping and overgrazing have resulted in severe soil erosion and watershed depletion. Where dams have been built, silting of reservoirs from poorly protected watersheds is occurring.

Woody species of trees and shrubs can be used to establish greenbelts and windbreaks. The planting of fruit and nut trees also aids watershed management and other environmental stabilization. There is a need to establish which species and seed sources are of greatest value in forest management systems which are compatible with animal grazing. The determination of the economic value for various species of trees, and sharing of agroforestry developments with other countries are a regional priority. This is particularly the case in hill areas where forest management as a means of watershed and erosion control is a major concern.

It is acknowledged that many countries in the region have adopted approaches and strategies for intensifying reforestation in arid lands. A number have even developed technologies that eventually were adopted globally, such as using drip irrigation to establish greenbelts along desert highways and shelter belts around newly developed orchards in the desert. As a result of practical methods of inoculating indigenous species with their symbiotic nitrogen-fixing bacteria to hasten growth of trees in arid and semi-arid lands, many hill lands have been planted with trees, as have areas around new towns and in water catchment sites in drier areas. Another approach is the establishment of seed banks of native species of trees and shrubs which will be used to reforest wildlands and areas prone to erosion. In several countries, governments are active with afforestation programmes for hill lands, and establishing windbreaks and greenbelts. In many

countries there is a mix or interface of afforestation with orchard tree planting involving olives, almonds and figs in the drier areas and other fruits where there is more rainfall. Much practical work has been undertaken to combine tree planting with hillside stabilization to reduce rainwater runoff, and forest areas are increasingly used for recreational purposes.

The principal constraints to the establishment of sustainable forest management and soil conservation in the semi-arid and arid lands include: limited precipitation; the high cost of afforestation and orchard development; financial losses incurred by landowners during the years between planting and before fruit trees reach full productivity; interdisciplinary skills and the institutional capacity required for forest management are yet to be fully developed in the region; traditional communal land tenure systems and rights to utilize forest resources do not allow for sustainable forest management at current levels of population pressure.

Objective

The overall objective of this theme is to curtail the process of wide-scale deforestation and watershed degradation through the development and promotion of economically viable and environmentally sound technologies for expanding tree cover and their incorporation into farming systems.

Regional Support Programme

Focal points will establish a Regional Forestry and soil conservation Network through the research institutions in the region. The participating countries national institutions would be responsible for implementing the identified priority project portfolios and would constitute the principal members of the Regional Forestry and Soil Conservation Network; the network will also be linked to relevant international institutes through an electronic mail system which will facilitate implementation of many of the network tasks. Cooperation could be expanded to countries facing similar challenges in climatically different ecosystems.

The objectives of the network are to disseminate information and technical expertise, and to collaborate on developing and implementing instruments and site application for reforestation, afforestation and soil conservation in arid lands. Potential programme activities of the network include the following: (i) establishment of a network among researchers and practitioners to review the experience of agricultural production, watershed management and soil conservation initiatives; (ii) stimulation of the introduction (e.g., N-fixing leguminous species) and application of appropriate and more productive technologies (e.g., disease control, integrated pest management) on agroforestry systems; (iii) contribution to capacity building and strengthening the ability of government research, extension and support agencies actively engaged in the establishment of nurseries, the re-establishment of forest and the introduction of agroforestry practices throughout the region (e.g., pruning, mulching); (iv) undertake a socio-economic evaluation of the programme with a view to identification of potential options for investment in further application of this methodology to similar areas in participating countries; (v) promotion of information exchange, joint scientific and technology research programmes including the consideration of know-how on indigenous and environmental technologies for managing waterlogging and soil salinization; and (vi) promote capacity building for the adoption of technologies and approaches and their possible integration into education curricula.

Thematic Programme Area 3: Rangeland and Pasture Management in Arid areas with particular emphasis in controlling shifting sand dunes

Background

The principal economic value of arid and semi-arid rangeland is provision of grazing for livestock, primarily sheep, goats and camels. Livestock production is one of the major economic and subsistence activities of the arid and semi-arid lands of the region. Rangelands also constitute the largest area of degraded lands in certain zones of the Asia region. The two principal types of rangeland degradation result from: (a) overgrazing, which reduces plant cover and the proportion of plant species that can be consumed by livestock; (b) removal of range vegetation for agricultural production; and (c) energy consumption.

A number of factors influence these forms of rangeland degradation. These include: reduction in the area of rangeland resources available for pastoral activities (due to privatization and conversion of range to other forms of land use); shifts away from traditional livestock management practices (including provision of water and feed supplements in areas where stocking rates should be limited); land tenure issues, and increasing population. Overgrazing and unsustainable forms of rangeland use are reducing rangeland productivity and biodiversity and, in some instances, are causing desertification.

The generally low priority assigned to tackling range degradation through improved range management has been associated with lack of awareness of the main issues on the part of both policy makers and resource users, and the low level of political influence of pastoral groups. There is an urgent need to identify and establish rangeland management systems that are productive, environmentally sustainable, and socially equitable.

Objective

The overall objective of this theme is to re-establish sustainable systems for managing rangelands and livestock production in the rangelands in an economic and socially equitable manner. This will entail the definition, development and application of participatory approaches to rangeland management in order to enhance recovery of vegetative cover to increase rangeland productivity, and improve options for social and economic development for those communities using these fragile areas.

More specifically, within this component, it is proposed to assess and monitor the present utilization of rangeland resources, and to identify technologies and development activities that demonstrate the potential for improving rangeland resource management to ensure conservation of the resource base and maximum returns from its management (primarily in terms of livestock products) throughout the region.

Regional Support Programme

A Network for Rangeland and Pasture Management in Arid Areas will be established through the focal points in the appropriate institutions or agencies doing extensive work on these areas. The participating country national institutions would be responsible for implementing the identified priority project portfolios and would constitute the principal members of the regional

rangeland and pasture management network. The network will also be linked to relevant international institutes, such as ICARDA and appropriate national and international NGOs having a proven track record in this field.

The network will share information and technical expertise and collaborate on developing and implementing instruments and site application for strengthening the capacity to manage rangeland and livestock in arid zones of the region. Possible programme activities shall include the following: (i) consolidating existing knowledge, both from within and outside the Region, on rangeland production systems, including the management of different livestock species, the application of various grazing regimes, and the influence of intra-and inter-seasonal rainfall variations on range resources and productivity and pastoralists' management strategies, and controlling shifting sand dunes and checking wind erosion; (ii) exploring the physical, social and economic factors and issues that influence range management practices. Under this theme, efforts to counter the degradation of arid areas will necessitate local participation, assisted by policy adjustments (e.g. subsidies, and tenure, customary laws on water rights, etc.); (iii) stimulating the introduction and application of innovative approaches to the management of range resources through support for pilot activities and the transfer of information on range and livestock management initiatives throughout the region (e.g. synchronization of lambing, mass selection); (iv) capacity building and strengthening of government technical and extension agencies throughout the region in the crucial area of rangeland and livestock management; and (v) researching the strategic issues and problems underpinning the overall objective, with a view to identifying opportunities for investment in more productive and sustainable rangeland and livestock management systems.

Thematic Programme Area 4: Water resources management for agriculture in arid, semi-arid and dry humid lands

Background

Sustainable use of the limited supplies of water and the avoidance of degradation of irrigated soils are complex issues affecting all countries of the region. Overirrigation combined with inadequate irrigation systems and, in water-scarce areas, the reuse of drainage water for irrigation, has led to waterlogging and salinization. Improved efficiency in the use of marginal water is being explored in several countries through use of brackish aquifers and treated wastewater.

Processing and use of urban wastewater, the effective exploitation of brackish aquifers, and the use of limited poor quality water resources for sustainable agricultural productivity, will require a thorough integration of existing activities and interventions through policy and economic incentives. The sharing of experience in this area amongst countries of the region would be useful. Management of marginal water and the soils receiving it will require improved technologies and new investments in wastewater recycling, brackish water processing, soil management, and soil and water quality monitoring. Water use efficiency can also be improved through introduction of drought and salinity tolerant crops.

Major constraints to the use of marginal water and reclamation of saline soil for agriculture include: insufficient precipitation on irrigation water for leaching salts from agricultural soils; the high investment cost of treatment facilities for wastewater; outdated regulatory standards

governing the use of saline and waste and surface waters in agriculture; inadequately defined national policy and institutional responsibility for management of marginal waters and saline soils, and insufficient technical expertise and access to ongoing activities in this field of research and development.

Objective

The overall objective of this theme is to promote cost effective approaches to the use of scarce water resources, to minimize further soil degradation caused by salinization, and to test methodologies for the reclamation and use of already degraded soils.

Regional Support Programme

A Water Resources Management Network will be established with the focal point in the appropriate institution or agency doing extensive work on these areas. The participating countries' national institutions would be responsible for implementing the identified priority project portfolios and National Support Activities and would constitute the principal members of the regional network. The network will be linked to relevant international institutes (e.g., The International Irrigation Management Institute - IIMI). To facilitate the implementation of its tasks, the network members will be linked through an electronic mail system.

The network will share information and technical expertise, and collaborate on developing water resources management programme in arid and dry lands and improving the use of marginal waters. Potential programme activities for the network shall include the following: (i) consolidating existing knowledge, both from within and outside the Region, on the management and sustainable use of marginal water resources and saline soils for agricultural production; (ii) establishing links among researchers and practitioners to foster a synergism in the development and application of innovative technologies used to manage water resources and saline soils for agricultural production (e.g. frequency and volume of irrigation in relation to water quality, water delivery and drainage systems); (iii) contributing to capacity building and strengthening the ability of government research and service agencies throughout the region in the crucial area of water resources and soil management in arid land agriculture; (iv) establishing a monitoring system to assess the long-term effects on soils of marginal water use; and (v) encourage the participation of the private sector in promoting technologies proven to meet the objective of water resource conservation in arid, semi-arid and dry humid lands

Thematic Programme Area 5: Strengthening Planning Capacities for Drought Preparedness

Background

The vastness of the Asian continent gives a different characterization of the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas of the region owing to this diversity, making it equally difficult in formulating a single strategic approach to drought management. It is imperative to make a risk-analysis assessment of the Asian region in relation to the frequency of drought occurrence as well as its severity. Drought is a recurring climatic phenomenon that should be distinguished from climatic change. However, the frequency of drought is certainly affected by climate change. Historical analysis of climatic variations and drought occurrence is very important as a basis for risk assessment. Moreover, existing models of projected climatic change in the above regions as

a result of the postulated greenhouse effect should also be used in risk assessment, particularly with regard to possible changes in aridity and drought frequency. Finally, an assessment has to be made of the possible effect of climatic change and drought on desertification, which ought to be exemplified by actual historical cases which can serve as a reference framework and database.

In parallel with the risk analysis, an assessment has to be made concerning the impact of climate change, drought and desertification on both agricultural production and food security in the four Asian subregions. Societies-preparedness response options must be reviewed. Livestock, production systems, whether extensive (semi-nomadic), intensive, or as mixed farming, should be included as a separate part of agricultural production and food security. The assessment has to include a historical evaluation to capture climatic, environmental, societal, cultural and political variations with time, such as specific period characterized by drought and desertification. The agricultural production of food is only one element, albeit a very important one, in the analysis of food systems and food availability, which together relate to food security. Other items to be included: climatic and environmental review by region in relation to agricultural (& livestock) production and food security, food production figures by category with time, food reserves in relation to food security, vulnerability (environmental, economic, social), bottom-up and top-down related causes for changes in agricultural production and food security, as well as recommendations for improvement in food production and food security with increased drought preparedness and desertification control.

Objective

The overall objective of this theme is to enhance preparedness and strengthen institutional capacities to plan for drought preparedness and management with the end view of developing early warning systems and medium-range forecasting methodologies for improving food security.

Regional Support Programme

A Planning for Drought Preparedness and Management Network will be established with the focal point in the appropriate institution or agency doing experienced work on this subject matter. The participating countries' national institutions would be responsible for implementing the identified priority project portfolios and would constitute the principal members of the regional network. The network will be linked to relevant international institutes, and to facilitate the implementation of its tasks the network members will be linked through an electronic mail system.

The network will share information and technical expertise, and collaborate on developing this drought preparedness and management programme in arid and dry lands. Potential programme activities for the network shall include the following: (i) consolidating existing knowledge, both from within and outside the Region, on drought preparedness and management; (ii) establishing links among researchers and practitioners in the development and application of innovative methodologies and approaches to drought preparedness; (iii) contributing to capacity building and strengthening the ability of government research and service agencies throughout the region in the crucial area of drought management, particularly in planning and development of food security strategies.

*Thematic Programme Area 6: Implementation of Locally Developed Initiatives*Background

This area would be closely linked to National Action Programmes. Noting that the poor are both agents and victims of desertification, it is necessary that decentralized institutional arrangements and economic incentives be developed to assist the poor in managing natural resources. The Convention's poverty orientation explicitly reflects the main development challenges facing many of the signatory countries. To eradicate poverty, the Convention proposes measures linked to the development of rural markets, expansion of agricultural diversity, establishment of adequate price and tax policies, promotion of drought-resistant crops, and application of integrated dryland farming systems. The attainment of these aims not only demands a reappraisal of the financial aspects of the development process but also an intensive resource mobilization both domestically generated and through official development assistance.

Similarly, efforts to alleviate desertification should be closely coordinated with the affected communities, promoting their participation at all levels of decision-making. Given the strong social dimensions of sustainable development, the Convention has focused on: a) promoting effective participation at local, national and regional levels of NGOs and local populations, including women, farmers, pastoralists and their organizations; b) encouraging the use of cooperative mechanisms, including NGOs; c) responding to the specific needs of local populations, promoting traditional and local knowledge, and strengthening extension and dissemination; and d) giving due consideration to local area development programmes.

Objective

The overall objective of this theme is to support a comparative analysis of locally developed initiatives undertaken by communities which adopt specific and innovative approaches in combating desertification. The intention is to pilot these experiences and consolidate the results for possible replication on a region-wide scale.

Regional Support Programme

Focal points in selected countries will implement pilot local schemes and constitute a Support Network for Locally Developed Initiatives. The task of the participating countries' national institutions would be to identify local communities on desertification control technologies or schemes. The community shall be responsible for implementing the priority pilot project portfolios and selected representatives of NGOs and CBOs would become the principal members of the thematic network. Experience from the pilot schemes will be consolidated by the task manager of the network and can be used for further expansion. Initial funding sources will be obtained to support the initial works under the network.

The network will share information and technical expertise, and collaborate with communities on developing local area development activities in arid and dry lands. Potential programme activities for the network shall include the following: (i) decentralized land-resource management by delegating responsibility to rural organizations; (ii) strengthening rural organizations in charge of village and pastoral land management; (iii) establishing and developing local, national and intersectoral mechanisms to address land tenure issues with particular attention

on protecting the property rights of women, pastoral and nomadic groups living in rural areas; (iv) providing appropriate incentives to small farmers, pastoralists, and communities for better land-management practices; (v) promoting of rural credit and mobilizing rural savings through the establishment of rural banking systems; and (vi) developing infrastructure, as well as local production and marketing capacity.

5.0 PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME

The Regional Implementation Annex for Asia provided the parameters by which the regional institutions shall operate. The New Delhi conference acknowledged in August 1996 that it would be technically difficult to assign a single regional institution to spearhead the RAP implementation. For this reason a pragmatic approach was advocated: the establishment of several networks built around the thematic programme areas. The networks shall have the task of overseeing the strengthening of institutions and mechanisms for coordination and cooperation at the national, subregional and regional levels.

In the context of the present constraints and realities faced by multilateral agencies like the United Nations System, the proposed arrangements could not count on substantive up-front infusion of resources for its operations. Task managers of the thematic networks; their national focal points should thus be entrusted with resources-mobilization efforts, assisted as appropriate by multilateral institutions. Each network's regional support programme could become the object of a specific partnership arrangement with institutions or agencies in developed country Parties.

To flesh out the details of this institutional framework for the launching of the RAP, an Experts Group will be constituted following the Beijing Meeting. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for setting up the Experts Group to Review the Framework for the Development of the Thematic Programme Networks under the RAP appears as Annex II and is a matter for consideration at the Beijing Meeting.

As envisioned, the Experts Group will look into the following institutional arrangement:

5.1 Setting up of Steering Committee

A Steering Committee would oversee overall implementation of the programme and would be responsible for providing general guidance on technical matters for addressing the desertification issue in the region in consonance with the provision of the Convention and the Asian Annex. The Steering Committee would include membership of the participating governments, contributing donors and, when necessary, outside experts. The Steering Committee will review and coordinate the preparation of the work programmes and budgets of the Thematic Programme Areas network and their respective regional support programme facilitated by the Regional Backup Facility.

5.2 The Establishment of the Regional Backup Facility (RBF)

The RBF is seen as a cost effective, demand-driven support structure for the networks. The facilitation of the function of the TP network largely hinges on the creation of the Regional Backup Facility which is contemplated to be set up in response to needs identified during the

initial phase of implementation of the RAP. Its location could be in one of the regional multilateral institutions. The facility would support and report to the Steering Committee and would be composed of one senior Facilitator, support staff, and ad hoc consulting staff as required. Responsibilities of the RBF would include:

- a) secretariat of the steering committee and overall support and coordination of the RAP;
- b) assistance to the TP networks in the design of the RSPs, including:
 - (i) preparation of project portfolios for possible financing institutions;
 - (ii) coordination and facilitation of links among programme components; and
- c) manage capacity-building programmes identified and prioritized by the TP networks; and
- d) assistance in the development of a framework of programme indicators and milestones for monitoring and assessing impacts.

5.3 Consultative Review of the Thematic Process

Thematic review meetings will be held on a regular basis for each thematic Regional Support Programme in order to ensure that the objectives of the programme are achieved. Participants to the meeting will include: the network's task managers, national experts responsible as focal points for implementing the thematic RSPs, representatives of supportive multilateral or bilateral institutions, independent specialists, and the facilitator.

The overall objective of the thematic review process is to assess collegially progress of the programme and recommend measures to maintain or improve the efficiency of operations as necessary. The first thematic review meeting will establish the first-year annual work programmes, budgets and monitoring indicators for each RSP. Thereafter, the meetings would be held on a regular basis to:

- a) review work accomplished by the RSPs;
- b) analyze collegially the successes and setbacks experienced in the previous year, review past and future RSP activities and assess progress in relation to monitoring indicators;
- c) strengthen the methodological content of the proposed programmes in response to the assessment; and
- d) review and if necessary, adjust institutional and financial arrangements;
- e) if necessary, redefine progress.

5.4 Programme Evaluation

Towards the end of the initial five year period (1997-2002), RAP programme evaluation will be undertaken by independent consultants. The evaluation team will assess programme performance using all available information including performance indicator data supplied by the RSPs and field visits. This evaluation could be used to plan and design future programme activities.

The objective of the evaluation is to assess the overall conception and performance of the programme, including the institutional aspects. In particular, the evaluation would:

- a) review implementation of the programme in relation to stated objectives, targets schedules and budgets;
- b) identify the crucial factors, both positive and negative, that have influenced implementation of the programme;
- c) evaluate the extent to which programme objectives have been achieved; and
- d) draw lessons from the experience to date and recommend implementation arrangements in order to improve the course of possible future actions.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the major role for ensuring the implementation of the RAP lies with national Governments and their designated specialized institutions, individually and collectively. However, the active cooperation and participation of international and regional agencies and bodies and multilateral financial institutions is a prerequisite for its successful implementation.

The United Nations bodies and agencies and multilateral financial institutions should, to the fullest extent possible, provide technical assistance and financial support for the implementation of the RAP. In the context of the Global Mechanism that is currently being negotiated, financial support should also be explored from countries, and also from donor agencies, organizations and NGOs. Major multilateral financing institutions shall be invited to assist the implementation of the regional action programme through technical assistance and concessional funding. UNDP is requested to take a leading role in capacity-building and provide funding support for the Regional Backup Facility.

6.0 PROGRAMME PREPARATION, PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

The national reference framework of the RAP would be at the level of preparedness of countries to implement desertification control programmes as embodied in their respective National Action Programmes (NAPs). Precisely for this reason, the Convention gave significant attention to Article 10 which elaborated on the scope of the NAPs. While some countries in the region have completed their NAPs, there are a number that are still in the process of preparing one or are yet to begin. The present efforts of encouraging countries to develop their respective NAPs in keeping with article 10 of the Convention should be continuously pursued.

The key to the immediate operationalization of the RAP is the entrusting of the function of task manager to a competent national institution or an intergovernmental institution located in the region. The task manager, assisted by its partners, would then establish guidelines for a functional network of focal points, prepare and develop the RSP and liaise with the Facilitator for overall RAP coordination. The task manager would eventually be confirmed in his functions by the national focal points.

The next phase of the RAP preparation includes activities leading towards the setting up of the TP networks. The follow-up of the Beijing Meeting can focus on the next steps:

- a) Implementation of the conclusions of the Beijing Meeting, which is a political statement of commitment to establish the TP network in the region; and
- b) Adoption of the TOR that will set up the Experts Group to Review the Framework for the Development of the Thematic Programme Networks for the Asian Regional Action Programme in Combating Desertification.

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**SUMMARY OF POSSIBLE THEMATIC PROGRAMME AREAS
FOR THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR ASIA**

PROPOSED PRIORITY THEMATIC PROGRAMME AREAS (TPA)	INITIAL LIST OF COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN THE TPA	FOCAL INSTITUTIONS
<p>Theme 1: <u>Desertification Assessment and Monitoring</u> - Covers the enhancement of desertification monitoring and assessment capacities by harmonizing approaches and the use of space-based technologies. The development of a framework for desertification indicators shall also be covered by the thematic area. Scope of interventions include, capacity building, joint research and training.</p>	<p>Armenia</p> <p>People's Republic of China</p> <p>India</p> <p>Islamic Republic of Iran</p> <p>Israel</p> <p>Kazakhstan</p> <p>Turkmenistan</p>	<p>Ministry of Environment Protection and Underground Resources</p> <p>Ministry of Forestry; National Desertification Monitoring Center</p> <p>Ministry of Jihade Sazandegi, Forest and Range Organization Particularly their Remote Sensing Unit</p> <p>Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research</p> <p>Ministry of Ecology and Bioresources</p> <p>Desert Research Institute</p> <p>ACSAD (Arab Center for Studies of Arid Zones in Drylands)</p>

PROPOSED PRIORITY THEMATIC PROGRAMME AREAS (TPA)	INITIAL LIST OF COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN THE TPA	FOCAL INSTITUTIONS
<p>Theme 2: <u>Agroforestry Management and Soil Conservation</u> - Will address issues relating to the curtailment of wide-scale deforestation and watershed degradation through the development and promotion of environmentally sound technologies and approaches.</p>	<p>Armenia Bangladesh China India Israel Jordan Korea Nepal Pakistan Philippines Thailand</p>	<p>Institute of Applied Ecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences National Research Center for Agroforestry; Central Arid Zone Research Institute and Central Research Institute for Dry Land Agriculture Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research Ministry of Agriculture Forestry Research Institute Department of Forest, Department of Soil Conservation and Forest Research and Survey Center Pakistan Forest Institute</p>

PROPOSED PRIORITY THEMATIC PROGRAMME AREAS (TPA)	INITIAL LIST OF COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN THE TPA	FOCAL INSTITUTIONS
<p>Theme 3: <u>Rangeland and Pasture Management in Arid Areas with particular emphasis in Controlling Shifting Sand Dunes</u> - Re-establish sustainable systems for managing rangelands and livestock productivity in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humids. Particular emphasis is laid on controlling shifting sand dunes.</p>	<p>Australia India Islamic Republic of Iran Jordan Kazakhstan Pakistan Turkmenistan Uzbekistan</p>	<p>Arid Forest Research Institute; Indian Grass Land and Fodder Research Institute Ministry of Jihade Sazandegi, Forest and Range Organization Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Ecology and Biological Resources Arid Zone Research Institute Desert Research Institute</p>

PROPOSED PRIORITY THEMATIC PROGRAMME AREAS (TPA)	INITIAL LIST OF COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN THE TPA	FOCAL INSTITUTIONS
<p>Theme 4: <u>Water Resources Management in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas including the Use of Marginal Water for Agriculture</u> - Will promote cost effective approaches in utilizing scarce water resources in arid areas, minimize further soil degradation caused by salinization and test methodologies for the reclamation of degraded soils. The topic area will include problems relating to soil salinization and waterlogging.</p>	<p>Australia</p> <p>China</p> <p>India</p> <p>Islamic Republic of Iran</p> <p>Israel</p> <p>Jordan</p> <p>Kazakhstan</p> <p>Nepal</p> <p>Pakistan</p> <p>Turkmenistan</p>	<p>CSIRO</p> <p>Institute of Applied Ecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences</p> <p>Central Soil Salinity Research Institute; Indian Institute of Soil Science; G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment.</p> <p>Ministry of Jihade Sazandegi, Forest and Range Organization</p> <p>Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture</p> <p>Pakistan Agricultural Council; Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources.</p>

PROPOSED PRIORITY THEMATIC PROGRAMME AREAS (TPA)	INITIAL LIST OF COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN THE TPA	FOCAL INSTITUTIONS
<p>Theme 5: <u>Strengthening Planning Capabilities for Drought Management and Controlling Desertification</u> - Will enhance institutional capacities to plan for drought preparedness and management with the end view of developing early warning systems.</p>	<p>China</p> <p>India</p> <p>Israel</p> <p>Kazakhstan</p>	<p>China National Research and Development Center for Combating Desertification, China National Committee for the Implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.</p> <p>Central Research Institute for Dry land Agriculture</p> <p>Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research</p>
<p>Theme 6: <u>Implementation of Locally Developed Initiatives for Combating Desertification</u> - support locally developed initiatives undertaken by communities which adopt specific and innovative approaches in combating desertification</p>	<p>Open to all countries in the region which can mobilize villages to implement integrated local area development projects in combating desertification.</p>	

Terms of Reference for the setting-up of the Experts Group to Review the Framework for the Development of the Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) under the Regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification in Asia

1.0 BACKGROUND

The current level of effort to make the Convention fully operational have now achieved a significant milestone following the entry into force of the convention on 26 december 1996. This paves the way for the convening of the first Conference of Parties (COP) scheduled to be held in Rome this year, and will in effect signal the translation of the principles reflected in the convention to a more concrete set of programme of actions in the global effort of combating desertification. In the light of this development, many governments sees a unique opportunity for further advancing the effort particularly in the area of firming up the networks and linkages, and global, regional, subregional and national institutions that have been doing extensive work in combating desertification. Many member countries have supported this process of RAP preparation and would now wish to see that the momentum gained be sustained. A key measure of progress for the process is the establishment of visible and functional networks of institutions for combating desertification in the various regions. In this vein, this proposal is being put forward.

2.0 RATIONALE

The Convention to Combat Desertification provided the framework for the development of an appropriate implementation mechanism at the global, regional, subregional and national levels. Developed and developing countries that have committed themselves to this process are now currently engaged in the identification/formulation of the respective policies, strategies and programmes. At the regional level the same commitment is apparent as work in the preparation of the regional action programmes by institutions having mandate for such tasks is likewise progressing. In the Asia region, considerable efforts have been undertaken along this line and there is now a necessity to look into the next steps to ensure consistency of efforts among the key players (i.e., members states and their concerned institutions, international organizations, regional organizations and institutions, multilateral agencies, donor countries and the civil society organizations concerned with the desertification issue) involved in the process. A major step is the Beijing Conference, which is expected to provide directions for strategically planning the next course of action beyond the first Conference of the Parties to the CCD, which will take place in Rome in September 1997. At the outset, the critical element for this process is the formulation of programming processes and identification of resources that will carry on the present efforts to the next phases of implementation. Precisely, this proposal is prepared to present the logical steps that would have to be carried out in order to attain the objectives of the RAP.

3.0 STRATEGIC THRUST

The present regional initiative comprises the preparation of a background document for the Beijing Regional Conference on Combating Desertification in Asia. A significant element of the background paper is the initial identification of possible thematic programme areas for networking and collaborative linkages of institutions in the region. The aftermath of the Beijing Meeting will essentially be the translation of the operating principles for the Regional Action Programme (RAP) into the implementation of the regional networks for the various thematic programme areas. To ensure that this process takes place, the following related steps could be considered:

- a) setting up an Experts Group that will review the framework for the development of the Networks of Thematic Programme areas of the Asian RAP and corresponding identification of the task managers for the networks;
- b) constituting of a Regional Interagency Task Force in support of the regional action programme development process;
- c) establishing of an International Contact Group including the Donor countries and multilateral agencies in support of the regional action programme development process; and
- d) convening the various Consultative Forums of the respective Thematic Programme Area Networks starting with the first one no later than the autumn of 1998.

Broadly, the above activities will be the next important milestones for regional cooperation in Asia which are projected to take place within the next five years (1997-2001).

4.0 DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EXPERTS GROUP

In the light of the task ahead and considering the current levels of effort in the preparation of the RAP in Asia, the most immediate step is to set up the Experts Group that will review the framework for the development of the thematic programme networks (TPNs) areas for the regional action programme. This Experts Group shall have the following Terms of Reference:

- a) Review the complementarity, scope and coverage of the respective thematic programme areas identified in the background paper for the Beijing Meeting;
- b) Formulate criteria for determining the membership of the networks, taking into account among others the capacity of institutions to significantly and effectively participate in the networks;
- c) Develop the Terms of Reference for setting up the Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs);

- d) Facilitate the identification process of the possible Task Managers who will serve as hosts to the programme area networks on an interim basis until such time as they are selected/confirmed by the national focal points of the network.
- e) Develop the TOR for the setting up of the Regional Interagency Task Force in support of the RAP development process which will include the options for soliciting support resources to cover the cost of formulating the RAP for Asia; and

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF OUTPUTS

The key outputs of the Experts Group shall be the as follows;

- a) Proposals and recommendations on institutional arrangements and co-ordination mechanism for the development of the thematic programme networks under the RAP;
- b) Firming up of the Thematic Programme Areas and review of proposals for the identification of Task Managers for the TPNs; and
- c) TOR for the Regional Interagency Task Force and the International Contact Group.

6.0 TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS (1997- 2001)

- a) Setting up of an Experts Group that will review the framework for the development of the Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) of the Asian Regional Action Programme - (initial work could commence on the autumn of 1997) [will cover the constitution of the Experts Group, Preparatory Meeting of the International Experts Group and the subsequent Consultative Meeting of the Group];
- b) Constitution of a Regional Interagency Task Force in support of the regional action programme development process (would commence in mid-1998) [will cover the constitution of the Interagency Task Force, preparatory meetings and subsequent meetings which could extend up to 2000 depending on the final TOR for the Group];
- c) Setting up of an International Contact Group including the Donor countries and agencies in support of the regional action programme development process, including arrangements for the RBF - (will commence in spring of 1998); and
- d) The various Consultative Meetings of the respective Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) - (will commence in 1998 or 1999 and will have scheduled meetings of two TPNs per year, which could continue to meet until 2001);

- f) The RBF will be established in 1999. Consistent with the formulation of benchmark indicators, the Facility will periodically review and monitor the progress of work of the respective networks (once established) and check the consistency and relevance of the RAP with the articles of the Convention, the agreements in the Conference of Parties and the work programme the Committee of Science and Technology.

Consideration of Cross-Cutting Elements

Reflecting the discussions and resolution of the New Delhi Regional Conference held in August 1996 the following discussion covers the cross-cutting elements of the RAP that would become part of the regional support programmes to be identified under each thematic networks of the RAP.

1.0 SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

The region has an established research and development (R&D) capacity in technical areas. Many countries have R&D institutions of good standing, specially in agriculture. Significant progress has been noted in examining alternative and sustainable systems of production and livelihood. While the R&D in agriculture is quite established, research work on biotechnology, information technology, environmental assessment, and socio-economic issues related to desertification need more work. Following areas are recommended: (i) supporting the development of joint research agenda with inter-institutional collaboration for its conduct; (ii) increased effort in socio-economic research; (iii) formulation of programmes at national and regional level that promote the validation and use of traditional and indigenous knowledge and integrate them with modern technology; (iv) consolidating research information and results on recorded local knowledge and indigenous practices for arresting desertification and predicting droughts; and (v) identification of centres of excellence for desertification and drought R&D and eventually build them as the national focal points for the desertification control network.

2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

No government in the region would take issue with the notion that enhancing people's participation is an essential process for promoting sustainable development. Accordingly, it is through the participation process where the general desire and aspirations of the people are reflected in the development discussions. Beyond generalities, however, there is a wide divergence of definition of people's participation, particularly on what it means and on how to achieve it. The point of disagreement perhaps can be attributed to the "stance" of how the process is viewed. The process should start with consensus-building exercises among the key players and agree that participation would mean the recognition that stakeholders have a direct influence and share control in the development initiatives that are being contemplated. Among the promoters of people's participation there should also be acceptance on their part to work within the local social system and be willing to work collaboratively with the key stakeholders in the formulation of whatever interventions are envisioned. As a principle, therefore, the RAP should consider adopting this view of participation and consensus building. By taking this stance, the RAP would also recognize that there is no such thing as a "perfect model" for participation but would concentrate more on ensuring the process to be locally acceptable.

Similarly there should be recognition that poverty alleviation and the widespread provision of basic needs and social development infrastructure can most effectively happen with active and informed beneficiary participation. This is to be complemented by decentralization of authorities to local governments, which should include the ability to raise financial resources and to plan and manage development at the local government level. In the context of the RAP, the focal actions for ensuring public participation in combating desertification are: (i) documentation and consolidation of participatory methods and tools based on regional experiences, particularly in combating desertification and mitigating drought; (ii) support in developing regional strategic programmes that will strengthen the participation of major groups, specially the role of women, NGOs, the youth and indigenous communities in the fight against desertification; (iii) support in the development of regional programmes that will develop the capacities of institutions to implement the participatory approaches to planning desertification control programmes at local levels; and (iv) support for the conduct of social researches that will determine the most appropriate participatory approaches that can be applied in arid, semi-arid, humid and sub-humid areas of the region.

3.0 EDUCATION CURRICULA PROMOTION AND AWARENESS RAISING

Increased public awareness is a means to bring attention to environmental issues. But the dynamics of raising public awareness is more complex than just bringing people's attention to the key issues that impact the public as a whole. The aspect that needs further emphasis relates to translating available information on the process of desertification and the impacts of drought for institutions and the public in general to take positive action. But sound information which is to serve as a basis for adopting the proper policy framework is not sufficiently available. This limits the options of relevant groups and authorities to decide and even apply policy and programme interventions that are environmentally sound. Moreover, in some countries political commitment that is necessary to translate public awareness into action is still lacking. With respect to environmental education, although some considerable progress has been achieved in these areas, further efforts are still wanting in developing education and training activities which emphasize context-specific, problem-solving approaches and actions using culturally accepted modalities. Given these gaps, the RAP can concentrate on the following action areas: (i) technical assistance to refine and re-orient current environmental education plans and materials to a more action oriented and context-specific education, training and information programmes; (ii) development of desertification control demonstration programmes and action framework that will suit the various agro-ecological zones for training and showcasing; (iii) formulation of a programme that will strengthen cooperation and collaboration involving the media, NGOs and government institutions in disseminating materials and promotional campaigns for combating desertification and anticipating the disastrous impacts of drought; and (iv) technical assistance for governments, particularly in desertified zones for improving curriculum for schools and out-of-school programmes, including adult education and women's training courses that incorporate desertification control and practical approaches to drought mitigation.

4.0 CAPACITY AND INSTITUTION BUILDING

Capacity and institution building, particularly at national levels, is a critical prerequisite for attaining success in the fight against desertification in the region. The need transcends all levels of administration from communities in areas that are affected by severe desertification processes up to the highest levels of government charged with the responsibility of steering the

country to economic progress. Generally, many countries in the region are pursuing various levels of capacity-building efforts as possibly reflected in their respective national Agenda 21 programme in partnership with international agencies like UNDP, UNEP, ESCAP, and multilateral financing institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Similarly, some well-off countries in the region have initiated capacity-building outreach programmes such as the Technical Cooperation for Developing Countries (TCDC) for their less developed neighbours. Although these activities are commendable and steps in the right direction, there are still deficiencies in putting coherence to the overall capacity-building programmes pursued by governments. The directions of capacity-building programmes are still sectoral in scope and are pursued without consideration of the long term impacts to the environment. Many of the capacity-building programmes and policies of government are not in congruence to the sustainable development objectives they profess to pursue. Capacity building in the region should be viewed as investments towards a more progressive future. The development of skills and technology that are aligned along national sustainable development objectives is becoming a regional imperative which should largely focus on enhancing domestic technological capacities through research and development, improving human capital formation and opening opportunities for affected sectors by making the labour force flexible to the demands of the situation.

Given the existing levels of effort by the various institutions in the region against desertification, the draft RAP should envision a more defined role of these institutions with the objective of attaining greater effectiveness and efficiency in carrying out their respective tasks. Among others, the RAP should focus on the following action areas for strengthening the role of the regional institutions: (i) undertake an assessment of existing programmes; and (ii) with inputs coming from the national action programmes (NAP), develop and consolidate a regional training programme which is to become capacity building framework for desertification control.

5.0 REGIONAL COOPERATION AND LAND DEGRADATION ACROSS DIFFERENT CLIMATIC SUBREGIONS

The varying agro-ecological zones in Asia elicit different responses to the problem of land degradation taking place in the region. These responses differ as well from country to country depending on a host of influencing factors such as the social, cultural, economic and political milieu. There is, however, some degree of commonality among these countries with respect to land degradation, i.e., the process and its triggering causes which are mainly due to poverty, inequality, and perpetuation of environmentally destructive policies. The Asia-Pacific has a wealth of experience sectorally responding to different land degradation processes which include among others the following (1) Soil and water conservation for areas where degradation is largely caused by water that occurs mostly in mountainous or hilly areas as in Nepal, Thailand and Afghanistan; (2) reforestation and agroforestry in areas that were formerly timber rich but have been deforested due to over logging or illegal cutting which are common in South East Asia, for instance, in Thailand, Laos and Vietnam; (3) range management in savannah types of vegetation where overgrazing has threatened the ecological stability of the area; (4) salinization in flat agricultural areas (due to over utilization of irrigation and waterlogging) has reduced the crop productivity potential of these areas which are common in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and other South Asian countries; and (5) sand dune fixation in arid and semi-arid areas to neutralize the advance of deserts and sand dunes as in China, Mongolia and Central Asian countries.