



ACSAD activities to support the implementation of the UNCCD Report submitted to the committee for the review of the implementation of the convention (CRIC 5)

With the references to the decision 9/cop7, on the fifth session of the committee for the review of the implementation of the convention (CRIC5), also recalling decision 11/ cop1 on procedures for the communication of information and review implementation and decision 10/cop7. ACSAD carried out the following activities to support the implementation of UNCCD, Since (CRIC4) Nairobi – Kenya 17-28/10/2005, ACSAD carried out the following:

1. Continued to implement SRAP activities in Syria and Yemen :

A. In Syria :

- ACSAD in cooperation with the local communities , Syrian Ministry of Agricultural and Agrarian Reform, and the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment rehabilitated 100 ha of Syrian steppe in Tholithliate area, 35000 *Salsola vermiculata*, 1000 *Pistacia atlantica*, 1000 *Raetama*, 500 *Amygdalus orientalis* 1000 *Zizyphos lotus* and *Zizphos spina christi*, seedlings had been planted, in growing season 2005-2006.
- Design and implement contour ridges for seedlings planting.
- Detailed hydrological study. Conducted to determine location for haffir Agricultural pond next to the project area to collect an amount of 30000 m³ of water in winter season to be used by local communities, as well irrigating new planted seedlings twice in this first summer season.
- Carrying out applied research for different rain water harvesting to be disseminated in large scale in Syrian steppe, these harvesting measures are :
 1. Diamond. Shape
 2. Cresent shape
- The Diamond shape water harvesting is implemented on the land with slope 5.6 % , *Pistacia atlantica*, *Zizyphos lotus* , *Amygdalus orientalis* , *Raetama* and *Zizphos spina christi* seedlings planted at the lower angle of the Diamond.

- Semi circle (Crescent shape) bunds for rain water harvesting with radius 6 m and land surface with slope 5.6 %, seedling of *Pistacia atlantica* and *Salsola vermiculata* planted at lower angle of the semi circle.
- Evaluating bund spacing in the contour bunds method for rain water harvesting the tested bund spacing are 5,8,12 m on the land surface with slope 7 % the seedlings planted are of *Salsola vermiculata*, and *triplex halmius*.
- Final SRAP workshop for the pilot area was implemented between 28-29/5/2006 accompanied by a field day. The workshop attended by 80 participants, in addition to ACSAD experts. Sixty participants are owner herds and twenty participants are from Minister of agricultural and Agrarian reform NGOS ...etc. The lectures presented in this workshop are view of SRAP project, soil conservation practices implemented in the pilot area, water harvesting measures carried out in the pilot Area, vegetation cover rehabilitation in the degraded areas of the pilot area, social economic studies of the pilot areas. Remote sensing monitoring of the pilot areas. Field day attended by 80 participants most of them are Herds owner.

B. In Yemen:

- The water harvesting measures are completed and rehabilitation of degraded terraces are in its way in the farmers fields.
2. ACSAD experts participated with the Libyan experts to prepare the Libyan National action program (NAP) document this document prepared and sent to UNCCD , as well as prepared soil Map of Libya and soil data base according to the SOTER system.
 3. ACSAD started rehabilitation of degraded land in Kordfan province (Amjomet site). The activities implemented include.
 - Carrying out soil survey study and land use.
 - Carrying out mechanical barrier to fix sand dune and to hold sand encroachment.
 - Fixing the sand dune Bodies by chess-squares and planting 20000 seedlings of plant by the name of *Marth* and 1000 seedlings of Arabian gum.
 - Establishing nursery with capacity of 150000 seedlings yearly.
 - In cooperation with GTZ and in the framework of UNCCD implementation. Hill lake is established in the mountain area of Jabla province Batmouh village in Syria to conserve water to be used by the local communities for domestic supply and supplement irrigation for summer crops. Other mountain lakes will be constructed in Syria and Jordan in the summer of 2006.
 4. ACSAD experts carried out the vegetative cover in Jordan steppe (sites Sopha , sobhia , Sora) and determined the grazing capacity. The result of the vegetative cover survey in Sora included, the plant density ranged

between 11.7-45.2 plant /m² and the forage production is 800 kg/ha . the grazing capacity is 1.4 head /ha for 180 days. The vegetation cover in Sopha and Sobhia site studies showed , the vegetative cover is 62.89 % in 2005 compared with year 2000 , 46.3 % . the average vegetation cover yield is 1.15 tons / ha the forage production was 609 kg/ha in low lands and 536.2 kg/ha in hilly land. The grazing capacity is 2.12 head ha/ for six months.

- Socio economic studies also carried out for the two sites in Jordan steppe land. The studies showed in Jordan steppe the family size is with 9.6 person while in Jordan as a whole is 6.2.

5. On the occasion of the year of deserts and desertification combating (2006). ACSAD implemented a workshop on the state and prospects of the Arab deserts 14-16 /5/2006. This workshop was organized by the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry land in cooperation with green Gulf Research Center (GRC), the food and Agriculture organization of the united nations / regional office for Near East (FAO / RNE), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP/ROWA) , and the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab region and Europe (CEDARE). The workshop attended by 40 participants from 18 countries and organizations.

- The scientific papers presented by ACSAD experts and by Arab and foreign specialists in the following subjects: ACSAD efforts in combating desertification and monitoring land degradation, desertification effects and the methods of combating desertification in Saudi Arabia, grazing system environment (a case-study from Saudi Arabia), Status of forest and range lands in Saudi Arabia, the natural capacities of the Libyan deserts their exploitation, monitoring land degradation, biological diversity and sustainable management, Iraqi experiences in sand dune fixation, the Omani efforts in desert land exploitation , state of Syrian steppe, exploitation of the Moroccan deserts and Tunisian oases and the important socioeconomic development of the Arab deserts.
- ACSAD as well produced a film about deserts and desertification in cooperation with UN ESCO (Cairo Office) and UNEP/ROWA , this film is distributed to all Arab states.
- ACSAD submitted paper with the title of efforts on combating desertification to be included in the papers to the Arab Council ministers for Environment for selecting the PRIZE of this council.
- Human capacity building : ACSAD implemented several training courses for the Arab engineers concerned with natural resource, in Arid and semi arid zones management and combating desertification according to the main causes of desertification . on job training courses for water harvesting measures in the SRAP Area in Syria and in the pilot areas of Jordan steppe land (Sobhia and Sopha) for the engineers who are participating in the implementation.
- Training courses on range land management , water harvesting and biodiversity carried out in Der Zoor, SRAP pilot area. 20 participants participated in this training course. Lectures delivered in

this training courses are range land management and biodiversity, estimation of range land grazing capacity, plant density determination and its application. Evaluation of the methods used for measuring vegetation cover. Field work were carried out to apply the above topics. Methods of water harvesting accompanied by field trip to SRAP site to expose the trainees to the measures implemented in the field. plant samples collect and their classification.

- During the period from 6 – 12 April 2005 in Damascus ACSAD in cooperation with GTZ organized a sub regional workshop entitled: Hot Spots and Bright Spots. Experts from the remote sensing centers in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria presented assessment of some areas identified as Hot Spots and Bright Spots on their Countries. Trier University and ACSAD first trial results of its Regional early warning products were presented and a trip to 13 different spots were visited during the period from 8 – 11 April for the calibration of the time series analysis model.
 - During the period 30 July to 4 August 2005 in Damascus ACSAD in cooperation with GTZ and the General Organization for Remote Sensing GORS organized training workshop entitled : Land Degradation Monitoring System - Local and Regional Level . 14 participant from 8 Arab countries attended the training. During the training the time series analysis using TimeStats software package were introduced and training of the trend detection using the software on Pathfinder and Medokads data archive and creation of maps representing different aspects in time-series beside a case study including field trip.
6. ACSAD carried out the survey for rangelands vegetations cover for 3.5 million hector (Syrian steppe). The number of surveyed species during the study period reached 210. Thirty five of them belonged to the shrub perennials groups. It comprised *Artemisia herba-alba*, *Haloxylon articulatum*, *Salsola vermiculata*, *Ananasis syriaca*, *Atriplex*, *Leucoclada*, and *Atriplex halimus*. The herbaceous perennials were 46 species; 6 of them belonged to grammineae family and 40 belonged to other perennial families. The number of annual herbaceous species in the studied region reached 119. Sixteen species belonged to grammineae; the most important of them were *Hordeum glaucum*, *Koleria pheoides*, *Schismus arabicus*, *Eremopyrum orietale*, and *Bromus*. The forbs comprised 93 species; the most important of them were *Salsola volkensi*, *Astragalus*, *Plantago*, *Erodium*, and *Trigonella*. The average plant coverage percentage was 55% in the project region during the spring season. The shrubs covered 11%, herbaceous perennials covered 7%, and the annuals covered 37%. The average plant density was 84.3 plant /m² during the spring season. The annuals density was the highest 73.4 plant / m², herbaceous perennials was the second in rank 12.7 plant / m², the shrubs ranked third (0.74 plant / m²). The average plant productivity was 486.5 kg/ ha and the average forage productivity was 233.1 kg/ ha.

Based on the plant species survey in different survey areas, which included, structure, coverage, density, frequency, and dominance, twenty plant population were recognized. The study showed that the average animal stocking rate was 1.33 animal / ha /180 day. The animal stocking rate ranged between 0.1 and 3.1 animal / ha /180 day in the project area.

7. ACSAD presented the first results of its Regional early warning for desertification products during several international conferences and workshops and several publications were published in this domain.
8. For the purpose of Monitoring and Assessment of land degradation ACSAD and UNEP/ ROWA called for Arab Expert from 6 countries to meet during the days 16th and 17th of May 2006 to discuss the preparation of a regional project document that deals with that issue, this activity will keep on going till fulfilling its task .