

The Commonwealth of Dominica



National Action Programme to Combat Land Degradation Roseau 2004

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Preface:

The National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Land Degradation demand a broad inter-sectorial approach at all stages - formulation, implementation, and monitoring - and will be implemented within the context of Dominica's present socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental situation. The formidable challenges facing Dominica in addressing land degradation problems is the result of the absence of coordinated planning and overwhelming need to have a detailed land use plan. These problems are stemmed primarily within the context of a small population, worsening poverty and micro increase in the utilization of natural resources. Presently, almost fourteen (14%) percent of the total land area is vulnerable to some land degradation from anthropogenic origin and productivity of accessible agricultural land has shown significant declines.

1.2 The Goals and Scope of the NAP:

1. To provides a framework for the implementation of the UNCCD.
2. The implementation of UNCCD programmes and activities has the potential of addressing other socio - economic problems such as poverty, which is consistent with government's major goal of poverty alleviation.
3. The NAP offers opportunities of highlighting land degradation and desertification issues incorporated within the long – term plan.
4. To define and demarcate all identified areas of land degradation on Dominica with the use of measurable and usable benchmarks and indicators, stemming from the necessary programmes and activities identified.

5. Assessment of the needs of these degraded lands.

6. Reinforcement and development of the all stakeholders addressing land use and land management. (NGO/CBO, Forestry, Agriculture, Land and Survey Dept., Physical Planning, Environmental Health etc.).

7. Updating and organizing restoration ecological and conservation (example watershed) programmes to improve land conditions.

8. Establishing research priorities into agro forestry among other land uses for and with local communities.

9. Strategizing a framework that will encourage grass-roots action; facilitate early detection of land degradation that will be cost effective by using local infrastructures and services to provide more reliable results.

The scope of this report has confined itself to the setting out of the implementation strategy to facilitate the combating land degradation activities within local communities. The implementation of the NAP has been designed following the Dominica's programme approach towards development which shall be elaborated in **section 6**. The integral part of the NAP strategy is its synergetic spill-off from other conventions which already are at the implementing stages of projects and activities within a number of local communities.

Essentially, the components of projects and activities have been presented in terms of their objectives, outputs, activities, relevance to other programmes, institutional framework for implementation, time frame, cost estimate, sources of funding. In the selection of the programme components, linkages with other programmes were sought. For instance, linkages with programmes on good governance, poverty alleviation and sustainable and associated livelihoods.

This NAP will not address stated budgets and resources as these are not known before hand and are within the control of the other institutions and agencies. For this reason, the Convention is not entirely in comparison with others. The NAP programme goals, budgets and resources will be more or less estimates and approximated since NAP relies on the initiative of the prospective partners who may conduct their affairs and activities within their own budget and time constraints. In essence, this report shall not prescribe to prospective partners how to conduct their affairs. Instead it provides an enabling framework of encouraging, supporting, and promoting desires of its partners through activity and policy decisions within its structures. This report will also not venture into technical matters and activities of any nature in its attempt to facilitate the achievement of partners' desires within the NAP.

1.4 Developments and Preparation of the NAP:

In Dominica, the most outstanding policies and plans have been generated since the seventies, Forestry for example. There has never been any direct policy to address land degradation.

The basis for the formulation of the National Action Plan is to establish an outlined that will incorporate all activities needed at a national level to combat land degradation before it happens rather than monitoring degradation after it has occurred with inter-institutional support.

During the formulation process of the plan, the results of one-on-one consultation carried out with natural resource managers, institutions, groups, farmers, resource users, were taken into account. The international initiatives; UNCCD, the Convention on Biodiversity, the Convention Frame on Climate Change, CITES, Biosafety Protocol were all incorporated and consolidated to develop the synergies for further enrichment of this plan.

This NAP is the major implementation tool of the UNCCD and its production is guided by the principles set by Article 3 of the UNCCD. The principles stress the importance of consultation and participation in the implementation of the UNCCD. The NAP preparation process began with community and regional consultations aimed at sharpening awareness among the various stakeholders. In addition, the NAP development came about with repeated evidence of land

degradation as these impacted directly on Dominica's environment. At a number of workshops held under various conventions, the UNCCD concerns were tabled. Cases in point are at the Public Consultation of the amendments made to the Forestry and Wildlife Act held in August 8th, 2003 and at the Dominica Climate Change National Communication, Phase II Project held in November, 25th, 2003 in recent times. There, Land degradation was centrally discussed. The NAP came about through this processes and others much earlier and the submission of various agencies, institutions, communities priority initiatives to Combat Land Degradation. This process will be completed with Cabinet's approval and endorsement of this NAP.

Since the beginning of the 1990s there has been documentation of issues and concerns related to the environment. There has also been documentation of proceedings of workshops, seminars, conferences / conventions and meetings on environmental issues, particularly on Biodiversity and Climate Change. The NAP report is a product of the analysis of most of these documents and it has benefited from insights of various informants / stakeholders through community workshops, meetings and National For a.

SECTION 2: LAND DEGRADATION ON DOMINICA:

2.1 Introduction

This section intends to expose the Land Degradation problem in Dominica with an aim of putting the NAP into context. The section opens by defining land degradation and present a brief exposition of the environmental state on the Island. Also, a brief overview on the causes of land degradation on Dominica is presented.

To date, there exist a number of national legislations working in one way or another to combat land degradation, avoiding the island to reach desertification status as marked on a global level. This plan will not address desertification in its real sense but rather refer to land degradation and factors attributing to its increasing threats. This report presents the National Action Programme which details a strategy and programmes aimed at the implementation of the UNCCD.

2.2 Defining Land Degradation:

Land Degradation for Dominica is generally regarded as the depreciation of the status of the naturalness of the land and there lies all upon it, failing to meet the true productive ability and capacity cause by either anthropogenic and or natural influences, hereby leaving a recorded pattern and change.

2.3 The status of Land degradation on Dominica:

The magnitude of land degradation in the country is not comparable with others in the sub – region. Presenting the extent of land degradation on Dominica is a difficult task especially in the absence of documentation assessing the extent of changes in the land and lack of statistical data on land use. As a result, such discussion will be confined to a limited number of variables, often referred to environmental problems, which include soil erosion, biomass productivity, use of farm chemicals, uncontrollable planning, and development in the construction industry (solid waste problems etc), overexploitation of forest resources in accessible areas, a gradual reduction of forest cover from 75% to 66% over the last 23 years (1979 Hurricane David), expansion of the agricultural frontier, tourism and natural disasters.

These mentioned above are degradations that put a risk on all resources, from forest to biodiversity that they shelter and the environmental services that these ecosystems offer. Increasingly, Dominica has had some improvement in its management structures for the environment and towards enforcement of such variable structures....such are with institutional frameworks. Systematically, changes in particular environmental issues are evident. Land degradation is a complex and widely varied ordeal for Dominica.

It has been estimated that just under fifteen percent (14%) of all land out of state ownership (45%) is nearing an eroded state. Although there are differences in the magnitude of soil erosion from one micro habitat to another, the rate of soil erosion and land degradation remain constant and is greater influence by natural catastrophes rather than man. It has been estimated that soil erosion and siltation in the Mattieu/Layou Disaster Area has settled in the last 2 years and this trend is likely to continue (James, C. Personal Communication, 2003). This productivity estimate may be meaningless without a statement on the optimum productivity of all lands. Intensive use of farming chemicals further encourages land degradation through soil acidification via leaching. Currently, the use of soil acidifying nitrogen - based fertilisers is quite high (Agricultural Census Report 1998).

The areas already air-marked for restoration works are mostly along the west coast road from Mahaut to Salisbury. These areas have very intensive degrees of invasive species of lemon grass (*Cymbopogon citrates*) which are annually burn , yet contributing to their prolific nature and retarding the growth of native species (see table 4.1). Apart from their massive soil restructuring, their annually burning (anthropogentially) contributes to added threats of person's households and property

2.4 Causes of Land degradation:

Factors causing land degradation are numerous and they do not operate in isolation. The magnitude of the causes of desertification vary with the level of socio - economic development and resilience of the physical environment. Dominica's ability to recuperate with fast vegetative cover reflects that little evident of land degradation exist. Land Degradation is fundamentally a result of the depletion, removal and loss of the island biodiversity from the impact of human activity and natural disasters together with fire, deforestation and reforestation, road maintenance, crop farming practices, mining, population distribution patterns attributed to human activities, topography and climatic processes, especially drought (see section 2.5 for added detailed causes identified).

Dominica has identify the need to develop indicators to land degradation is presently in an era of its relation to the close proximity to its strong socio-spiritual relationship between man and the environment, which is now becoming into an era of dominance of man over nature without any ecological ideologies. Historically, Dominica has failed to clearly document the changes in its environment that has been attributed by culture change, technological development and scientific thoughts.

The Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division have impartially identified some causes of land degradation on Dominica, but no specific indicators to such has been developed. Hence such measurable tools to indicators are merely centered around socio-economic indicator (farmers returns), soil fertility, Agricultural markers and indicators, meterological data, ecological measurements and assessments, environmental indicators incorporating coastal changes, human habitation patterns and activities.

2.5 Halting Land degradation:

There are several challenges to be overcome in the implementation of initiatives to combat land degradation. These challenges include the rapidly growing unplanned housing and industrial constructions in the absence of a detail country land use and demarcation plan, a declining economy and stagnating food production from failures in the agricultural sector also linked with improper farming systems and land management practices. Other challenges are unsustainable use of natural resources, indiscriminate waste disposal, fire (annually), spread of invasive species, natural disasters, loss of traditional knowledge, and pollution/waste control. Indigenous Territory practices along with poverty are also major socio - economic challenge to combating land degradation.

SECTION 3: THE NAP COMPLETION PROCESS

3.1 Foreword:

This section covers the role of stakeholders in the implementation of the NAP. There is also a suggested format of project presentation and project approval criteria. Also, there is a section on funding of combating land degradation projects and other activities.

3.2 NAP Execution Process:

The basic principles of the NAP are founded on discussions and participation. Suggested here is a simple two - staged process for the execution of the NAP which ensures that the principles and priorities set in this National Action Plan on Land degradation are fulfilled.

3.2.1 Held Discussions:

The development of meetings to begin the preparation of the NAP began at the point of all the consultations on the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan between March and August 2001. The consultation stage was not set primarily to address this NAP, but rather consolidated all findings which were directed to Land degradation. The meetings and consultations meet with representatives of the private sector, government departments, and NGOs. The production of the NAP was undertaken via a series of activities such as sub-regional and regional workshops, meetings pertaining to issues on land degradation, one to one consultations, questionnaires, and community meetings.

3.3 Specification of Roles and Responsibilities:

The implementation of the NAP will involve a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The specification of roles and responsibilities is crucial to minimise confusion emanating from overlap and duplication of activities. This enhances efficient co-ordination of activities undertaken by the various stakeholders see sections 4.2 and 4.3.

3.3.1 The NAP:

The NAP proposes programmes for implementation under the UNCCD under a potential funding mechanism. Since the Convention to combat desertification is related to other conventions such as the CBD and UNFCCC, the NAP recognises the importance of other initiatives within the framework of the relevant conventions, hence the development of the NAP simultaneously after the Dominica's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2001-2005.

3.3.2 The Steering Committee to Combat Land Degradation (SCCLD):

The Steering Committee to Combat Land Degradation remain the same in composition to that of the steering committee for the Convention on Biological Diversity, IACC and UNFCC. The responsibility of this committee is predominantly the same as with its previous and ongoing responsibilities on decision - making and influencing policy on other Conventions. Its major task is to facilitate and promote the formulation and submission of projects, and to oversee the implementation of projects by interested parties. The committee shall periodically compile existing projects and suggest a menu of viable projects for execution. In addition, the committee may offer assistance, upon request by prospective partners, in the initiation and design of projects. Using a specified criteria, developed by the committee, it shall be responsible for the approval of projects submitted by participating stakeholders. The Committee shall not do any of the following without consultations with the participating partners:

Impose projects on stakeholders.

Decide on the agent responsible for the execution of projects.

Decide on the time-frame for the execution of projects.

Though the Committee may provide advice, it shall not decide on the budget and type of technology and other resources to be employed in the execution of the projects.

Decide on the site / location where the project would be executed.

3.3.3 Participating Partners and Stakeholders:

This is a composition of all governmental and non-governmental agencies, NGOs, community groups and individuals interested in combating land degradation. The lead agency is the Environmental Coordinating Unit with the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division. The participating partners and stakeholders shall initiate and design their own projects. They shall also be responsible for the execution of the projects once they have been approved. This is an independent exercise undertaken by the stakeholders using the participatory approach. They may solicit assistance from the Committee, but they are not obliged. Specified goals in their projects shall be based on needs and priorities and be in accordance with the overall goals of the UNCCD and the execution of the NAP.

3.3.4 Participating International Agencies:

UNDP: The regional office is responsible for the management and administrative follow-up on project implementation, monitoring and reporting.

UNEP: Co-operates with UNDP and the World Bank in the implementation of the Global Environment Facility. The Global Environment Facility provides grants and concessional funds to developing countries for projects and activities that aim at protecting the environment.

UNCCD secretariat: Responsible for arranging sessions of the conference of the Parties. In addition, the secretariat has to compile and transmit reports and facilitate assistance to affected developing country Parties as well as co-ordinating all CCD activities.

3.3.5 Environmental Co-ordinating Unit-National Focal Point:

The Environmental Co-ordinating Unit (ECU) is an established Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment and serve as the secretariat and focal point for all UNCCD activities. The Unit is not a one person responsibility as it was the case in the preparatory stages of the NAP. The Unit is composed of a Head (currently the focal point). In the existing structure the Unit will be an interface between prospective participants (stakeholders) mainly at an institutional level and the Steering committee at national level. This structure will avoid the

creation of numerous ministerial or sectorial committees. The Unit accords all the necessary facilities (including transport) and is based in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment.

This Unit will co-ordinate the implementation of the NAP and provide continuity on long-term NAP programme activities. The Unit shall on behalf of the SCCLD, facilitate invitation and submission of projects from stakeholders. ECU has already seconded the Forestry, Wildlife and National Parks Division (FWNPD) to provide close supervision to the UNCCD. The officers from FWNPD shall periodically visit communities and organisations to monitor progress on the implementation of UNCCD projects and activities and to offer assistance and advise where needed. The Unit shall also liaise with relevant agencies, such as UNDP as well as local and regional stakeholders for purposes of reporting, information sharing, dissemination and other matters related to the implementation of UNCCD projects.

3.4 Private Sector Financial Support:

The private sector recognizes its responsibility in the overall development of the Island including protection of its environment. However, its willingness to contribute to environmental sustainability is not wholly identifies as Government mandatory bodies remain completely auspicated. Funding from this sector is rarely channeled to meet and complement Government action toward Land Degradation. Still the need to establish a transparent private sector fund toward wider environmental protection will therefore have to be initiated through the sector themselves without compromising their marketing strategy to uphold clients to their products.

SECTION 4: RESPONSES TO DESERTIFICATION

4.1: Introduction:

Land Degradation is an extreme concern to the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica. Therefore, the collating of information toward the identification of degradation has to take an

institutional approach. This section therefore addresses ongoing works, actions and projects in Dominica that enhances the capacity to almost halting land degradation and the policies with regulatory frameworks associated with National Programmes that in corperate land degradation somehow.

4.2: Legislations, Regulatory Responses and Policies:

Dominica's environment is being marketed as a true source of economic diversity and as one would expect, polices and regulations governing the environment has securely named the Island as the 'Nature Island of the Caribbean'. The most outstanding legislation and regulation that addresses land degradation on Dominica is the Forestry and Wildlife Act (1976), the Forest Act and Forest Rules (1958), Botanic Garden Act (1898), Physical Planning Act (2001), Water and Sewage Act (1989), Power Craft Prohibition (Designated Rivers) 2001, Pesticide Control Act (1974), Environmental Health Services Act (1997), Solid Waste Management Corperation (1996), Development and Planning Corporation (1966) controls orderly development of urban, rural settlements and industrial development in the country.

Effective policies and legislation are essential for the success of any programme because they guide and facilitate the achievement of the set goals. Several other policies and regulations have been drafted over the years. Some of these do address the issue of land degradation on the offset in the country. More exclusively, the development into Dominica's extensive operational and legislative protected area system, methods and approaches applied consisting of forest reserves, protected forest, protected areas and national parks is presently covering approximately 42,000 acres (17,084 ha). 20% of the country's forestland base is legally protected in National Parks and Forest Reserves and a remaining 25%, Zamore (1997) identify as crown/state land and protected areas. There are two Forest Reserves - the Central Forest Reserve 1,013 acres (410 ha) and the Northern Forest Reserve 13,531 acres (5,476.9 ha) and the Syndicate Parrot Preserve 204 acres (81). The island park systems contain three (3) parks which are- Morne Trois Pitons 17,000 acres (6,879.8 ha) established in 1975, officially declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998; Cabrits National Park 1,313 acres (531 ha) established in 1986, and Morne Diablotin National Park 8,242 acres (3,336 ha) established in January 2000. Dominica did not

just inherent the skill and knowledge to conserve its resources the *in situ* way, but by trial and error situations with its land uses which all tend to be sooner or later incompatible.

The past and the present situations of land use practices have reflected urgency in mobilizing the necessary legislative instruments for governing land use and management. Though the island resource-legislation particularly on natural resources dates back almost a century old, it still proves to 'guard the resources'. To begin with, there is the Forest Act of 1959, which empowers the Minister of Agriculture and Environment to establish Forest Reserves on Crown Lands and also to enact legislation to acquire in the public interest private forestland into Protected Areas. The Act demands the appropriate conditions for timber harvesting, makes provision for the control of squatting, and explains various offences. The experience with Dominica is to compulsorily acquire any land deemed to be under severe threats that can accelerate land degradation with a number of underlying poverty consequences to the Island of Dominica.

Next in line from the formative years is the Forestry and Wildlife Act (1976), which makes requirements for the management, protection and preservation, and conservation, of wildlife. It entails the list of species and regulation on special protection especially for the two species of parrots. The Act gives priority to the establishment of reserves, and the setting of fines for a variety of offences.

The fact remains that Dominica leads the Su-region in the number of National Parks and their sizes as well. Hence, the National Park and Protected Areas Act (1975) provides for National Parks and Protected Areas establishment. Followed from the National Parks and Protected Areas Act is the Water and Sewerage Act 1989. It addresses the need for coordination of water resources and watershed protection, use under licenses, and conservation by the island water authority, Dowasco.

4.3: Institutional initiatives:

Issues of land degradation in the country have been cause for concern since the colonial period. Measures to control for example for soil erosion in the country started in the 1949 with the

establishment of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, solely to look at conservation of all the island Natural resources, hence erosion among others.

In the 1970's there were great efforts to practice good soil conservation there about brought the introduction of grass species which today are rather invasive and uncontrollable adding to land degradation. While the objectives were sincere, the result today is detrimental. Dominica has also seen the holistic approach to land allocation by the Land and Survey Division in a managerial manner that has contributed to the lessening of inappropriate land uses, but much more is needed (section 6.4). The Forestry Division is responsible for afforestation programmes in the country, yet the avoidance to reaching this stage is with a comprehensive educational programme that engulfs all divisional educational programmes towards good land and farm management. The physical Planning Division of the Ministry of Finance channels all environmental impact assessment reports to and through all relevant agencies when case specific and where expertise are required, hence the participatory approach to needs and development and identifying possible negative impacts of activities and projects. The Government driven rural development programme via housing and roads has also taken land degradation mitigating measures into account.

The shortcomings of meeting agencies input towards activity base to mitigate land degradation are hinged of financing as will be addressed later.

4.4: Current and on-going programmes and projects:

The country has engaged a number of programmes and projects that can significantly contribute to the fight against land degradation. These programmes and projects are primarily implemented by the Central government (Table 4.1), private sector programmes and projects implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations. The key ministry in central government to implement land degradation programmes and projects is the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment. Within the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment (MOA &E), the key divisions are the Land and Survey Division, The Forestry Division, Division of Agriculture, Fisheries Division, Prime Unit and The Environmental Coordinating Unit. Other ministries like Ministry of Health

and Social Security and Ministry of Finance and Planning are involve in programmes that impacts significantly on the MOA & E role against Land Degradation.

Noted in these programmes, the lack of or poor participation of communities in the design and implementation of the programmes is of concern as well as the apparent duplication of efforts and or miss coordination of activities between ministries or departments and within the same division. Examples include the reforestation of the newly constructed Delice /Pettite Savanne road in1998. There is need to consolidate resources in those programmes that are closely related to avoid duplication.

Table 4.1: Proposed and on-going government programmes addressing the issue of land degradation in the country.

PROGRAMME	RELEVANCE	IMPLEMENTING AGENCY	PROGRESS AND LIMITATIONS	FUNDING AGENCY
Utilization of Natural Resources	Database to be used in preparation of land-use plans	MOA & E- Forestry, Land and Survey and Division of Agriculture	Absence of Land Use Plan. Small areas already identified for restoration and community participation not specified	None
Restoration and rehabilitation of forest ecosystem	Restoring degraded areas, development of research programs, providing areas for ecological growth	Forestry Division, Division of Agriculture, community groups, Schools and state College.	Areas identified, No research methodology applied,	None
Resettlement/Village expansion Programme	Housing Division. Allocation of House Lots in undisturbed low-lying areas.	Ministry of Communication, Works and Housing	Misunderstanding and poorly defined roles have led to conflicts with Forestry, Land and Survey, Housing and Physical Planning thus inefficient local conservation committees	Government Of The Commonwealth of Dominica
Forest Fire Protection	Formulation and Consolidation of national network of	Fire department, Forestry Division,	Lack of GIS System to update database, vulnerability and risk	None

	prevention, detection and control of bush fires	Communities and Police Department, Disaster Coordinating Unit	not adequately measured and assessed.	
Livestock Production Programme	Relieve pressure on imports by identifying appropriate livestock production systems to increase farmer's income	MOA & E – Livestock/Vet Unit	Construction / rehabilitation of Stockfarm Livestock Farm. Does not quite address the issue of grazing pressure, since the sale of cattle is still at the prerogative of the farmer.	MOA & E
National Zoning and Land Use Plan	Allotment of appropriate activities land-based to meet sustainability	MOA &E, Physical Planning, NGO, Ministry of Health	Failure of establishing a national coordinating machinery such as a Sustainable Development Council	NOT IDENTIFIED
Management of Indigenous Lands	Environmental conservation of indigenous forest and its products, and reduction of deforestation	Carib Council , DEXIA, COMPACT, IICA,MOA & E	Need to establish possible effects of the propose fast growing trees on buffer zones on water resources and growth of indigenous tree	CREP
Forest Nurseries	Introduction, improvement and maintenance of nurseries, especially in firewood-deficit areas	MOA &E - Forestry Division	On-going Emphasises on fast growing tree species, agroforestry tree species and native commercially important Species	None
National Park Zoning	To secure the integrity of the Park System	MOA & E – Land and Survey, Forestry	Beyond the present cope of management	
Development of water supply and sanitation in rural areas	To combat diseases, meet farm production and promote hygienic water consumption and practices To uplift standard of living in rural areas and mitigate the effects of drought	DOWASCO, Environmental Health, Produce Chemist Lab-MOA & E		None

Source: Biodiversity and Action Plan 2001; Forestry Sector Plan 1992-2011

Private Sector Initiative

The million cedar tree project exist but solely as a commercial business. Though some attention has been given to tree planting and nursery works on the island, the company provides limited service to address land degradation. Plus it is a newly establish company of private sectorial initiative.

NGO

National Action Programme emphasises on this important aspect of project development and implementation. NGOs have the responsibility to assist communities in the implementation of other projects rather than concentrating on pre-funded or aid-driven projects.

Research

The organizations that conducted a number of studies on gully erosion in Dominica are the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division and the Division of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment. This information is extremely valuable in terms of determining the most affected areas with regard to land degradation. However, not much has been done on the rate of sedimentation in our river systems and the destruction of lowlying vegetation types by sedimentation and deforestation, and impacts from construction. The NAP also encourages further research activities in these areas. Other topics of research include an analysis of resilient plant species and plants that may be used to rehabilitate degraded land and landslides.

SECTION 5: EMERGING ISSUES

5.0 Introduction

The establishment of the Steering Committee to Combat Land Degradation (SCCLD) facilitated the initial phase of consultation and awareness raising on the National Action Programme to Combat Land Degradation. The first document was also compiled for the Convention (ECU 2000) and was formulated from group and plenary discussions after Dominica became a party to the convention in 1997.

5.1. Land degradation within an institutional framework:

Within the country there are several institutions that deal with land issues. These are the Land and Survey Division, Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, Housing Division, Physical Planning, and Division of Agriculture. What is lacking is the establishment of a land management board to coordinate all land transactions, hence integrating into the National Land Use Plan highly needed.

5.2. Awareness and capacity building:

Noted during consultation is that Dominica have a paucity of soil and water conservation experts. The few conservation experts are based at the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment. Field officers do not emphasize the importance of soil conservation on the island due to the priority of concentration on crop production even when the obvious provide for inter-linkages. Existing extension officers are mainly trained on crop production and livestock production and disease control respectively. Forestry is often overlooked. Discussions among stakeholders felt that trained soil and water conservation experts should be posted to all districts on the island. Suitable course modules on soil and water conservation also need to be developed for extension officers and community training at the various resource centers. Environmental education also needs to be integrated in the formal education curricula. The training materials have to emphasize the importance of both "scientific" and indigenous knowledge techniques for combating land degradation as outlined in Article 19 paragraph 1(d) of the convention.

5.4. Community participation at grass-root level:

Communities must be sensitised on the consequences of land degradation and encouraged to participate actively in land management programmes at grass-root level. This approach is also emphasized in the convention (Article 3 (a)) and it is the recipe for a long-term solution to combating desertification. Grassroot (local) communities have to participate at project identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. To achieve this, the NAP process has accommodated the ideas of local communities, the youth and other relevant organisations.

5.5. Reclamation and rehabilitation of degraded lands:

Land degradation in Dominica is not so severe that crop and livestock productivity levels are directly affected. Evidence of land degradation is rarely seen as Dominica has a very quick successional stage of vegetative recolonization. With a population that is almost constant and demand for land is restricted to steeper slopes yet remain stable for such reasons, the problem of soil erosion is rather spatial and developed on a case-by-case basis. The task at hand is rather minute and quiet possible under restoration projects.

5.6. Land settlement, resettlement and poverty alleviation policy:

To address the issue of land degradation vis-à-vis land allocation in the country, a land policy is essential. The policy must be formulated with the involvement of all the people concerned, starting from the residential to industrial and government sectors. This legislation also has to control the irreversible conversion of agricultural and forest land into non-agricultural and degrading uses. As part of the exercise all existing legislation and responsible sectors on land issues need to be reviewed and merged where feasible.

Striking poverty off the agenda requires initiatives to help people help themselves through techniques, technology and education and using available resources, rather than work for projects life-span.

SECTION 6: ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

6.1 Introduction:

This section presents the implementation strategy and description of programmes to be undertaken in the implementation of the NAP. The programmes described here are a reflection of the priorities set out in the First National Report which was compiled from the national consultation and workshop held on July 7th to 9th 1999. This section also sets out the underlying principles and guidelines for the implementation strategy. This includes a definition of the programme approach. Finally a description of the programme areas is presented. The presentation on programme areas includes information on the objectives; activities; relevance to

other programmes; institutional arrangements and the time frame (in some cases) for implementation. In discussing the relevance of the programme components or areas, linkages with other programmes especially poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods, good governance and others are highlighted.

6.2 The guiding principles:

The principles form the basic guidelines for the implementation strategy. These principles are based on the following facts and assumptions:

NAP programmes and projects emphasize popular participation, or are "people - led", to promote their ownership among communities and enhance their execution and sustainability.

NAP provides an enabling environment allowing communities to help themselves achieve their stated goals through Governing structures.

It is essential to adopt a programme approach in the NAP to facilitate the full integration of UNCCD activities within other national policies for sustainable development. Adoption of this approach also conforms with its increasing usage by governments.

The implementation of the NAP emphasize building of partnerships between the various stakeholders and government.

6.3 The programme strategy:

The programme approach shall be used in the implementation of the national priorities on combating land degradation. In this approach the NAP goals will be articulated within the several programme areas described in Section 6.4. According to the UNDP (1997), the programme approach "is a process which allows government to articulate national priorities and realise sustainable human development objectives through a coherent and participatory national programme framework". While government takes the lead in human development issues the programme approach allows donor agencies to support one or more areas or components of a national programme framework in line with their comparative advantage. The programme approach encourages integration of all available resources, irrespective of origin, in addressing community / local and national priorities. In essence, it is a coherent set of interrelated policies, strategies and investments to achieve specific and time bound national development objectives. It outlines all requirements / resources as well as the implementation and management

arrangements. Several benefits may be derived from the programme strategy. Most importantly, it offers a medium of amplifying environmental protection issues highlighted in the Integrated Development Plan, Forestry Sector Plan 1992-2011, St George's Declaration of Sustainable Development Principles for the OECS and other development strategy documents. In these programmes government has highlighted drought and land degradation as priority problems in the Dominica. Moreover, this programme strategy acts as a tool for mobilising resources and thus enable the translation of the convention into action.

6.4. Identified programme areas and NAP:

The programme areas described below are derived from the UNCCD priority areas identified in the preceding section. time frame and cost estimates Where information is available, all the programme areas will be presented in the following format: objectives, activities, outputs, relevance to other programmes, institutional framework for implementation.

6.4.1 Institutional Arrangements

Objectives:

To develop an effective and properly constituted institutional framework for the implementation of the NAP.

To Establish the main proactive institution to coordinate the implementation of the NAP.

Outputs:

A properly constituted institutional structure for the implementation of the NAP to combat land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought already exist with the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division.

Cabinet approval of the division and the document submitted.

National Environment Fund are mobilized from the Convention via a financial mechanism such as GEF to established and implemented NAP.

Activities:

Integration of the activities and constituted coordination of all stakeholders from Government to meet land degradation issues.

Utilizing all institutional capacity available in addressing land degradation.

Channeling resources from UNCCD to meet project implementations.

Relevance to other programmes:

This programme area is relevant to government's programme on Reform, Growth and Recovery.

Institutional framework for implementation:

Since the responsible institutions are primarily within the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, coordinated efforts has to be centrally pooled with other participating Ministires.

Short-Term (1 to 2 years)

6.4.2 Promotion of Awareness And Capacity Building

Objectives:

To stimulate awareness among communities on issues of combating, mitigating land degradation.

To increase the local capacity of handling land degradation problems.

To facilitate the co-ordination of activities on combating desertification and mitigating the effects of land degradation.

Outputs:

Increased awareness of land degradation issues among community members.

Land degradation personnel capacity built and reformed into permanent structures within institutions

Activities:

Comprehensive strengthening of the existing environmental education unit to coordinate all awareness programmes on land degradation.

Development of modules on land degradation to be used at all schools.

Continued and maintain an environmental corner on the media, radio, TV, Paper etc.

Provide group training on land degradation mitigation measures.

Enhance ongoing research on degraded areas

Co-ordinate research activities on land degradation.

Declaring areas as 'Protected Areas' once degradation is exceeding restoration efforts.

6.4.3 Other programmes are:

i. Land Use Plan and Policy;

To complement all existing and future work on land degradation. This will require activities such as intense land evaluation, demarcation etc.

ii. Land degradation mitigation measures;

To develop strategies to address such and this is achievable through activities such as education and training, complementary land practices in harmony with soil structures, intensification of extension services etc.

iii. Alternative fuel and energy sources;

Adoption of such in context of reducing importation of propane gases, reliance on single tree species. Activities needed to achieve such would include promoting the use of local fuelwood species, conversion of fuelwood into charcoal, sources alternative such as biogas and developing an energy alternative such as solar, wind power and water.

iv. Rehabilitation of degraded lands;

To actively practice sustainable use of Land (Natural) Resources via restoration works. Activities geared to achieve this objective will include preparation of minute land use plans (case specific), implementing such with appropriate technology and using indigenous knowledge, encourage existing conservation efforts, and formulating legislation to govern all efforts.

v. Sustainable Use of Major Forest Products Policy;

To develop a strategy for sustainable utilization of major forest products on Dominica which will direct levels of exploitation.

Activities needed to fulfill this objective would require a medium term time frame incorporating all types of forest resources and to inter-link these into a usage rating thereof developing a policy.

vi. Infrastructure construction and development;

To reduce the potential threats of poor construction on sites and to harmonize sites with building designs. The activities required here will be from an institutional approach base at close supervision and monitoring at all stages. Site specifications in details.

Concluded Institutional framework for implementation

Implementation of this programme will undertaken by the Environmental Coordinating Unit and the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division.

Time frame:

Medium to long-term.

LIST OF REFERENCES

United Nations Development Programme. 1997. How to implement the programme approach. UNDP.

United Nations Development Programme. 1998. Draft Programme Support on the Promotions of sustainable livelihoods. UNDP

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BSAP Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

CBOs Community based organisations

UNCCD united Nation Convention to Combat Desertification

EIAs Environmental Impact Assessments

FAO Food and Agricultural Organisation

UNFCCC United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change

MOA &E Ministry of Agriculture and The Environment

NAP National Action Programme

NGO Non-governmental Organisation

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNEP United Nations Environment Programme