

Report from AUSTRIA

Measures taken to assist Affected Country Parties of other regions than Africa in the preparation of action programmes under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (**UNCCD**)

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Summary

The Austrian Development Co-operation has since the ratification of the convention become actively engaged in the Himalaya-Hindukush region to support food security, integrated land use under an ecological point of view and sustainability in all aspects, but especially with regard to soil degradation.

In Latin America the Austrian Development Co-operation is differentiating between Central America and South America. As a consequence of efforts of concentration there is a direct programmatic engagement in Central Amerika, only. The rest of Latin America is dealt with by different Austrian NGOs under public co-financement.

There are no activities in the Carribean space.

General Policy Statement relevant to the idea of Combating Desertification

In summer 1997 the general policy regarding relevant activities was revised. Since then there is a thematical focus on supporting small scale integrated rural development with a main focus on income diversification, sustainable management of vulnerable resources and capacity building. With regard to the latter activities concentrate on the strengthening of local communities for the improvement of livelihood conditions, in order to realize step by step a sustainable utilisation of ecologically sensitive, arid and semi-arid lands.

The geographical focus is situated in Westafrica – Sahel region. The policy-guidelines broadly outlined above are binding – particularly in the context of strategic assessments – for all country programmes, however.

0 Core Report

Relevant Activities to Support the Implementation of the Desertification Convention in **Asia**:

Austria has, as a small country with an accordingly small budget, to concentrate its efforts to a number of target or core countries. The respective region in Asia is composed by the countries situated on the southern slope of the Himalayan massif – China, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan. From these four countries the latter three are partner-countries of the Austrian Development Co-operation. Since the situation in this region is extremely diverse and sometimes changing from one small area to another, Austria has, first of all, chosen ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) in Kathmandu, Nepal, as a mediator to its efforts in combating desertification in these countries. ICIMOD is undertaking active research in combating desertification, sustainable agriculture and appropriate agricultural techniques and shares the relevant findings with the regional stakeholders and administrative staffs of the respective countries. By this measure Austria hopes to achieve an effective level of concentration despite the necessarily small budget.

The Austrian Development Co-operation started this engagement by a core-funding support of ICIMOD from summer 97 to end of 99 of 4,2 Mio ATS or 360.000,- US\$. This core funding is currently continued for another three year period up to 2002 (again 4,2 Mio ATS or 360.000,- US\$). Beside of this core support Austria is contributing to ICIMOD's "Regional Pasture Programme for Hindukush-Himalaya", which consists of an in situ study of different ecological methods to stop the rapidly ongoing soil degradation and to save the subsistence basis of approximately 25 million people in China, Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan. The contribution equals another sum of 4,2 Million ATS or 360.000,- US\$, distributed over three years from 1999 to 2001. It is likely to be continued by a new contract in 2002.

1 Other Activities related to combating desertification

in **Latin America:**

In Latin America the Austrian Development Co-operation has no comparable partnership to ICIMOD (see above). Most activities are implemented in co-financing arrangements with NGOs and the EC.

In Central America all relevant activities are older than the ratification of the convention. There has always been a certain amount of projects of 3 million US\$ in total per year for the partner countries Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala that are coherent with the goals of the convention. Overall, this cluster of projects will be kept stable over the next few years.

Austria has no partner country in the rest of Latin America. Action programmes related to the convention's goal are not foreseen in the near future. Nevertheless, like in Central America, a cluster of about 15 single projects with a total sum of approx. 7 millions US\$ per year exists, dealing with land degradation, desertification, sustainable small scale agriculture to support subsistence livelihood-systems and food security without depleting the natural resources, in most cases combined with a capacity building component. Most of these projects are situated in the semi-arid North-East of Brasil (including the North of Minas Gerais) where the supported NGOs closely co-operate with the IRPAA (Instituto regional da Pequena Agropecuária Apropriada - Regional Institute for adapted small scale agriculture), which was founded in 1990. About 20 million people over one million km² are trageted.