

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)



CANADA'S FOURTH REPORT TO THE UNCCD ON INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN REGIONS OTHER THAN AFRICA, FROM 2002 to 2006

Canada

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canada has been a strong supporter of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) since its inception in 1995. Canada plays a dual role in the implementation of the Convention – both as an affected country (i.e. arid regions in Western Canada) and more significantly, as a donor country assisting the developing world in helping meeting UNCCD objectives.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), as the federal government's department responsible for administering overseas development assistance, leads Canada's collaborative efforts under the UNCCD. CIDA works with other government departments, in particular Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Environment Canada, and Natural Resources Canada, as well as the International Development Research Centre (a Federal Government Crown Corporation) on a variety of international projects that promote sustainable development. CIDA's collaborative efforts in this field also extend to a number of Canadian partners from the private sector, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This broad range of experience has helped influence CIDA's strategic directions, including the approach taken to address sustainable land management.

This report summarizes the key Canadian initiatives that were undertaken to combat desertification from 2002 to 2006 in regions other than Africa, as required under the Convention. Canada produced an Africa-focussed report in 2004, which can be found on the [UNCCD's website](#). In the implementation of the Convention, and as reflected in the aforementioned reports on activities, Canada has taken a holistic management approach because of the complex nature of desertification. In many instances, sustainable land management policies are not considered independently, but are integrated into broader poverty reduction strategies.

Over the reporting period, Canada has provided bilateral support for desertification-related initiatives in a number of affected countries within Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. It has also contributed to multilateral initiatives and institutions whose programming has a major impact on sustainable development. These include the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the International Land Coalition (ILC).

The integration of land-related programming, including desertification, has underscored the four interconnected dimensions of sustainable development: economic well-being, social development, environmental sustainability, and good governance. CIDA's approach to addressing desertification issues and other impacts of land degradation in partner countries is premised on sustainable development, and emphasizes poverty reduction, capacity development and participatory initiatives. These take place at all levels of intervention -- involving people and institutions from the community to regional and international levels. Since Canada's ratification of the UNCCD, CIDA has worked with other Parties and with its partners towards ensuring that the Convention's guiding principles are encompassed into their collaborative work.

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report has been developed as Canada's response to meet its requirement for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and summarizes the key Canadian initiatives that were undertaken to combat desertification from 2002 to 2006 in regions other than Africa. In October 2006, the fifth session of the CRIC (CRIC 5) will address the Progress Reports on the implementation of National Action Programs (NAPs) from regions other than Africa. The UNCCD requested that donor countries focus their activity reports on initiatives that were implemented or initiated in these regions during the reporting period: from 2002 to 2006. This report will complete the third reporting cycle for affected country Parties, which started within the context of CRIC 3, with the review of initiatives undertaken to combat desertification in Africa. CRIC 4, held during the UNCCD's Seventh Conference of Parties (COP 7), considered the report of CRIC 3 and proposed a number of decisions, which were adopted by COP 7.

Canada has taken a holistic approach to the implementation of the Convention, reflecting the complex nature of desertification. This approach is reflected in previous reports submitted by Canada to the UNCCD. Rather than providing a clear distinction between activities directly related to the implementation of the Convention (Category A) and those that broadly address desertification (Category B), as per the guidelines provided by the UNCCD, we are reporting on international sustainable land management initiatives that contribute to the overall implementation of the UNCCD. In many instances, sustainable land management policies are not considered independently, but are integrated into broader poverty reduction strategies. Therefore, while all the initiatives presented in this report clearly address the issue of desertification, it is often a question of interpretation as to whether they belong to Category A or B.

This report is grouped by region and country, with an overview of regional activities provided in each section. Where appropriate, those activities specifically addressing the implementation of the UNCCD are described at the beginning of the respective country entries. The report concludes with a section on multilateral initiatives that helps summarize emerging international partnerships to address desertification.

INTRODUCTION

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNCCD), which came into force in 1995, is the only internationally recognized, legally binding instrument that addresses the problem of land degradation in the drylands. It recognizes the causal relation between combating land degradation and reducing poverty. Canada acknowledges that the relationship between desertification, food security, poverty and health are fundamentally linked and that governments must explore programming which adequately addresses this challenge.

Environmental sustainability has been central to Canada's international development work during the period covered in this report. This includes the integration of land related programming, including desertification in the Canadian government's overall priorities and policies for poverty reduction. Environmental sustainability, including Canada's desertification-related development work, relies on partnerships, for example with civil society, private sector, other donors and developing country governments to help achieve greater coherence in Canada's efforts to combat desertification. Since Canada's adoption of the UNCCD, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has worked with other Parties and with its partners towards ensuring that the Convention's guiding principles are encompassed in collaborative work.

In adopting the UNCCD, the international community decided to pay particular consideration to desertification in the African continent. Although the primary focus of the Convention is on Africa, desertification has great implications for many other parts of the world. To address this need, Canada has – through its official development assistance – funded a broad range of initiatives in Africa and other regions that not only help promote sustainable land management, but by extension also help increase food security. More productive, environmentally responsible agriculture can lead to improved nutrition, improved human well-being and reduced poverty.

Canada brings expertise to this issue through experience, as it is both a donor and an affected country under the Convention. For more than a century, Canada has been involved in researching and promoting sustainable agricultural development in the Prairie Provinces and elsewhere. Having frequently been subjected to drought, Canada is well aware of the social and economic repercussions of losing fertile lands, and is able to capitalize on its national experience internationally.

CANADA'S COMMITMENT: SUPPORTING DEVELOPING COUNTRY EFFORTS IN REGIONS OTHER THAN AFRICA

Canada has always maintained a strong international engagement in the UNCCD. Canada played an active role in negotiations and was prompt to ratify the Convention in 1995. Canada is an affected country, due to the fact that desertification affects the three Prairie Provinces. However, the Government of Canada's participation in the Convention is mainly as a donor. Canada has served as president of the Conference of the Parties (COP), and has served as Bureau Member on three separate occasions. Canada has also served as the President of the Committee of Science and Technology (CST), and is currently serving as a CST Bureau Member.

CIDA is the lead agency to negotiate and implement the Convention for the Government of Canada, in cooperation with Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC). Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) are also key Federal organizations who assist in the implementation of the UNCCD. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (AAFC/PFRA) has the responsibility to implement the Convention's domestic goals.

CIDA is working towards a long-term approach to land degradation and desertification, building on ongoing international commitments, as well as on Canada's experience as an affected country, to assist developing countries in their efforts to combat desertification. This approach involves making strong links between sustainable agriculture, food security and desertification within the context of development. CIDA hopes to enhance efforts to address land degradation by supporting actions to promote knowledge sharing and integration into broader CIDA programming.

Canadian Partners

As stated earlier, CIDA serves as the Canadian lead on the UNCCD, primarily as a result of the large number of development issues associated with the implementation of the Convention. Canada coordinates its global efforts with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and also works with the Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) along with civil society organizations to further coordinate international – as well as national – sustainable land management initiatives.

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

The IDRC continues to contribute to finding solutions, through research and associated action, to address the concerns of dryland countries. The IDRC's "Environment and Natural Resource Management Program" supports work that is field-based: action and policy research that offers viable alternatives to – or improves – current environmental management practices and institutions. These provide practical approaches to enhancing food and water security, human health, the quality of natural resources, democratic participation, governance, and equity. The IDRC has also assisted countries to define useful indicators to monitor the implementation of the Convention and continues to work collaboratively with developing country partners to find solutions to social, economic and

environmental problems through applied research. Numerous IDRC research initiatives have contributed to a better understanding of desertification (causes, dynamics and impacts), leading to solutions that help populations address land degradation at the local level.

The IDRC has contributed to strategies that address land degradation and related problems from a broad perspective. It has developed initiatives to foster a participatory development of technologies; the strengthening of capacities of local authorities; and the development of appropriate communication tools to meet the needs of local populations, with a special emphasis on women. The IDRC's mission of "empowerment through knowledge" is demonstrated through its projects, some of which are summarized in this report.

Natural Resources Canada

Accurate, current and accessible land cover information is a requisite for sound land-use management, particularly relating to land use change and the effects of large-scale disturbances such as fire. Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) has been committed to fulfilling these information needs, as demonstrated through its involvement in the Global Observation of Forest and Land Cover Dynamics (GOFC-GOLD). GOFC-GOLD is a coordinated international effort to ensure a systematic long-term program of space-based and on-the-ground observations of land cover and forest change, including the role of fire. NRCan directs the work of GOFC-GOLD through the project office at the Canadian Forest Service (CFS, housed at NRCan).

GOFC-GOLD is designed to help provide the data needed for global monitoring of terrestrial resources, to study global change and to improve natural resources management. Originally developed as a pilot project by the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) as part of their Integrated Global Observing Strategy, GOFC-GOLD is now a panel of the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS) and interacts with several United Nations bodies, and numerous international and national scientific and technical organizations.

By promoting and supporting participation on implementation teams and in regional networks, GOFC-GOLD develops regional and global scale products in two thematic areas: Land Cover Characteristics and Change; and Fire Monitoring and Mapping. Capacity is strengthened by working with regional networks, which provide guidance on specific needs and promote the transfer of technology and experience in South East Asia, Northern Eurasia, Latin America and, more recently, East Asia.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Measures to fight land degradation have been implemented in Canada since the 1930s. The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) was created in the 1950s to assist farmers in their fight against desertification and drought. This body, now a part of AAFC, works in partnership with federal and provincial government departments, the private sector and civil society, to promote sound land management practices and soil conservation measures. Activities undertaken by AAFC to address desertification in

Canada are tabled in a separate report as per UNCCD reporting requirements.

Canadian Civil Society

Canada has consistently contributed to the strengthening of civil society in the Convention. The federal government has been a strong supporter of civil society's participation in key UNCCD meetings. In addition, Canadian delegations have encouraged dialogue with non-governmental organizations (NGOs, both nationally and internationally), and have used their perspective to inform international discussions, where appropriate. More recently, CIDA has provided seed funding towards launching a Canadian civil society network on sustainable land management that will involve the engagement of a range of civil society stakeholders. The objective of this network is to strengthen dialogue between Canadian civil society organizations and the federal government regarding sustainable land management. The focus of work is on policy and programming issues relating to dryland issues, with particular emphasis on the UNCCD and other Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), primarily the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Civil Society at Work

CIDA provides support to Canadian NGOs whose work in developing countries contributes to sustainable land management. For example, CIDA has supported USC Canada's initiatives that emphasize human development through poverty eradication. Working primarily through local organizations and partners in overseas country offices, USC Canada supports agriculture, vocational training, health, education, environmental protection (particularly combating desertification), community development and capacity building. This organization has also taken a lead in efforts to promote food security and preserve biodiversity, especially in Africa. USC Canada has a strong constituency base of 650 volunteers and 10,000 supporters.

USC Canada is working in Honduras on a project entitled **Supporting Innovative Participatory Development**. Over 600 farmers in north-eastern Honduras have joined together in 55 local research action committees, or CIALs, to address environment and food security concerns in their marginal hillside communities. This initiative has involved carrying out farmer-led research on improving the quality and quantity of seeds for planting and promoting sustainable land use. USC and CIDA have provided approximately CAD \$1 million towards this work with the CIALs between 2002 and 2006, nearly a quarter of which has been associated with activities narrowly conceived as "land rehabilitation". Overall, the financial support can be seen as providing a broad, holistic support for environment and agricultural activities in Honduras.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES BY REGION

Asia

Canada has been helping Asian nations develop the capacity to address the continent's most pressing challenges: reducing poverty, consolidating economic gains, supporting governance and political inclusion, and advancing work social development and the environment. To achieve these objectives, and in collaboration with a host of international partners, CIDA has focussed its work in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Individual programs vary considerably within the framework of the core sectors, and individual programs vary greatly, depending on the specific needs of each country. In the context of UNCCD, CIDA and its Canadian partners have, over the years, concentrated on China, India, and Bangladesh. In particular, Canada continues to make a difference in agricultural practices to reduce desertification in China.

China

Canadian cooperation with China has included a range of successful programming initiatives to address land degradation. Canada has initiated various sustainable land management projects that have shown considerable promise. These have led to the development of second phases of projects, or have resulted in complementary efforts by a variety of Canadian partners. For example, the **Hebei Drylands Research Project** had as its goal to “develop and transfer ecologically sound dryland management technology and practices, including improved water-use efficiency, soil and water quality, and increased farming profitability, in the Hebei Lowland Plain and in ecologically similar areas in China.” The project developed socio-economic indicators to monitor the impact of the adoption and application of technologies. These technologies are now being applied by farmers across the lowland plain, and are being promoted to farmers beyond the border of Hebei Province to regions with similar ecological conditions.

Similarly, the **Biodiversity Protection and Community Development in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region** initiative has addressed desertification as part of nature reserve management (since the reserves are located in semi-arid/dry sub-humid areas). The purpose of the project is to increase the capacity of responsible Chinese Ministries, Bureaus and related institutions and agencies to manage protected areas. This will help safeguard biodiversity and promote sustainable development opportunities for poor populations living in project areas, especially ethnic minorities. The initiative has helped improve the administrative capacities of nature reserve managers and their staff. The project has thereby helped protect biodiversity, support community development, strengthen information sharing between (and by) nature reserves, and promote models of sustainable economic development. A second program in the same region focuses on **Sustainable Agriculture Development**. The goal of this initiative is to promote the environmental and economic sustainability of Inner Mongolia's agricultural practices. Through field demonstrations and training materials adapted to local conditions, the

project has resulted in recommending, among other things, practices for: grazing systems; full season nutrition and feed supplies; rangeland improvement; and sand dune reclamation.

Managing Communal Natural Resources in Mongolia: Rural Poverty and the Environment (IDRC Project, Phase II: 2001-2004, Phase III: 2004-2007)

In 2000, IDRC and the government of Mongolia launched a project to develop alternative institutions for pasture management that would be community-based and jointly managed by the local population and the government. Over three phases of funding, the project team helped establish community organizations to represent herders in their interactions with government officials. With herder communities, the project team developed and put in place co-management contracts that transfer resource use rights and resource protection responsibilities to the communities. Herders and researchers have piloted income-generating measures through processing and marketing of animal-derived products, particularly felt, wool, cashmere, furs, and leather. Substantive contributions have been made to new laws, including the new Land Law and Water Law. In 2005, the Environment Protection Act was amended to include community-based natural resource management procedures.

The overall objective of this project is to develop new ways to improve the livelihood opportunities of Mongolian herder communities through more efficient, sustainable, and equitable use of pasture and other natural resources. Livestock production is the backbone of the Mongolian economy, providing a livelihood to some 172,000 herding families and generating 19 percent of the country's gross domestic product. For much of Mongolia's long history, grassland pastures were managed in common by herders whose wide-ranging migrations followed the seasons.

Looking ahead, the project team continues to receive requests to provide assistance to herder groups. Initiatives to expand community control over the local resource base and to broaden livelihood options will continue. Herder groups are very interested in, and encouraged by, direct improvements to their well-being through income generating options and improved diet.

India

Canada has had a long history of development cooperation in India, having supported the country for more than 50 years, with a total investment of more than CAD \$2.5 billion. The **India-Canada Environment Facility (ICEF)** had as its goal enhancing the capacity of Indian institutions "to promote and deliver sustainable development programs addressing specific natural resource and environment problems in the water and energy sectors". Concrete results have been achieved in terms of reducing soil erosion, through the introduction of appropriate conservation measures in the project areas. For example, sand dunes have been stabilized, check dams constructed and mangrove forests restored. In parallel, the socio-economic conditions of the local populations have significantly improved. The acceptance of, and support for, community-based approaches to natural resource management have increased among both communities and government. All of the 25 sub-projects have achieved capacity development and self-supporting management structures. The initiative has also contributed to an increased participation by women in community affairs, and income levels for women have improved through their participation in user groups.

Canadian support for the **Treegrowers' Cooperative project** has helped improve India's capacity to reclaim and manage wastelands in an economically and environmentally

sustainable manner. Involvement of local people was enhanced in the reclamation process through establishment and strengthening of a profit-oriented village-based cooperative structure. Implemented with the technical support of Agriteam Canada, the initiative has demonstrated positive results. The cooperatives improved the ground water quality and moisture retention of adjoining lowlands. The initiative helped increase the availability of fodder and water, even in drought conditions. The positive effects of the project were validated by change detection studies using geographic information systems and remote-sensing techniques. A large part of this success can be attributed to the holistic approach that was adopted, which recognizes that natural resource management depends in part on improved institutional structures that work to advance the sustainable livelihoods of marginalized groups. The project adopted a highly participatory, grassroots-focused methodology while working with existing institutions that are part of the social, cultural and political fabric of the area. This broad perspective has helped ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.

Environmental Restoration and Water Conservation in the Hill Villages of Western Ramganga in Kumaon Himalayas, India (INHERE) May 2002–March 2007

The INHERE project, which receives support from the India-Canada Environment Facility, is being implemented by the Institute of Himalayan Environmental Research & Education, Almora. Natural resources of the Central Himalayan belt are under great human stress. The degradation of vegetation cover around villages has been leading to high rates of soil erosion and water scarcity. Degraded forests in individual and common lands in Van Panchayat are dominated by a species of pine that is prone to annual forest fires, further depleting the area's natural biodiversity.

The INHERE project is located in the hill State of Uttaranchal and is spread over 48 square kilometres, covering 5 micro watersheds that serve 32 villages in the district of Almora. The project addresses the linkage between natural resources degradation, poverty and poor working conditions, focusing on the problems relating to land, water, forest and people. The aim of the project is to improve living conditions and livelihood security through integrated natural resource management.

During 2005, the project focused on the implementation of planned physical activities that included plantation of a range of indigenous broadleaved trees, implementation of measures to conserve soil and water, and the development of sustainable livelihood opportunities. The activities were carried out with the active involvement of the resident communities.

INHERE focused on promoting diversified livelihood opportunities, primarily agriculture and associated activities. Emphasis was laid on consolidating the path-breaking gains made in certification and promotion of diversified organic practices for agriculture, horticulture and medicinal plants, leading to economic gains and the conservation of biodiversity.

The community organizations involved in the project area include 31 Village Environment Restoration Committees (VERCs); 57 women's Self-Help Groups; 22 Youth Groups; 8 Kishori Samuhs; 3 Watershed Committees; and 3 Women's Federations. During the year, 854 meetings were organized with these groups, involving consultations on a wide range of issues.

At the end of third year of the project, the availability of fodder in the project area has increased by up to 40 per cent. There was a 70 per cent reduction in areas affected by forest fire, and agriculture yield had increased by 40 to 50 per cent. Per capita water availability, on an average, has increased by 12 liters.

Bangladesh

Canada has been a major development partner with Bangladesh since its independence in 1971. Early development efforts involved reconstruction, and then moved into agriculture, management of water resources, and rural economic development. One project that touches on sustainable land management issues is the **Bangladesh Environmental Management Project** that was developed with the aim of strengthening the institutional capacity of the Department of Environment and other relevant bodies to respond to the increasing pressure of natural resource degradation. The initiative emphasizes impacts on the poor, and has been complemented by the establishment of the Environmental Monitoring Information Network (EMIN). EMIN's purpose is to implement an information network to facilitate the planning and management of water and land resources as they relate to flood and erosion monitoring among national stakeholders and relevant agencies in the Brahmaputra-Jumuna Rivers region. In a separate initiative, CARE Canada and its local partners are helping to **Reduce Vulnerability to Climate Change**. The project is building the capacity of low-income households and community-based structures and networks to be able to respond sustainably to the negative impacts of global climate change. As a result of the project, participating households, and NGOs that serve them, will be better prepared to address the problems associated with extreme weather events, such as salinity, flooding, drought, and potentially rising sea levels.

The Indian Ocean Tsunami

Canada's response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004 was a "whole-of-government" effort to deliver the aid relief in an effort to less the humanitarian crisis. In collaboration with a range of partners, the Government of Canada is now addressing the long-term needs of communities affected by the tsunami. Within hours of this disaster, more than a dozen Canadian departments and agencies responded to the devastation. Foreign Affairs Canada coordinated and spearheaded the relevant consular and political efforts. CIDA worked with aid groups to provide humanitarian aid and to plan reconstruction. A program to match some \$200 million in private donations was undertaken. Canada's Department of National Defence sent the Disaster Response Team (DART) to Sri Lanka.

CIDA has developed reconstruction strategies for **Indonesia** and **Sri Lanka** that are based on the long-term needs identified by these governments. In Indonesia, efforts are underway to restore livelihoods (enterprise assistance and restoration of natural resource base), including initiatives to restore sustainable livelihoods by supporting the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors (i.e., capital investment, micro-credit, market development).

The tsunami caused significant environmental damage in Sri Lanka, including the potential destruction of fish habitat and spawning grounds, as well as damage to agriculture land. Given that Canada has expertise in the rehabilitation of agricultural land, CIDA is exploring ways to support reconstruction in this sector. CIDA's programs in Sri Lanka also address the impact of the tsunami on the on fishing communities.

Cambodia

Land in Cambodia is a very complex issue whose management requires a careful consideration of social, political, economic and development considerations. Donors collectively view work in the land sector as being key to reinforcing broader governmental reforms. These, in turn, are considered prerequisites to economic development and poverty reduction. CIDA has therefore accorded significant prominence to land in the upcoming interim program strategy for Cambodia. Success in this sector might easily be translated into a broader agent for change in the overall effectiveness of the Cambodian government.

In response to specific requests by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) for assistance in land administration and management, CIDA has developed a comprehensive program approach to channel Canadian support. This program approach includes several projects. For example, CIDA has already contributed CAD \$4 million to a Land Management and Administration Program (LMAP) Trust Fund, which supports the implementation and financing of a number of relevant studies, such as the development of land markets and a review of gender considerations. A second Trust Fund has also been established, and will support the RGC's broad Land Administration, Management and Distribution Program (LAMDP). CIDA is in the contract negotiation stage for a third element in Cambodia's work on land: the Cambodia Land Administration and Management Project (CLAMP). These three elements have been developed in the hope of establishing a uniform land administration and management system in Cambodia. Jointly, they are expected to contribute to the achievement of clearly stated results through a highly coordinated programmatic approach.

In order to help foster a coordinated approach, CIDA intends to fully coordinate its work with existing and upcoming programs in this field. LMAP plays a central role in this coordinated approach. The main objectives of LMAP are to improve land tenure security and promote the development of efficient land markets. LMAP has five main components: (1) Development of Land Policy and Regulatory Framework; (2) Institutional Development; (3) a Land Titling Program and Development of a Modern Land Registration System; (4) Strengthening Mechanisms for Dispute Resolution; and (5) a Land Management component. LMAP is integrated into the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, and is coordinated by a Central Project Management Office (CPMO). The initiative works at the provincial level through Provincial Project Management Offices. The Land Management component involves clarification of procedures for defining different classes of land, such as forest land, protected areas, private land, and public land. It also helps procure aerial photographs and satellite images, as needed, and prepare land classification maps for each of the project provinces. These maps show the boundaries of forests, protected areas, land under private use, land under public use, land under concession, and other types of land use.

The Developing Country Farm Radio Network (DCFRN)

DCFRN has 25 years of success and experience in providing small-scale farmers, their families and communities with accurate and up to date information on agriculture and rural development to enhance their environment and health through radio programming. The goal of this program is to promote practices in food production/processing, health, small-scale rural enterprises and natural resource management that lead to sustainable rural livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa. DCFRN also promotes the participation of women, men and children in rural areas in determining the strategies and policies that affect their quality of life. DCFRN contributes to these overarching goals by providing support to farm radio broadcasters so that they can in turn support the intended beneficiaries. Countries that DCFRN works in include Bolivia, Bangladesh, Honduras, Indonesia, India, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Viet Nam.

Central Asia

Canada promotes environmentally sound management of the region's natural resources. At the same time, it helps reinforce the basic building blocks of democracy through human and civil society development initiatives, in support of regional co-operation and stability. For more than a decade, CIDA has supported programs in the region that focus on natural resource management and climate change, human and institutional capacity building, rural development, and community/civil society development.

Canada, through CIDA, has been working closely with the Global Mechanism and other donors in a number of important regional initiatives. In 2001, representatives of five Central Asian governments and international financial partners, including Canada, agreed to advance a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA). The goal is to improve cooperation in the area of land and natural resource management, in order to help combat desertification and drought. In its work, Canada has emphasized the need to address the combined impacts of desertification and climate change. The new **Central Asian Countries Initiative on Land Management (CACILM)** initiative is nearing the end of its design stage. Its objective will be to build coordination among Central Asian countries in land management programming, and expand/improve projects using funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Capacity strengthening and civil society involvement have been identified as essential factors for successful land management programming in the region. Consequently, CIDA has contributed to, and participated in, several training workshops and Partnership planning meetings. For example, the Global Mechanism coordinated a workshop in June/July 2003 in Tashkent to strengthen the Strategic Partnership Agreements with the relevant governments in the Central Asia sub-region. A wide range of local and international participants, including NGOs, attended the workshop. Discussions included the need to confront land degradation and poverty through enhanced implementation of the UNCCD, and to identify targeted activities for reversing the trends of poverty and land degradation over the long-term.

Kyrgyz Republic

Canada has been supporting a number of agricultural and water management improvement projects in the Kyrgyz Republic. While not strictly 'anti-desertification' schemes, these initiatives are relevant to desertification and land management issues, due to the negative impacts that unsustainable agriculture and water resource management is exacting on the countryside. One such project involved **Addressing Water Scarcity and Drought** in Kyrgyz and other Central Asian countries, implemented with the support of McGill University in Montreal. This initiative is helping Central Asian Republics to reduce their vulnerability and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, particularly water scarcity and drought. Another project, **Community-based Rangeland Management** in Temir Village, Kyrgyz Republic, focuses on improving rangeland management practices. To counter increasing desertification, the initiative helps promote improved land cover and soil moisture, as well as controlling the negative impacts of erosion.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan's, through its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP) and National Action Programme (NAP), has indicated that water and agricultural management are key issues. Canada will help address issues of water and agriculture management at all levels, from the household to national. Although the primary focus of our support will be on interventions that allow for the sustainable development and management of agriculture, the work will be relevant to the objectives of the UNCCD and the UNFCCC.

Canada is supporting the **Farm Ownership Model**, an agricultural initiative that will help improve the environmental sustainability of Tajik farming. This initiative will provide training and access to commercial services, in order to address issues such as water logging, crop rotation (from cotton to fruits and vegetables), salinity management, and biological and integrated pest management, all of which can negatively impact agricultural and environmental sustainability. The Farm Ownership Model is working with the government to accelerate the process of land reform, and to move towards a market economy in agriculture.

Canada is currently engaged in the **Community Development Through Integrated Water Resources Management** initiative. The aim of the initiative is to help improve the quality of life in selected communities in the Khatlon, Sughd and Rasht Valleys. The objective of the initiative is to help develop and strengthen community-based structures to ensure their long-term health, as well as their environmental and economic security. Activities focus on empowering communities, thereby enabling them to identify issues relating to their overall health and economic well-being. In turn, this will provide replicable models to support the rehabilitation of infrastructure, and training for sustainable resource management.

The Middle East

Canada supports a range of programming that addresses both the priorities and the challenges of individual Middle Eastern countries, as well as regional issues these countries face together. Canada's activities in the region are aimed at bridging social and economic gaps, improving governance, strengthening democratic institutions, and ensuring human security.

CIDA's principal role is to plan, develop and implement Canada's bilateral development cooperation programs in the region by matching Canadian capacity and resources with the development needs of the countries. IDRC is also active in the region and works with countries to help optimize the creation, adaptation and ownership of the knowledge that the people of developing countries judge to be of greatest relevance to their own prosperity, security and equity. Based on IDRC's Corporate Strategy and Program Framework (CSPF 2005-2010), four broad Program Areas will be supported in the region, including the Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM) program, which addresses land degradation issues.

Iraq

The goal of the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Iraq reconstruction program is to support the development of a stable, self-governing and prosperous Iraq, which has a democratic government representative of the people and respectful of human rights and gender equality. Canada supports one project focusing on the marshes in Iraq, and particularly the Mesopotamian marshes located in the south of the country, are the largest in the Middle East. The marshes are recognized for their significance in conserving biodiversity and for sustaining livelihoods. By 1999, 90% of the wetlands in the country had been transformed to parched desert land due to Iraqi government's construction of dams and hundreds of drainage channels. The goal of the CIDA funded **Restoration of Mesopotamian Marshes** project, which has been operational since 2004, is to increase Iraq's capacity to understand, assess and manage wetlands in order to: contribute to the restoration of the ecological, socio-economic and cultural values of the southern Mesopotamian Marshlands; and to improve the living conditions of the people living in and around them. The project is strengthening elements of the Iraqi environmental governance system for protecting wetlands. On-going and planned restoration efforts will be undertaken sustainably, and will focus on the southern Iraqi marshlands. This restoration initiative stresses Iraqi ownership, and promotes work in partnership with both local and international stakeholders.

Lebanon

Canada has worked in Lebanon on an initiative entitled the **Sustained Improvement of Marginal Lands**. The project, led by the IDRC, stems from a case study carried out in the highland village of Aarsal in 1991-1993 by the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), which revealed massive conversion from traditional cereal/livestock raising to rain-fed fruit production. A second phase of research funded by IDRC analyzed the sustainability of the emerging production system,

and its prospects for improving community development. Researchers characterized the land-use system, assessed the resource base (with emphasis on soil and water conservation) and explored non-agricultural income-generating activities for women. Local beneficiaries were involved during different stages of the project, and their capacity was strengthened through the establishment of a user network. This second phase of the project tested and evaluated management strategies developed in the first phase. Researchers assessed progress made towards sustainable land use, evaluated and strengthened the local user network, while paying attention to gender issues.

Yemen

Canada, through the IDRC, has supported two phases of research on the mountain terraces of Yemen (Phases I and II, initiated in 1992). While the causes of land degradation in the area are generally understood, technological and institutional innovations have not been sufficiently tested within local communities. Furthermore, there is a dearth of information on the effects of policy and institutional changes on the adoption of land conservation practices by farmers. Farmer participation in problem identification and innovation testing has been limited prior to this initiative.

Phase III of the **Mountain Terraces** initiative is an IDRC project that builds on existing research by identifying and evaluating land conservation practices in the Yemen highlands using participatory research methods. First, a land use planning methodology was developed and tested in different communities, with a view to informing local decision-making and raising awareness at the higher policy levels. Second, technologies that improve productivity, increase income and conserve natural resources were evaluated through farmer participation in the target communities. Third, land use options and their social and economic consequences were evaluated, using data provided by farmers during testing. A set of recommendations was developed for improving natural resource management, food security and income levels of rural households in the Yemen highlands.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Canada's strategy for the Americas has been changing in response to the countries' own development focus towards economic growth and industrialization. CIDA envisages a program that is more geographically concentrated, with greater sectoral focus emphasizing governance, broad-based economic growth, and social development (health and education). In addition, two crosscutting themes - gender equality and environmental protection - are integrated into all CIDA programming activities in this region. CIDA is increasingly focusing its resources in the Americas in Bolivia, Guyana, Honduras and Nicaragua. Haiti, being a fragile state, is the largest aid recipient in the Americas. While the programming focus in Haiti is mostly on issues of governance and health, there are some projects that are relevant to the implementation of the UNCCD.

Bolivia

Canada's bilateral programming in Bolivia has one primary objective: to reduce poverty and enhance the standard of living of poor Bolivians. This will be accomplished by meeting the basic human needs of Bolivian citizens through improved access to essential health and related services (such as safe water and sanitation), and improving governance by focussing on democracy and human rights, public sector reforms, and better regulations for strategic economic sectors. Addressing environmental considerations is also important to improving living standards, as evidenced in the text box below.

Watershed Restoration in the Tarija Region, Bolivia (2001-2004)

Sierra Club Canada, BC Chapter (SCBC) and Arbolando

The goals of the Sierra Club Canada program in Bolivia are:

- To promote and support the development of community-based restoration, reforestation and soil conservation practices in riparian zones in order to protect the land from erosion and avoid damage caused by river flooding.
- To provide food security for small farmers through the implementation of agro-forestry systems and permaculture techniques.
- To more effectively and responsively meet the needs of our partners by providing volunteers with technical support capacity and bringing awareness of local/regional environmental and social issues to an international level.

The program seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To involve the local communities in actions that protect and conserve soils from erosion, and to develop a collective consciousness around the conservation of rivers and water resources.
- To create partnerships between community farmer groups and urban organizations to implement collective, coordinated action, as well as to develop their technical skills and organizational abilities.
- To instill value to native species by recapturing local knowledge and raising awareness.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic

Canada is coordinating its resources and activities in an integrated approach to address the needs of Haiti, primarily focussing on security and peacemaking. This strategy aims to strengthen good governance and democracy in Haiti. It also aims to make the country more secure. Finally, it aims to address basic human needs, where environment, including land degradation is addressed.

With regard to the Dominican Republic, CIDA maintains a limited assistance program and there are no long-term projects planned in this country, although there is one initiative Canada is involved in referred to as the **Hispaniola Project**. This project is an innovative and collaborative effort to combat desertification and address land degradation. Haiti and the Dominican Republic have developed an initiative for a transboundary Action Plan (PAN-FRO) to complement their own National Action Programs. PAN-FRO has been given priority because the management of shared watersheds is important to both countries, particularly in a zone severely affected by land degradation and poverty. To further enhance coordination, a mirrored strategy will be used to develop NAPs in the two countries. PAN-FRO also provides a framework for participatory processes designed to address desertification and poverty, promote sustainable community development, and strengthen local capacity to take responsibility for implementation.

Canada joined this initiative, with other donors, at the invitation of the two countries; the Global Mechanism is coordinating the work. The focus of Canada's involvement is to support the NGOs in the activity area. This approach complements CIDA's existing program priorities for Haiti. It is also of strategic interest, as it aims to involve multiple partners to garner financial, technical, and institutional support. While conceived specifically in the context of the UNCCD, PAN-FRO will also be relevant to the objectives of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

A new, complementary, bi-national project is presently in the preliminary stages of implementation. Its goal is to help reduce poverty in the border zones in the **Artibonite** watershed between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The objective of the initiative is to help protect the environment and make sound use of natural resources, thereby reducing tension on the island by strengthening bi-national dialogue. Other programs in the region, implemented in cooperation with Canadian and international partners, address land degradation, soil conservation and assistance to the rural population

Canada is also engaged in the **Nippes Zone** project, to provide credit and training to help design, promote and implement agroforestry production models in three micro-watersheds in Southern Haiti. The project will also help improve local community development efforts. The town of **Marmelade** lies perched high in the mountains of northern Haiti's Arbonite region. A CIDA funded project is underway and is taking a participatory approach to help farmers in the community control their personal and collective development. This will help increase their income through diversification, and improve their agricultural production while conserving the soil. Phase II of the Marmelade project,

initiated in 2005, covers an additional segment of the community and utilizes Phase I resources to train new landowners and local committee members. The project also emphasizes efforts to increase farm production, product processing, and marketing efforts.

Honduras

In Honduras, a Canadian bilateral program is supporting a large, decentralized initiative called **Pro-Mesas**, which operates in the fields of agriculture, forestry, environment, health, water & sanitation, and education. The bulk of Pro-Mesas' programming funds will be allocated to these six sector funds, each with a budget of CAD \$5 million over a period of five years, which will be used to support a wide range of programming activities. The choice of sectors assists to achieve the strategic goals of Honduras' Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP). The bilateral program supports the work of CIDA's partners, including international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme and Canada's many non-governmental development organizations.

In addition, Canada supports **CAUSE**, the Honduras Coconut Palm Reforestation pilot project that aims to empower three local communities to reverse the environmental loss, diversify the economy to alleviate poverty, and protect their culture. The beneficiaries will operate coconut palm tree nurseries and replant 180 hectares of hybrid coconut palms which are resistant to Lethal Yellowing Disease. Reforestation of these communities will significantly improve the economy while protecting the environment. The communities will receive training in managing nurseries, growing coconut palms, preventing and treating Lethal Yellowing Disease, and sustainable use of coconut palm.

Jamaica

Since Jamaica's physical environment lies at the heart of the country's economic and social well-being, CIDA is building on successful efforts to strengthen key central agencies responsible for the environment. Canada has been supporting the **Trees for Tomorrow** project, which aims to improve the management and conservation of forests and tree crops for the sustainable benefit of the people of Jamaica. The project focuses on strengthening the institutional capabilities in the Jamaican forest sector to plan and implement sustainable forest management and improve land use in Jamaica's watersheds. A goal of the project is to increase the public awareness of the importance of forest throughout the country. The project focuses on human resource development, biophysical inventories, establishment of a sector database, watershed and forest management planning, and a public awareness program.

Nicaragua

Canada's current bilateral programming focuses on supporting basic human needs (reducing social vulnerability), productive capacity development (reducing ecological vulnerability) and human rights, democracy, and good governance. There are some projects that deal with the environment and also touch on land issues. For example, Canada supported a detailed investigation and technical analysis on **Improvement of**

Nursery Techniques, which was a part of the “Sustainable Forestry Investment Promotion Project” approved by the World Bank as a mean to improve the forestry situation in Nicaragua severely affected by Hurricane Mitch.

Canada is also involved in the **Nicaragua Integrated Watershed** project, which works at multiple levels, from local non-governmental organizations to municipal governments, to departmental stakeholders. This project operates in up to five sub-watersheds in northern Nicaragua and will aim to improve watershed management for agricultural production, environmental protection, water supply and sanitation, while working on institutional strengthening. This will be achieved through improving production methods, soil and water conservation, improved waste management, agro-forestry, and capacity building.

Paraguay

Canada maintains a limited assistance program in Paraguay. One project of relevant to the UNCCD is the **Strengthening Agricultural Sustainability and Rural Development in Communities** project set within the Buffer Zones of Paraguay’s Key Atlantic Forest Protected Areas. To develop an integrated model for sustainable community agriculture in the critically endangered Atlantic Forest ecoregion in eastern Paraguay, which alleviates poverty and enhances food security and natural resource management through improved and diversified production, leading to the reversal of current trends of environmental degradation. This project aims to implement a series of sustainable agricultural initiatives in local communities at two key sites for biodiversity conservation. Facilitating the formation of community cooperatives and increasing capacity to improve and diversify agricultural production will directly improve the livelihoods of these communities and reduce current trends of land degradation, thereby improve ecosystem and agricultural productivity.

MULTILATERAL FUNDING

Canada has provided considerable financial support over the last 4 years to multilateral institutions that help address desertification in regions other than Africa. These institutions include the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank, regional banks, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). CIDA is building on its strategic relationships with international institutions such as the CGIAR, IFAD and the FAO to enhance its contribution to applied agricultural research and technology transfer relevant to promote sustainable land management.

DEVELOPING AND EMERGING PARTNERSHIPS

The International Land Coalition

Canada has forged a strategic partnership with the International Land Coalition (ILC). ILC's new programme, entitled *People, Land and the Environment*, complements ongoing CIDA objectives with regard to promoting sustainable land management. The ILC programme will focus on environmental considerations associated with land tenure, and will increase its support to the drylands. In particular, the ILC's partnership with CIDA will focus on the following four core areas:

- I) The ILC's Knowledge Programme, which helps civil-society, governmental and intergovernmental organizations learn from each other by identifying, documenting and sharing practical experiences, with an emphasis on filling knowledge gaps;
- II) The ILC's Network Support Programme, which strengthens civil-society networks at the country level, so that resource-poor households can negotiate their access to resources from a position of collective strength;
- III) Policy Dialogue and Advocacy, which enables the ILC to engage its members and partners in developing common policy positions by fostering appropriate dialogues and participating in global, regional and national policy and advocacy events; and
- IV) Coalition Building and Participation, which is the way in which the ILC strengthens collaboration among its members and partners and expands its relations to include new stakeholders.

The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Drylands Development Centre (DDC)

Canada has supported a series of Challenge Papers on development issues in the drylands and related knowledge networking activities. The Challenge Paper series originated from CIDA support to the DDC, with priority topics identified in advance of each Conference of the Parties (COP) through an informal network of practitioners known as the Global Drylands Imperative (GDI). The two series of papers have been on the topics of (a)

Poverty, Sustainable Development, Biodiversity Climate Change in the drylands and (b) Pastoralism, Land Tenure, the MDGs in the drylands. The papers have been presented at the last three COPs, normally as side events in which CIDA participates.

While retaining the same format, the latest version of Challenge Papers that CIDA has supported involves advancing direct policy formulation through ‘participatory action-research’. The most recent Challenge Paper, entitled *Land Policy, Resource Rights & the MDGs in Africa*, hopes to influence policy by directly engaging with the policy making process over the next two years. The UNDP-DDC will work simultaneously at several levels, and will engage in a range of initiatives including (a) development of a short Challenge Paper on Land Policy; (b) development of Guidelines for Donor Engagement in Land-rights Issues; (c) a validation workshop at CIDA on the Challenge Paper; and (d) a presentation the Challenge Paper at a major event linked to the African Union Land Framework process.

United Nations Development Program and Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF)

LDC and SIDs Targeted Portfolio Approach for Capacity Development and Mainstreaming for Sustainable Land Management (LDC-SIDs Portfolio Project)

The overall goal of this project is to assist Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDs) in promoting effective Sustainable Land Management (SLM) for global and local benefits. Its objective is to strengthen the domestic capacity for mainstreaming SLM into national development policies. The LDC-SIDs Portfolio Project will help 47 LDC and SIDS countries to develop individual, institutional and systemic capacity for sustainable land management. Mainstreaming and capacity building will be achieved through the introduction of innovative tools such as: strategic environmental assessment; economic valuation and other economic tools; environment-poverty mapping; and integrated assessments. Furthermore, the project will establish participatory mechanisms at the national level for cross-sectoral debate that will be able to inform the PRSP process at the highest political levels.

Canada has provided financial support to the LDC-SIDs Portfolio Project and is serving on its Global Advisory Committee. At the end of the project, it is expected that each country will have strengthened capacity to mainstream sustainable land management into their national development frameworks. The countries will also have produced a medium-term national investment plan for SLM, along with a coordinated resource mobilization plan. These investment objectives will highlight country plans for mobilizing national and international resources to implement their SLM policies and projects. Policy making and implementation will be undertaken in line with the provisions of the UNCCD, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), the NEPAD, and the Barbados Plan of Action. In particular, the initiative will build on efforts made to develop National Action Plans under the UNCCD, while offering countries a broader variety of options for NAP development and implementation than those currently being promoted within the strict confines of the Convention.

CONCLUSION

This report provides an overview of Canadian initiatives that have helped address desertification in countries other than Africa from 2002 to 2006. CIDA's development policies are premised on the principles of sustainable development and environmental sustainability. Canada's efforts to combat desertification and support sustainable land management are a reflection of this policy platform, and are key considerations in other developmental programming priorities. CIDA's approach underscores the importance of enhancing agricultural production as a means of stabilizing food production and eradicating poverty while promoting an integrated approach to sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem health.

In close partnership with a range of stakeholders in affected countries, Canada will continue to support development of National and Regional Action Programs. Support for civil society organizations in the affected countries has proven that an important component for successful program planning and implementation is to undertake participatory approach. Canada's involvement in the UNCCD is one that is holistic, as part of a broader commitment to sustainable development, economic growth and environmental sustainability.