

**CHINA NATIONAL REPORT**  
**ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS**  
**CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND**  
**NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT**  
**DESERTIFICATION**

China is one of the most severely affected countries suffering from desertification. The total area of desertification affected land is approximately 2,622,300 sq.km., occupying 27.32% of the total land territory, or 79.1% of the total areas of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. Desertification affected lands are mainly distributed in the Northwest China, North China and the Northeast China. As consequences, desertification worsens ecological environment, accelerates further poverty and invades the survival space of Chinese people.

China does not only attach great importance to desertification rehabilitation in China and to the implementation of her NAP, but also pay serious attentions to the cooperation between countries of Parties, to the implementation of the UNCCD and to the global efforts to combat desertification.

**DESERTIFICATION HAZARDS IN CHINA**

The patterns of desertification affected land are complex with high variation of causes and formation, including: the desertification affected lands caused by wind erosion, occupying 1,607,400 sq.; the desertification affected lands caused by water erosion, covering 204,600 sq.; the desertification affected lands caused by freezing and melting processes at cold plateau, representing 363,300 sq.; the desertification affected lands caused by salinization/alkalization, forming 233,200 sq. Human factors activate and accelerate the processes of desertification as the primary dynamics to cause desertification.

Land desertification is developing with a rapid process of spreading and accelerating. The annual invading speed of desertification process in 1950s was 1560 sq.; desertification was expanded in an annual rate of 2100 sq. Desertification threatens directly people's productive and living environment.

It is estimated that there are 400 million populations is being threatened by desertification and the annual direct economic loss caused by desertification is approximately 6.5 billion US Dollars. Desertification causes further poverty in rural areas.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND THE PRIORITY AREA**

As the major efforts to protect environment and to realize sustainable development, desertification rehabilitation has been incorporated into the State Economic and Social Development Plan.

In consideration of sustainable development strategy, "Forestry Action Plan for China Agenda 21" has been developed by SFA on the basis of China Agenda 21 that developed by the central government.

In consideration of reality of the ecological environment improvement of China, the State Council has ratified "China Action Plan of Ecological Environment Improvement". The key locations and main projects of the priority areas of the plan include: the upper and middle reaches of the Yellow River, the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River, wind-sand impacted land areas and rangeland and steppe areas which are mainly desertification affected areas. The plan is incorporated into the National Economic and Social Development Plan.

### **CONCRETE ACTIVITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING UNCCD AND EFFECTS**

#### **Establishment of coordination unit**

Since the adoption of the UNCCD in June 1994, China has developed her NAP and determined the strategic objectives to combat desertification. In order to implement the UNCCD, the Chinese government has established various management agencies at different levels to strengthen the institutional building for combating desertification. In 1994, the Chinese government has set up China National Coordinating Group to Combat Desertification and China National Committee for the Implementation of the UNCCD (CCICCD) composed of 17 ministries and state commission, and liaison system. The Secretariat of CCICCD is located in the State Forestry Administration. The secretariat is mainly responsible for guiding, coordinating and supervising the work in combating desertification. The financial resources of the Secretariat are from the national allocation, which are mainly used for publicity, technology extension, training and staff salary.

The National Bureau to Combat Desertification was established in 1991. Its main role rests on the management of projects of combating desertification and ecology restoration. Coordinating groups or leading groups for combating desertification have also been set up in the affected provinces. Therefore, the effective management system for combating desertification from central to local level is formed. CCICCD has set up its subdivisions, such as **Senior Expert Group, Liaison Office of China National Coordinating Group to Combat Desertification and Independent Expert Roster for China's Combating Desertification**. They have provided a lot of valuable advises on the National Action

Programme, China Country Paper to Combat Desertification, National Survey of Desertification Monitoring and provided consultation in the related field for combating desertification.

In 1995, the Secretariat of CCICCD has instituted **China National Research and Development Center of Combating Desertification, China National Training Center for Combating Desertification** and **China National Desertification Monitoring Center**.

In 1997, UNDP has formulated and assisted CCICCD a project on capacity building and demonstration for combating desertification. The URL of <http://www.din.net.cn> and a County-level Desertification Information and Data Exchange Prototype in Yijinhuoluo County of Inner Mongolia have been established.

#### **Participating in the Implementation of the Regional Action Programme**

Chinese government hosted the First Meeting of Asia-Africa Forum to Combat Desertification in May 1996 with the assistance of the Secretariat of the UNCCD, UNSO and the Japanese government. China also hosted the Beijing Ministerial Conference on Regional Cooperation to Implement the UNCCD in Asia and the meeting endorsed six priority thematic programme areas for regional cooperation in Asia.

China hosted the Asia-Africa Technical Workshop on Early Warning System, Second Asian Meeting of the UNCCD National Focal Points and the Launching Meeting for the Thematic Programme Network on Desertification Monitoring and Assessment (TPN1) in 1999. China is the host country of the Asian Thematic Programme Network on Desertification Monitoring and Assessment (TPN1) and are preparing the establishment of Asia-Africa Research, Development and Training Center for Combating Desertification.

#### **Acceleration of International Cooperation**

Chinese government has built up close relationship with many international organizations and countries through various means including bilateral and multilateral channels in the field of combating desertification. Within the spirit of UNCCD, Germany government has financed one project to combat desertification in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia in 1999. China is ready to establish new cooperation with Korea, Japan, and other countries of parties.

#### **Strengthening Legal Guarantee System**

As of present, China has promulgated about 20 laws relating to environmental protection and a series of by-laws and regulations. The National People's Congress has begun the legislative process of formulating a law in combating desertification since 1998 to implement sustainable development strategy, prevent land areas from desertification, bring desertified land under control and manage land wisely. Chinese government is strive to establish effective legal system so as to address the key issues regarding combating desertification and make the Law

of Combating Desertification in harmony with other related laws.

### **Desertification Monitoring and Early-warning**

A nationwide inventory on desertified land was carried out in China from 1994 to 1996. In accordance with the spirits of the UNCCD, the China Country Paper to Combat Desertification was compiled and China's desertified land area distribution map with a scale of 1:2.5 million was made. Starting from 1999, the nationwide desertification monitoring with thousands of sampling plots has been carried out. Dynamic Monitoring, Prediction, And Early-Warning System Of Desertification, Serving As Scientific Evidences For Decision-Making

China attaches importance to the summarization of the traditional knowledge and practical techniques for combating desertification. Chinese government strive their efforts for raising public awareness for combating desertification. Since the first time of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought on 17 June 1995, China has carried out large-scale publicity and public awareness raising activities for combating desertification in Beijing and other dozens of large cities.

### **Review on Benchmark and Indicators of Desertification Monitoring and Assessment**

Chinese government has attached great importance to the establishment of desertification benchmark and indicators of desertification monitoring and assessment. The Commission, in 1996, listed a topic of "Indicators System for Sandy Desertification and Dynamic Evaluation" at the Ninth Five-year Plan (1996 - 2000) key project of "Desertification Combating Technology Study and Demonstration". In 1998, the National Natural Resources Committee approved and funded a research project of "Desertification Occurrence Mechanism and Optimistic Model for Combating Desertification" (1999-2002) that again includes the topic of "Indicators System of Desertification Classification and Expert System". In the meantime, China Desertification Monitoring Center drafted "the Master Plan of China Desertification Monitoring Technology" and "the Regulations of the Fixed Location Monitoring Technology in the Typical Desertified Areas of China" and both of them were revised three times.

### **COMPILATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NAP**

The Chinese government has formulated the NAP in 1994. The compilation of NAP is in light of the UNCCD, "China Agenda 21, and on the basis of existing large-scale, trans-regional, trans-watershed ecological improvement programme action plan organized by the Chinese government, such as the National Action to Combat Desertification, "Three North Regions" Shelterbelts Development Programme, Plain Farmland Shelterbelts Development Programme.

In recent years, the State Forestry Administration organized an in-depth survey and analysis

of the on going NAP to Combat Desertification, which commenced in 1991. These survey and analysis have played a critical role to secure the scientific and practical foundation of the new version of NAP. The Chinese government has updated some components of the 1994 version of the NAP in light of the new developments and the National Eco-environment Improvement Plan which presents a blueprint, strategic policies for ecosystem and environmental protection and strategic objectives on combating desertification in China.

The National Action Programme has been started implementation and its financial resources are from three channels, i.e. central government allocation, local raised funds and loans with negative interest of Bank. In addition, the Ministry of Finance also provided funds for desertification monitoring.

## **THE FRAMEWORK OF NAP**

The special situation of the desertification in China determines the control measures adopted in NAP are dominated by biological measures, and the current strategy to combat desertification is from potential risk to severe situation.

### **Strategic Objectives in Different Phases**

China's strategic objectives for combating desertification shall require implementation of the principle of prevention first and integration of prevention, control and utilization, adopting the tactics of overall control and breakthrough in critical areas so as to check the expanding trend of desertification. To this end, three phases are designed: 1996-2000, 2001-2010 and 2011-2050, which are in consistence with China's national economic and social development plan.

By 2000, the continuous expansion of desertification has been mitigated to some extent, the environmental conditions in some areas have been improved and people's living standards raised substantially.

By 2010, regional environmental conditions in desertification affected areas will have been improved considerably and people's living standard been greatly improved.

By 2050, the overwhelming majority of the desertification affected land, excluding areas with extremely adverse conditions, will have been brought under effective control, the total area of nature reserves will have covered 91.35 million hectares and the local environment and economic development in the desertification affected areas will have entered into a virtuous cycle.

### **Priority Areas**

The Priority areas of NAP include following four aspects: acceleration of revegetation in the

affected region, capacity building for desertification monitoring, prediction and early warning system, extension service and adaptation of advanced practical technology, creation of network of public education for combating desertification.

#### Task and Overall Arrangement of Backbone Projects of NAP

The determined task of backbone projects is 17.867 million hectares, In light of the climatic and physical conditions, status and features of distribution of desertified land, the existing problems and similarity in control measures. The programme is subdivided into arid marginal and desert oasis zone; arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid desertified land zone and arid cold plateau zone affected by desertification and land degradation. Eleven engineering projects are arranged as needed in the above mentioned three special zones.

#### **Guarantee System to Implement Projects**

The guarantee system for implementing projects should include the definition of responsibility of local governments for implementing the project. The establishment of sound mechanism to implement project, the adaptation of advanced practical technologies and research results, and promotion and optimization of management mechanism of project are the essential guarantees..

#### **Finance Support for NAP**

Despite of the very limited financial resources, the State has made the decision of giving priority to the national desertification-combating programme. Meanwhile Chinese government warmly invite international contribution to the participation of the implementation of NAP.

(prepared by Yang Youlin, May 31, 2000)