

***Summary of Japan National Report***

***based on***

***the United Nations Convention  
to Combat Desertification  
in those Countries Experiencing  
Serious Drought and/or Desertification,  
Particularly in Africa***

***(UNCCD)***

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## **1. Efforts by both the international community and Japan regarding desertification**

The international community has carried out a variety of activities for environmental conservation including holding the United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm in June 1972, which adopted the 'Declaration of the UN Conference on Human Environment'. In recent years, along with the expansion in the scope, scale, and types of human activities, various global environment issues have emerged, which are recognized as potential threats to human beings. International cooperation is essential in this regard, because the issue of desertification is related to the sustainable development of various developing countries. Since deterioration of the global environment will substantially affect the world's population, this problem cannot be effectively dealt with by a single nation. Japan regards global environmental issues, including combating desertification, as one of the most important areas in which the country should make an international contribution.

The United Nations Conference on Environmental Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, was the consummation gathering for related international efforts made up to that time. The outcome of the UNCED, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and "Agenda 21" detailed the comprehensive efforts related to global environmental issues. Chapter 12 of "Agenda 21" entitled "Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Combating Desertification and Drought" sets forth a specific action program to tackle desertification. At UNCED, basic agreement was reached on the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to draw up a convention to combat desertification. Japan positively participated in the drafting process and made efforts to formulate a consensus.

This convention was adopted at the fifth session of the negotiating committee in June 1994 and was signed by 86 countries, including Japan, in October of the same year. The Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) entered into force in December 1996, and Japan became a party in December 1998. At COP2 in December 1998, Japan expressed its determination to continue its cooperation in the field of combating desertification as the second largest donor country to the UNCCD.

At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Japan announced the policy for environmental cooperation mainly through its Official Development Assistance (ODA), entitled the "Environmental Conservation Initiative for Sustainable Development (EcoISD), as a revision of former Initiative, the "Initiatives for Sustainable Development toward the 21st Century (ISD)". The philosophy of EcoISD consists of "Human Security", "Ownership & Partnership", and "Pursuit of Environmental Conservation & Development". Environmental problems threaten the survival of human beings, so it is important to tackle them from the viewpoint of "Human Security". It is vitally important that developing countries assume primary responsibility and role for tackling such problems through their own "Ownership" and that the various stakeholders in the international community work together in a spirit of "Partnership". In order to facilitate the "Pursuit of Environmental Conservation & Development" in developing countries, it is extremely important that developed countries provide support for the necessary environmental considerations in development, and extend cooperation for environmental protection, taking into account the differing economic and social conditions of each country concerned. In this regard, Japan's environmental ODA amounted to and billion yen on disbursement basis in fiscal 2003 and 2004 respectively (accounting for % and % of the total ODA disbursed by Japan in the concerned year respectively).

Japan promotes actions in the four areas in the EcoISD, which are "Efforts to Address Global Warming", "Pollution Control", "Fresh Water Issues", and "Conservation of Natural Environment". "Conservation of Natural Environment" includes 'management of nature reserves, forest-related issues, prevention of desertification, and natural resources management'.

In addition to such bilateral ODA projects, Japan has been making financial contributions to relevant international organizations to support the fight against desertification. Furthermore, various study and research activities on desertification are being conducted by Japanese institutions. Activities of many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) both in Japan and overseas have been supported by a variety of sources.

## **2. Japan's efforts under the UNCCD process**

Summary of Japan's implementations of the UNCCD is as follows:

### **2.1 Consultative processes and partnership agreements**

Japan had been actively making contributions to the UNCCD even before it officially became a party to the Convention in December 1998. During the intergovernmental negotiations for the UNCCD, Japan served as a bureau member and chaired the Second Working Group, positively participating in the drafting process.

### **2.2 Measures taken to support the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels**

#### **A. Support through Official Development Assistance (ODA)**

Japan has been implementing ODA projects that contribute to combating desertification, in areas such as conservation of water resources, reforestation and forest conservation, and agricultural development. There are various ODA schemes through which these projects have been implemented, such as Technical Cooperation (including Development Studies, Dispatch of Experts, Acceptance of Trainees), Grant Aid for General Projects and Yen Loans.

#### **B. Support through financial contribution for the UNCCD Secretariat**

Japan is the second largest contributor to the UNCCD activities. Japan's contributions to the core budget of the UNCCD for the years 2003 and 2004 are as follows: US\$1,439 thousand (2003) and US\$1,478 thousand (2004).

Japan also supports various UNCCD activities through its voluntary contribution. In 2003 and 2004, activities supported by Japan include: Thematic Programme Network from 6 (TPN 6) Launching Meetings; Support to the Asian regional consultations preparatory to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC3); Support for participation of affected developing country parties at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP6) and CRIC3; CST Ad Hoc Panel on Early Warning Systems; Support to the National Action Plan/ Policy Instrument Formulation.

#### **C. Other Supports**

Japan had been making substantial contributions to the implementation of the Convention with financial and technological support, organizing meetings, etc. even before officially becoming a party in December 1998. Through its contributions, Japan has been supporting, for example, various regional meetings in Asia such as ministerial meetings, focal point meetings, experts meetings and workshops; national awareness-raising seminars and regional activities in Latin America and the Caribbean; and national report preparation by African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean country parties.

Since 1998, Japan has been promoting the implementation of the UNCCD in various ways through voluntary contributions. In particular, recognizing the importance of promoting the exchange of information and cooperation between Parties, Japan has provided support for all Asian National Focal Points Meetings. Japan has also provided support for three Asia-Africa Forums on UNCCD to promote information sharing and the strengthening of relationships.

Japan has been positively supporting the formulation of a national action programme by various countries. In particular, Japan supported 7 Parties to formulate their own national action programmes. Considering it important to enhance recognition of the UNCCD, Japan provided support for a workshop in the Philippines and PNG to raise awareness of the people there. Not only to promote cooperation within regions or between regions, but also to support sub-regional activities, Japan supported the organization of sub-regional workshops in the South Pacific.

Japan has been involved in the development of Asia's regional action program for UNCCD. In 2003 and 2004, Japan provided financial supports for the launching meeting of the Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) such as the launching meeting of the Thematic Programme Network 6 (TPN6) (Pakistan, June 2004). In addition, Japan participates in Thematic Programme Network 1 (TPN1) on desertification monitoring and assessment, and Thematic Programme Network 5 (TPN5) on strengthening capacities for drought impact mitigation and desertification control.

### **2.3 Study and research on desertification**

#### **A. Contribution to the Committee on Science and Technology**

Regarding the activities of the Committee on Science and Technology, Japan, with the Secretariat of the UNCCD, hosted an Ad Hoc Panel on Early Warning Systems, which was reestablished at COP4, in June 2001 in Fujiyoshida, Yamanashi Prefecture. The outcome of the Ad Hoc Panel was reported at COP5.

#### **B. Domestic research processes**

A variety of study and research activities are being conducted by Japanese institutions. For example, the Ministry of the Environment conducts research on measures to combat desertification and also provides a Global Environment Research Fund to promote research on desertification. Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Japan Green Resources Corporation are conducting a study on combating desertification in Asia and a study on preventing soil erosion in Latin America. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Association for International Cooperation of Agriculture and Forestry are conducting research on the prospect of utilizing desert areas in Mongolia for agriculture. Study and research activities are also being carried out at the Arid Land Research Center, Tottori University.

### **2.4 Support for NGO activities**

In Japan, financial assistance has been provided to NGOs in and outside of Japan through various schemes including the Japan Fund for Global Environment (Environmental Restoration and Conservation Agency of Japan).

### **2.5 Linkage and synergy with other environmental conventions**

Based on the preamble of the UNCCD, which refers to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, Japan recognizes the importance of enhancing the synergies of environment-related conventions. Japan supported the National Forum on Combating Desertification and Promoting the Synergistic Implementation of Inter-Linked Multilateral Environmental Conventions in June 2001.