

National report to Implement the UNCCD Submitted by the Republic of Korea, 2006

1. Overview

From the earliest time of history, Korea has prioritized forest management to reduce drought and floods. However, in the early half of the 20th Century, a vast deforestation occurred due to illegal and excessive logging during Japan's colonial rule and Korean War. The reforestation during the First National Forest Plan (1973-1978) and the Second National forest Plan (1979-1987) had made Korea succeed in greening forest land. The Third National Forest Plan (1988-1997) focused on the establishment of forest resources.

Recently, forest land in Korea has been decreasing due to alteration of forest to building sites, roads, etc. Also soil degradation area has increased by forest fires and landslide. A strong wind including the Dust and Sandstorms(DSS) arising from deserts and degraded lands in China and Mongolia during the dry spring season is affecting forests environmentally and financially. These cross-border environmental problems made the citizens and governments realize that forest resources have priceless value in soil conservation. Based on the increasing interest to combat desertification, government and non-governmental organizations have been contributing to the prevention of desertification through organizing bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Moreover, these organizations are facilitating desertification prevention trainings, seminars, symposia, and international joint projects to build government employees' capacity in affected countries. The DSS is monitored and effective measures are devised through international joint projects. Northeast Asian Forest Forum (NEAFF), a non-governmental organization, is expanding public awareness among Northeast Asian countries and actively pursuing forestation projects.

i. Focal point institution

Name of focal point	Hyun-woo LEE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Chang-won HONG Korea Forest Service	Ho-joong YOUN Korea Forestry Research Institute
E-mail address	hwlee@mofat.go.kr	cwh600@foa.go.kr	yount@foa.go.kr
Website	1. www.foa.go.kr 2. www.koica.go.kr		

ii. Status of National Action Plan

- Did not establish a national action plan because Korea is not in the course of desertification.
- Soil degradation due to forest fires and landslide is rehabilitated according to the Erosion Control Act and the Forest Land Management Act.

iii. Member of SRAP/RAP : None

iv. Composition of the NCB

Name of institution	Government	NGO	Gender of the Head
1. Korea Forest Service (KFS)	✓		Male
2. Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)	✓		Male
3. Northeast Asian Forest Forum (NEAFF)		✓	Male

v. Total number of NGOs accredited to the process

- Did not organize a Committee to Combat Desertification because Korea is not an affected party.
- Number of organizations: 3 (NEAFF, Korea-Mongolian Research Society, Citizen's Information and Media Center)

vi. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD

- Do not have laws directly related to desertification but laws related to soil degradation have been legislated.

Title of law	Date of adoption
1. Forest Law	December 27, 1961
2. Erosion Control Act	January 15, 1962
3. Forest Land Management Act	December 30, 2002
4. Act on the Protection and Management of Forest Resources	August 4, 2005

vii. Name of projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD

Name of Project	National Action Plan	Project System	Duration	Partner	Budget
1. Forestation Aid Project in Western China	None	Official Development Assistance (Gratuitous)	2001~2005	China	\$5Million

2. Policy and strategic priorities

Korea has 6,411,893 ha of forests that cover 64% of the total land area. 1,448,179 ha (22%) is national forest, 490,758 ha (8%) is public forest, and 4,472,956 ha (70%) is private forest. Since erosion control was given policy priority throughout Korean history, forest resources have been well managed until early 1900s. However, during Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War, wide areas of forest were devastated due to illegal and excessive logging. Based on the Forest Law enacted in 1961, First National Forest Plan (1973-1978) and Second National Forest Plan (1979-1987) were established to focus on reforestation and rehabilitation. The Forest Law states that forest

plan should be established or renewed every 10 years and that an intermediate assessment and feedback should be performed every 5 years. The Third National Forest Plan (1988-1997) focused on the establishment of forest resources and healthy forest cultivation. The Fourth National Forest Plan (1998-2007) is currently implementing a new paradigm called Sustainable Forest Management in line with global trend. Among the framework forest plans, the Chief of Korea Forest Service establishes National Forest Plan and 5 Regional Forest Services establish the Regional Forest Plans taking local characteristics into consideration.

Korean government signed the Convention to Combat Desertification on October 14, 1994 and officially ratified the convention on August 17, 1999. Although there aren't any deserts, Korea is suffering from soil degradation caused by forest fire during dry season and landslide from local downpours. The average annual number of forest fires is 586 and 6,600 ha of forests is damaged annually. 984 ha of forests is affected by landslides annually.

The DSS coming from China and Mongolia in spring season is giving negative influences to environment. Average annual number of days affected by sand storm in the 1980s was 3.9 days and in the 1990s was 7.7 days. In year 2002, the number of days increased to 27 days. In 2003, the sand storm occurred only twice due to frequent rainfall in source areas. However, in China and Mongolia the deserts are expanding because of human impacts and climate change. The DSS does not only affect precision machinery industries but also atmospheric environment, agriculture, and forestry. It also can be harmful to human health, especially, respiratory organs during this season. The DSS acts as a pollutant carrier because it routes over the industrial areas in China. These pollutants are expected to have negative impacts on the ecosystem in Korea. Particularly being Korean government concerned about health, it is donating reforestation funds and technical supports through bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the nations where the DSS originate. Korean government and non-governmental organizations also have been participating in desertification control for Conservation of Global Environment.

3. Legal system

Korea Forest Service (KFS), which is in charge of implementing the Convention to Combat Desertification, is an independent government agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The objectives of KFS are promotion of forest resources, protection and cultivation of forests, and development of forest product and forest management. In 2006 KFS has been reorganized, composing Planning and Public Relations Bureau, Resources Policy Bureau, Forest Utilization Bureau, Forest Protection Bureau and Forest Land Conservation Unit. There are Korea Forest Research Institute (KFRI), National Arboretum, Forest Aviation Office, and National Forest Office within KFS. There are also 5 Regional Forest Services and 27 National Forest Stations nationwide.

Convention on Biodiversity and Framework Convention on Climate Change are under the

jurisdiction of Ministry of Environment, and Convention to Combat Desertification is under KFS which is in charge of rehabilitating deforested land caused by forest fire and landslide.

4. Participation and agreement process

With the increased frequency and intensity of sand storms, the public greatly acknowledge the importance of forest in preventing desertification and preserving environment. Korean government has become more concerned about desertification prevention and control programs through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In April 2002, Korea, China, and Japan's Environment Ministers actually made an agreement. In this agreement, the need for systematic joint researches was unanimously recognized to search for better solutions to prevent desertification.

The Forest Cooperative Committee Meetings between Korea and China have been held every other year since 1996 and in 2005, the 5th meeting was held. Korea and Mongolia Forest Cooperative Committee meetings have been held since 2000 and the 4th meeting in 2006 was held focusing on desertification prevention.

KFS is supporting the Greenbelt Programme in Mongolia, contributing to desertification prevention. In 2006, Korean government and the Mongolian government mutually agreed to a long term planting project to combat desertification. KFS will have an opportunity to present an effective project model and to encourage participation from the international organizations. It further plans to enhance the project effectiveness by linking other relevant works in technology transfer and local income increase.

- Project Duration: '07~ '16 (10-year supportive project)
- Project Fund: 9.5 billion won (0.5 billion won in 2007 and 1 billion for each year from 2008)

Contents of the project

- 2007: joint researches on soil, tree species and planting methods adaptable to the project land, and model forestation.
- 2008~16: planting, training programs, experts dispatch, joint researches, etc.

KFS and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) are supporting forest management projects and desertification prevention projects in northeast Asia. KFS provides the know-how and technology based on the successful reforestation experiences and KOICA provides funds for project operations in China, Mongolia, Myanmar, etc. KFS is primarily in charge of most projects and forestry policy implementations. The NGOs and private sectors participate in policy-making process and other forest related activities.

5. International cooperation activities for implementation of UNCCD

In the 1998 Summit Meeting between Korea and China, both countries agreed on a joint project to combat desertification in western China. In the implementation of the project Korean government agreed to give technical assistance and financial aid to share successful reforestation and rehabilitation experiences. This project is summarized in <Table 1>. The reforestation project is being carried out in 5 different local areas covering around 8,000 ha in western China. Expenses are shared by both Korea and China.

<Table 1> Reforestation projects in western China

Location	Purpose	Project Period	Reforestation Area (ha)	Budget (\$ 1,000)		
				Total	Korea	China
Total			8,040	9,990	5,000	4,990
Tongliao Inner Mongolia	Windbreak development	2001-2005	3,000	1,720	1,000	720
Baiyin, Gansu province	Windbreak, economic, environmental forest development	2001-2005	1,540	2,880	1,000	1,880
Tulufan, Xinjiang province	Windbreak, economic forest development	2001-2005	1,200	1,800	1,000	800
Pingluo, Ningxiahuizu province	Windbreak, economic forest development	2003-2005	1,000	1,590	1,000	590
Xiuwen, Guizhou province	Erosion control, economic forest development	2003-2005	1,300	2,000	1,000	1,000

According to the agreements made in the 4th Korea China Japan Ministerial Conference in April 2002, an experimental ecological village in Inner Mongolia was selected in 2003 to implement local researches, government employee education, and Chinese expert training. Village development measures/management and capacity building projects have been continuously facilitated since 2004. “ADB-GEF Northeast Asian DSS Prevention Project” was implemented from January 2003 to June 2004 with total budget of \$1.21 Million, \$500,000 of which was invested by ADB and GEF, and \$210,000 was invested by China and Mongolia. This project implements establishment of local cooperation system and development of DSS monitoring/alarm network, and project of DSS prevention within China and Mongolia. To establish DSS Monitoring Network, Korea and China agreed to set up 5 joint DSS observatories in China and to dispatch management experts to China. Total of \$1.23 million was invested for this project, \$630,000 by KOICA and \$600,000 by China. It was also agreed to share DSS data observed from China and Mongolia. However, technical problems on data transfer in rural areas are still outstanding. In February 2001, \$4.98 million of

Environment Development Fund managed by Ministry of Finance and Economy was financed on credit to combat desertification, to develop windbreaks and steppe licorice farming, and to promote other eco-environmental projects in Inner Mongolia district.

Korea is enforcing number of training programs with countries affected by desertification and also holding international conferences to combat desertification. The first technical training program hosted by KOICA held in May 2001 had 12 trainees from China and Mongolia. The second training was held in April 2002 for 16 trainees from 9 countries namely China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tadjikistan, and Uzbekistan. The third training was held in July 2003 with 15 trainees from 11 countries namely Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines, Peru, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco.

International cooperation for desertification prevention and control was also implemented in the field of researches. KFRI and Chinese Academy of Forestry have facilitated joint researches to combat desertification since 1996. Since 2002, soil improvement experiment, selecting drought-resistant poplar saplings, and grasses for establishing pasture have been performed and 90 ha of windbreaks and grassland have been established by implementation projects. International joint research with Mongolia has been facilitated as well since 2001. This research project focuses on the characteristics of desertification, control technology and prevention measures. All projects are carried out at local sites in China or Mongolia and project expenses are shared between both parties.

NGO projects are also actively being implemented. NEAFF, a non-governmental organization, facilitated a sand fixation project in 200 ha of Inner Mongolia in China, 20 ha of Gobi Desert, and 250 ha of Tujiin Nars Selenge in Mongolia to decelerate the expansion of deserts. KFS is supporting financial aid to NEAFF for forestation projects in China and Mongolia to combat desertification, and to Korea Federation for Environment Movement for Korea-China Cooperative projects, etc. (2006 year : 650 million won of Green Fund)

Seminars and symposia to combat desertification are held 2 to 3 times a year. These are listed in <Table 2>. Experts from concerned nations such as China and Mongolia were invited to give presentations on desertification status, causes of expansion, and combat efforts. Korean experts gave presentations on the data related to desertification collected in the Northeast Asian region and traditional rehabilitation methods for deforested land. Korea will continue to actively participate in conferences related to desertification.

<Table 2> Seminars, symposia, and conferences to combat desertification

Date	Title	Host	Place
July 1999	Seminar on combating desertification in China and Mongolia	UNCCD, UNDP, NEAFF	Seoul
November 2000	Korea-China cooperation Conference to combat desertification	NEAFF	Seoul
April 2001	Korea-China workshop on desertification prevention	NEAFF	Beijing
June 2001	Korea-Mongolia seminar on desertification prevention	NEAFF	Ulaan-Bataar
December 2001	Korea-China international scientific symposium on desertification prevention	KFRI, NEAFF	Seoul
April 2002	International symposium on combating desertification: Strategies for DSS prevention	KFRI	Seoul
May 2002	Korea-Mongolia partnership meeting for forestry sector	NEAFF	Seoul
August 2003	Korea-China cooperation conference on desertification prevention	NEAFF	Inner Mongolia
October 2003	International workshop on combating desertification and controlling dust and sandstorm	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNCCD, NEAFF	Seoul
October 2003	Korea-Mongolia cooperation conference on desertification prevention	NEAFF (Northeast Asian Forest Forum)	Ulaan-Bataar
October 2005	Korea- China Forestry Cooperative Committee	KFS- State Forestry Administration of China	Daejeon
June 2006	International Symposium in commemoration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification	KFS-NEAFF	Seoul
August 2006	Examination of suitable planting land in Mongolian deserts	KFS-Mogolian Ministry of Nature and Environment	Ulaan-Bataar
November 2006	Korea-Mongolia Forestry Cooperative Committee	KFS	Daejeon