

**UNCCD Second National Report- Lesotho**

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## **Executive Summary**

The commitment of the government of Lesotho to national development is articulated in its National Development Plan. These plans spell out its social, economic and environmental policies. The current (Sixth) National Development Plan addresses the economic and social development policies and strategies. These include sustainable human development with a focus on poverty reduction, appropriate roles for the public and private sectors, public participation in development, gender issues, regional economic co-operation, public finance, and development of the financial sector and disaster management. The commitment of the Government of Lesotho to the United Nations Conventions and in particular the UNCCD is inspired by the National Constitution. The Constitution of Lesotho provides the mandate on environmental management. Section 36 of the constitution allows for adoption of policies designed to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment of Lesotho for the benefit of both present and future generations. It also facilitates endeavours to assure all citizens a sound and safe environment adequate for their health and well-being.

The Government of Lesotho ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1995. To this extend, the government of Lesotho formulated the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) in 1989 providing a framework for the integration of environmental considerations into the planning and decision making process for social and economic development and for the implementation of Agenda 21. The NEAP focuses on the following priority areas:

- Improvement of the living and working environment of the poor, through eradication of poverty;
- conservation of biological diversity; protection and sustainable management of land resources;
- protection and enhancement of the quality and supply of fresh water resources; protection of human health and improvement in the quality of life;
- protection of the atmosphere by combating climate change; environmentally sound management of wastes; and
- involvement of major groups in planning, decision making and implementation of development programmes.

The National Action Plan to implement Agenda 21 was launched in 1994 and it is built on the foundations of the NEAP. This plan incorporates sectoral priorities and national plans for implementing international conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification control. In particular, Agenda 21 Implementation Plan aims to achieve close Government and inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation in environment planning co-ordinated by the National Environment Secretariat.

As an endeavour to facilitate the implementation of the UNCCD, a National Environment policy was developed. The National Environmental Policy relates directly to Lesotho's

national development priorities. It focuses on the social and economic dimensions, the management and conservation of natural resources, protection and improvement quality of environment and the promotion of community participation. The goal of the national policy on environment is to ensure the protection and conservation of the environment with a view to achieving sustainable development for Lesotho. The purpose of the national environmental policy is to facilitate sustainable development based on sound management of natural resources.

The commitment of the Government of Lesotho and its effort to combat desertification pre-dates the UNCCD as evidenced by a range of policy initiatives facilitating action programmes across the spectrum of areas involved in environmental issues. These include the issues of land ranging from land use issues (Land Act 1979) to natural resource management (Range Management & Grazing Control Regulations of 1980). The focus of the agricultural land use policy is that crop production should be carried out only in the foothills and lowlands agro-ecological zone, while the mountains should be used solely for livestock production under extensive grazing systems. Some relevant policy initiatives preceding the convention include water resources policies and energy policies.

The report also outlines major institutional measures undertaken after the ratification of the convention as part of the greater commitment of government of Lesotho to the implementation of the UNCCD. The flagship of these initiatives was the establishment of the National Environmental Secretariat (NES) in 1994, initially under the Office of the Prime Minister and later as a Department of the new Ministry of Environment, Gender and Youth Affairs. The NES was initially charge with responsibility to coordinate the national plans to implement the Agenda 21 in Lesotho. This mandate now covers overseeing the formulation and implementation of the National Action Programme (NAP) on the CCD.

In compliance with the terms of the CCD Lesotho has set up a multi-disciplinary National Desertification Steering Committee (NDSC) to oversee, in collaboration with NES, the elaboration and implementation of the NAP. The NES realizes the important role multiple groups can play in the elaboration and implementation of the NAP. This multi-disciplinary Steering Committee that has been set up has to lead the NAP process; forge closer and greater technical and scientific cooperation; assist in the transfer, adaptation and acquisition of technologies; and increase popular participation in NAP implementation and evaluate and assess the impacts of the action programmes. For smooth running of operations in the districts and local levels, it is necessary for NES to establish coordinating bodies similar to the NDSC. However this has not yet been done. The use of existing administrative institutions is being maintained. These structures consist of the District Development Council (DDC) at the district level under the chairmanship of the District Secretary. Membership includes Heads of departments at the district, Principal Chiefs, Selected number of representatives of the Village Development Councils and Representatives of NGOs. At the local level is the Village Development Councils, which are the planning structures at village level in as far as developmental and

land-use issues are concerned. Although these structures seem strategic, their effectiveness in dealing with desertification it is still questionable as land degradation remains the foremost national problem. This is partly due to the conflicting legislation over natural resources and undefined roles of Development Councils over that of the local chiefs.

The National Environment Secretariat (NES) has due legal standing in the promulgation of policy and legislation in environmental matters. In this regard the NES has significant influence. For example, the NES has been very instrumental in coordinating the promulgation of the National Environment Policy (1989), National Environment Action Programme (1989) and Environment Act (2001). However, the basic problem curtailing the extend of its influence is structural. As it is, the NES is a Department of the Ministry of Environment with no authority over other departments and /or ministries dealing with the environment. Its role can only be advisory. The ideal situation would be the establishment of an autonomous and independent authority with due legal and enforcement powers on matter of the environment. Such a strategy is being considered by way of contemplating the establishment of an environment authority. This is constrained by resources

The NES coordinates and links with various United Nations Conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework for Convention of Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification. This coordination includes relatively fair networking initiatives within the constraints of time and material resources available to the NES. The membership into the various NES participative fora and is based on representation by selection of members from stakeholders groups and organizations. There are on-going attempts to build capacity for monitoring and responding to environmental matters within the different stakeholder ministries. For example, intensive training is being given to environmental units within ministries. This has been on-going from 1999 and will finish in November 2002. Participants have given the initiative some good evaluation but it remains to be seen if the commensurate impacts will be seen within the routine plans of the various line ministries.

Among some of the major constraints of the in the implementation of the UNCCD are the financial resources both in the NES and stakeholder line ministries and participating partners in the NGO or private communities. From its inception the formulation of the NAP was financially assisted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The money allocated covered the preliminary activities regarding nation wide awareness and sensitisation campaigns as well as district workshops. Further assistance was received from the CCD Secretariat amounting to US\$20,000. This was used for a desk-top study on desertification in Lesotho, and two consultants were commissioned to undertake that study. After the sensitisation stage other processes This part of activities was financed by the grant provided by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with the sum of US\$200,000. The funding was used to do the following:

- preparation of a methodology and work plan for defining and formulating the

National Action Programme process;

- preparation of a vision statement and brief concept paper for implementation of the CCD in Lesotho;
- preparation of requisite inputs to National Forum;
- organisation and convening of the first National Forum; and
- preparation of an umbrella framework programme document outlining all required elements for the implementation of the NAP process after the first National Forum.

Currently the NES requires technical advisory services in the form an environment Economist. This has been requested through the GEF under the United Nations Operations Service. The process is in an advanced stage as the Technical Advisor and local Local Counter-Part are being short-listed for appointment by the respective authorities. Other co-operations are in place such as the Chief Technical Advisor in the National Environment Youth Coops programme and also in the Convention for Mountain Biodiversity in Southern Lesotho. Technical cooperation must also be targeted by the NGO community and CBA.

The Government of Lesotho has several institutions that address land management issues. These include the Department of Environment and four Divisions of the Ministry of Agriculture. Their combined total operational recurrent budget per year is about US\$0.9 million ( 1US\$ = Maloti 10.00). The efforts of the institutions using this fund are directed to activities related to combating desertification. In the capital budget regarding land management programmes, a total amount of about US\$1.0 million is currently budgeted for, out of which Lesotho Government is contributing about US\$0.2 million. International Partners contributing in the capital budget include Sida, CIDA, GTZ, EU, IFAD, DFID, and UNDP and the World Bank.

Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) is currently contributing to the Rural Development Programme within the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) area. The projects relevant to land management that are underway within this programme include Animal Husbandry and Range Management, Community Forestry, and Land Use Planning with the people. These projects are to continue up to the year 2005 and have a total budget of about US\$5.3 million.

Another financial resource available for contribution to land resources management programmes is the Lesotho Highlands Water Revenue Fund (LHWRF) established in 1991 by Legal Notice No.82 of 1991. Financial regulations governing the Fund were published in Legal Notice No.91 of 1992. The objectives of the Fund include promotion of economic diversification and development by providing capital resources to the development process, stabilizing government development resources and providing additional revenues to government on a long-term basis. The Government perceived the Fund as a source of development resources, which were to be used for promoting the involvement of people at local levels in planning and executing development projects that they themselves have identified. The Fund's resources are to be used for introducing and maintaining the bottom-up development process, and therefore, reverse the top-down

planning approach used in the past. Operations of the LHWRP commenced in  
September, 1994.



## **1 The Strategies and Priorities Established within the Framework of Sustainable Development Plans and/or Policies.**

The principal development objective of the Government of Lesotho is poverty reduction within a context of sustainable development. The country is threatened by erosion induced desertification and land degradation. Water erosion is the most prevalent form of accelerated erosion causing loss of organic matter and nutrients from the soil as a result of poor non-sustainable agricultural practices and various forms of biomass removal. The dearth of energy sources and rampant poverty in rural areas is a principal cause of deforestation and loss of vegetative cover.

Thus the strategies and priorities of Lesotho are established in the context of challenges facing the country in the form of accelerated soil erosion resulting in land degradation, loss of arable land and eventual desertification; periodic prolonged drought and scarcity of water for agriculture; increasing urban and rural poverty; pollution of land and water; low environmental awareness among policy and decision makers and the general public; low level, weak institutional capacity to deal with environmental problems; lack of public participation in project identification, design and implementation; legal impediments in the way of women's social and economic progress; and absence of an enabling legal mechanism to advance on sustainable development programmes.

### **1.1 National Plans and Strategies Available in Other Social and Economic Areas.**

This section highlights the policies and strategies that have been formulated at the national level to address the land degradation problems which have been the major issue for several decades.

#### *1.1.1 National Development Plan*

The commitment of the government of Lesotho to national development is articulated in its National Development Plan. These plans spell out its social, economic and environmental policies. The current (Sixth) National Development Plan addresses the economic and social development policies and strategies. These include sustainable human development with a focus on poverty reduction, appropriate roles for the public and private sectors, public participation in development, gender issues, regional economic co-operation, public finance, and development of the financial sector and disaster management.

#### *1.1.2 National Environmental Action Plan*

The Constitution of Lesotho provides the mandate on environmental management. Section 36 of the constitution allows for adoption of policies designed to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment of Lesotho for the benefit of both present and future generations. It also facilitates endeavours to assure all citizens a sound and

safe environment adequate for their health and well-being. To this extend, the government of Lesotho formulated the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) in 1989. The NEAP provides a framework for the integration of environmental considerations into the planning and decision making process for social and economic development and for the implementation of Agenda 21.

The NEAP focuses on the following priority areas: Improvement of the living and working environment of the poor, through eradication of poverty; conservation of biological diversity; protection and sustainable management of land resources; protection and enhancement of the quality and supply of fresh water resources; protection of human health and improvement in the quality of life; protection of the atmosphere by combating climate change; environmentally sound management of wastes; and involvement of major groups in planning, decision making and implementation of development programmes.

### *1.1.3 National Plan To Implement Agenda 21*

The National Action Plan to implement Agenda 21 was launched in 1994 and it is built on the foundations of the NEAP. This plan incorporates sectoral priorities and national plans for implementing international conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification control. In particular, Agenda 21 Implementation Plan aims to achieve close Government and inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation in environment planning co-ordinated by the National Environment Secretariat. Agenda 21 Implementation Plan further provides an umbrella to support and reinforce on-going and new initiatives for achieving economic growth, sustainable development and improved resource management.

### *1.1.4 National Environmental Policy*

The National Environmental Policy relates directly to Lesotho's national development priorities. It focuses on the social and economic dimensions, the management and conservation of natural resources, protection and improvement quality of environment and the promotion of community participation. The goal of the national policy on environment is to ensure the protection and conservation of the environment with a view to achieving sustainable development for Lesotho. The purpose of the national environmental policy is to facilitate sustainable development based on sound management of natural resources. The Policy Objectives are to:

- secure for all citizens of Lesotho a high quality of environment to enhance their health and well-being;
- use and conserve the environment and natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations;
- halt environmental degradation, and to restore, maintain and enhance the ecosystems and ecological processes essential for the functioning of the biosphere and the maintenance of biological diversity;
- raise public awareness and promote understanding of essential causal linkages

between development and environment, and to ensure that environmental awareness becomes an integral part of education at all levels;

- encourage and facilitate the participation of individual, NGO, Community Based Organisations, academic and research institutions and private sector in environmental management;
- foster community management and sharing of benefits from sustainable utilization of natural resources on customary land;
- put in place environmental legislative and regulatory measures complimented by social and economic incentives and institutional arrangements to influence positive behaviour towards environment and promote sustainable economic and social development;
- set up programmes of resource inventory and environmental accounting, complemented by regular and accurate environmental assessment, monitoring reporting, and dissemination of information on the state of the environment to all sectors of society;
- ensure that the true costs of environmental use and abuse are borne by the user, i.e. application of the “polluter pays” and “user pays” principle;
- enact and implement a land tenure policy which encourages and enhances sustainable natural resource management;
- enhance that programmes and measures of structural adjustment, economic reform and debt servicing repayment take into account the country’s environmental circumstances and needs;
- conserve the Basotho cultural heritage and utilises it for the benefit of the present and future generations;
- explore the use of fiscal policy and incentives (e.g. taxation, subsidies, public expenditure) to promote better environmental management;
- use markets, pricing of goods and services and economic incentives to complement regulatory and institutional measures for better environmental management;
- empower women to play key role in natural resource use and management activities; and
- co-operate in good faith with other countries in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, in Africa, and with international organizations and agencies to achieve sustainable management of transboundary shared natural resources and effective prevention or abatement of adverse transboundary environmental impacts.

## **1.2 National Policies or Strategies in the Field of Combating Desertification Developed Prior to UNCCD**

This section identifies the principal Government policies and strategies designed to address problems in the environment – development nexus developed prior to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). These encompass conservation and developmental policies having a bearing on the environment.

### *1.2.1 Land Use Policies*

The overall land use policy is the promotion of land use suited to the climatic zone and soil type. Policies have been developed for each of the major uses in the country. These policies are aimed at encouraging people to use land for what it is best suited to. The Land Act, 1979, was enacted to facilitate the new land use policies by providing security of tenure under a lease system, where a lease holder may lease, rent, or sublease out his land to users who can more effectively use the land.

The 1980 Range Management and Grazing Control Regulations were also introduced to control grazing and to encourage destocking. One aspect of controlling grazing is to reorganize the use of cattle posts. The destocking effort would be encouraged by the introduction of a grazing fee system.

### *1.2.2 Agricultural Land Use Policies*

Lesotho's overall agricultural land use policy is to increase production and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products in a manner consistent with the sustainable management of the land resources base. This policy has a crop production and range and livestock component.

The general policy is that crop production should be carried out only in the Foothills and Lowlands agro-ecological zone, and the mountains should be used solely for livestock production (grazing).

The major components of agricultural land use policy are:

- Development of comprehensive watershed management programmes in order to integrate water and soil conservation activities including rehabilitation through the use of improved production techniques to expand output of both crops and livestock;
- Promotion of intensive livestock production in the lowlands to conserve the land resources base necessary for crop and fodder production; and
- Encouragement of controlled and improved management of the rangelands through the creation of grazing associations and improvement of rangelands, and hence livestock productivity; training and educating households in the sustainable use of land and water.

### *1.2.3 Livestock and Range Management Policies and Strategies*

Livestock and Range Management Policy states as its overall goal the achievement of self-reliance and increased incomes for livestock owners and the protection and regeneration of the natural environment and the resource base.

Several strategies are listed for the realization of the overall objectives in which village

level institutions will play a major part. Those that have a direct bearing on desertification include:

- Promotion of improved range carrying capacity by developing appropriate management programmes;
- Promotion of intensive livestock production in the lowlands and extensive livestock production in the foothills and mountain areas;
- Promotion of enhanced levels of livestock nutrition by maintaining sustainable stocking rates and by expanding the fodder resource base; and
- Training of livestock owners in the sustainable use of land and water resources;
- Promotion of overall livestock and rangeland management through creation of Range and Livestock Management Associations (RLMA).

To implement these policies, village level RLMAs will play a major role. Their activities will be guided by the bye-laws and capabilities of their management committees and membership.

#### *1.2.4 Water Resources Policies*

The water resources policies are covered under the institutions of the National Meteorological Service and the Department of Water Affairs.

National Meteorological Services aims to give proper advice on environmental issues so as to minimize the effect of climate change and ensure the natural balance that exists in any eco-systems.

The strategies for achieving this aim are to:

- maintain and increase the number meteorological stations and upgrade rainfall stations;
- install several upper atmosphere stations to monitor carbon dioxide concentration through air samples in order to monitor the green house effect;
- deploy trained staff at different technical levels in key positions in the Service;
- undertake continuous staff training to maintain and improve the quality of the services offered to data users or information derived from the data;
- improve the specialised service geared towards aviation, agriculture, weather-included disasters; and
- change the structure of the services in accordance with prevailing demands to give a full and exclusive service through the specialised sector of agricultural meteorology, climatology, and weather forecasting.

The Department of Water Resources' policy is to utilize water resources in order to improve the economic and financial livelihood of the people by ensuring the assessment and forecasting of the quantity of water resources of the country in order to meet the needs of all sectors of the society, to enable mitigation of water related hazards, and to maintain or enhance the condition of the environment in order to achieve a sustainable development.

The strategies for achieving these objectives are to:

- increase the awareness of the decision makers of the value of water resources assessment;
- improve the information and databases by employing available significant advances in instrumentation, thus making data more accessible and useful to a greater range of clients;
- improve human resources development, education and training;
- implement institutional arrangement and consolidation including well articulated legislation for water resources management;
- increase the financial resources of the water resources assessment agency by introducing a charge for supplying all hydrometeorological data to users in order to supplement budgetary allocations.

#### *1.2.5 Energy Policies*

Lesotho's energy policy is to ensure an energy supply for all sectors and in all regions of the country through the implementation of the Energy Master Plan designed to satisfy the energy needs of the country at minimal social, economic and environmental costs. The measures envisaged to achieve the overall strategy as spelled out in the Master Plan include:

- Promotion of the efficient use of energy – promotion of energy conservation in all sectors of economy;
- Substitution of imports by local sources – development of solar energy to minimize the use of imported electricity, coal and petroleum products;
- Enhancement of supply through development of all viable energy local energy resources – increase tree planting activities, the development of biogas and the development of hydropower and solar energy.

### **1.3 General Analysis of the Issues**

The general aims and objectives of the various strategies and priorities discussed above are noble in themselves. It is, however, difficult and uncertain to what extent they have actually contributed to alleviating poverty and combating desertification. It would require some dedicated impact assessment studies to ascertain the real effects of the strategies and policies.

The implementation of the different plans in Lesotho have been affected to varying degrees by constraints of resources. For example, there has been a relatively poor dissemination of Agenda 21 issues in the various line ministries resulting in their inability to incorporate the issues into the annual ministerial plans. It has also been difficult to mobilize funds both locally and internationally for issues like desertification despite the presence of global mechanism for supporting the Agenda 21 implementation. The processes to secure funds are too lengthy and cumbersome.

The National Action Programme for Lesotho is a coordinating document which synthesizes priority issues from different areas under five key priority issues.

## **2 Institutional Measures Taken to Implement the Convention**

### **2.1 National Coordination Body**

The National Environment Secretariat (NES) was established in 1994 under the Office of the Prime Minister to oversee and coordinate the National Plan to Implement Agenda 21 in Lesotho. In June, 1998 a new Ministry of Environment, Gender and Youth Affairs was created, of which NES is now a department. The CCD is embraced in Agenda 21 and by virtue becomes part of the activities of the NES. The NES is responsible for overseeing the formulation and implementation the National Action Programme (NAP) on the CCD.

In compliance with the terms of the CCD Lesotho has set up a multi-disciplinary National Desertification Steering Committee (NDSC) to oversee, in collaboration with NES, the elaboration and implementation of the NAP. The NES realizes the important role multiple groups can play in the elaboration and implementation of the NAP. This multi-disciplinary Steering Committee that has been set up has to lead the NAP process; forge closer and greater technical and scientific cooperation; assist in the transfer, adaptation and acquisition of technologies; and increase popular participation in NAP implementation and evaluate and assess the impacts of the action programmes.

The NDSC operates under the auspices of National Environment Secretariat. Its principal objective is to serve as the main organ through which National Environment Secretariat shall advise and guide the Government private and public sectors on the conservation, protection and sustainable use of the country's natural resources. The committee includes the following institutions:

- National Environment Secretariat (Coordinator)
- National University of Lesotho
- Natural Resources (Hydrology and Meteorology)
- Ministry of Agriculture Divisions:

-Soil and Water Conservation Division

-Land Use Planning Division

-Agricultural Research Division

-Range Management Division

## -Forestry Division

- Ministry of Home Affairs and Local Government
- Disaster Management Authority
- Lesotho Council of Non Governmental Organisations (LCN)
- Other NGOs that deal with afforestation and soil conservation

The NDSC is responsible to the Director of Environment Department and reports on a monthly basis on the progress and performance of its work. The NDSC amongst its duties advises government on:

- all land management issues;
- information that should be disseminated to the public;
- the best and effective ways and means of reaching the grassroots communities;
- the National, District and Local projects formulation, to ensure proper planning, implementation and monitoring by Technical Staff as well as by the communities;
- the best methods to use in order to ensure popular participation in sustainable land management programmes and activities;
- Government of Lesotho on land management issues that require an integrated approach and advise on the ways and means of effecting such Inter-Ministerial approach to implement these land management programmes;
- implementing Ministries and NGOs on the best land-use activities in different land classification systems and locations. This will include advising the land authorities on the relevance of the land tenure systems in use to the intended land improvement and rehabilitation; and
- all matters relating to implementation of programmes under the Convention to Combat Desertification.

In view of the highly technical nature of the activities of the NDSC it was found advisable that the level of representation from the organisations/ministries should be of the highest calibre in educational qualifications as well as seniority of posts held in their organisations/ministries. For the sake of maintaining the required continuity in the attendance of the NDSC meetings, it was further advised that only one representation per organisation as listed above should be nominated.

### *2.1.1 Operational structures in the districts*

For smooth running of operations in the districts and local levels, it is necessary to establish coordinating bodies similar to the NDSC. However this has not yet been done. The use of existing administrative institutions is being maintained. These structures consist of the District Development Council (DDC) at the district level under the chairmanship of the District Secretary. Membership includes Heads of departments at the district, Principal Chiefs, Selected number of representatives of the Village Development Councils and Representatives of NGOs. At the local level is the Village Development Councils, which are the planning structures at village level in as far as developmental and



land-use issues are concerned. Although these structures seem strategic, their effectiveness in dealing with desertification it is still questionable as land degradation remains the foremost national problem. This is partly due to the conflicting legislation over natural resources and undefined roles of Development Councils over that of the local chiefs.

### *2.1.2 Evaluation of the Functional Effectiveness of the National Environment Secretariat including the Institutional Framework for Coherent and Functional Desertification Control.*

The National Environment Secretariat (NES) has due legal standing in the promulgation of policy and legislation in environmental matters. In this regard the NES has significant influence. For example, the NES has been very instrumental in coordinating the promulgation of the National Environment Policy (1989), National Environment Action Programme (1989) and Environment Act (2001). However, the basic problem curtailing the extend of its influence is structural. As it is, the NES is a Department of the Ministry of Environment with no authority over other departments and /or ministries dealing with the environment. Its role can only be advisory. The ideal situation would be the establishment of an autonomous and independent authority with due legal and enforcement powers on matter of the environment. Such a strategy is being considered by way of contemplating the establishment of an environment authority. This is constrained by resources.

The NES is operating under a very centralized structure with limited outreach in the districts by way of environment officers. Outreach is limited to special programmes of youth activities in environment and other livelihoods projects. In its current form, the NES lacks the capacity in terms of finances, human resources and material to operate environmental units in the district. There are plans within the NES to deploy graduate level personnel in the district to provide frontline and on the ground intervention by training and monitoring. As a coordinating agency for environmental issues, the NES is a too centralized with respect to personnel and finances. The directorate of the NES acts as a focal point which is autonomous within limits of resources available. In terms of human resources, there are 10 professional members of staff with higher degrees in environmental areas and all of these are centralized within the secretariat headquarters in Maseru. The financial resources are limited within the Government of Lesotho's budgetary allowance and less than 20 percent of its capital and operational costs are supported by external donor funding.

The National Environment Secretariat (NES) is responsible for coordinating implementation of the UNCCD. In November 1994 NES initiated the establishment of the National Desertification Steering Committee (NDSC). This inter-ministerial, multidisciplinary committee has acted as a catalyst for the National Action Programme process. The committee worked on activities leading to the holding of the first national forum; and on issues to be discussed during that forum. However, the NDSC has always had problems meeting. In many cases meetings would not take place due to poor turn up

of members (not making a quorum). This problem is due to (as a major reason) the fact that most of the individuals who are members mostly come from government departments and other institutions (private, NGO, parastatal) where human resource capacity is alarmingly low hence such individuals are always over committed. Other reasons for poor turn up as identified by committee members, is lack of incentives provided to members upon attendance in meetings; as well as unclear mandate of the committee. In fact according to the terms of reference, the committee provides advise to NES and nothing more. Other activities in which participating groups played a role include community mobilization campaigns, the environment fair and celebrating the desertification day annually. This activities enjoy broad participatory support of line ministries and NGOs.

The NES coordinates and links with various United Nations Conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework for Convention of Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification. This coordination includes relatively fair networking initiatives within the constraints of time and material resources available to the NES. The membership into the various NES participative fora and is based on representation by selection of members from stakeholders groups and organizations. There are on-going attempts to build capacity for monitoring and responding to environmental matters within the different stakeholder ministries. For example, intensive training is being given to environmental units within ministries. This has been on-going from 1999 and will finish in November 2002. Participants have given the initiative some good evaluation but it remains to be seen if the commensurate impacts will be seen within the routine plans of the various line ministries.

Communications and information systems between the NES and its various stakeholder groups and organizations is continually improving especially through established data management systems dealing with land issues, chemical management and persistent organic pollutants. To date an active database has been established. A profile on chemical management has also been produced and the State of the Environment Report is currently under review. The NES also has a web site and library.

## **2.2 National Action Program as Part of the National Economic and Social Development and Environment Protection Plans.**

The framework of the National Action Programme (NAP) is based on key priority areas for the country addressing the social development and environmental protection plans and to this extend it is coherent with the objectives and aspirations of the various development initiatives. The NAP is thus considered as a strategic framework for action. For example, the Range Management Division has developed programmes of action based on the NAP. The salient example of such programmes is the SADPMA. This programme and others have adopted the principles of participation, partnership and programme approaches. Furthermore, the NAP process has been very interactive with national development goals, objectives and aspirations. To this extend the NES has pursued other programmes with regional and /or sub-regional dimension such as the

Multidisciplinary Science and Technical Consultative Committee which is collaborative link between Lesotho and other Southern African partners in desert research coordinated in Namibia. The other project is the Transfrontier Maloti Development Conservation Project between Lesotho and South Africa.

The NAP was adopted by approval of the Government of Lesotho's cabinet decision in 1999. However, there has been no specific budgetary support has only been partially funded through other related activities as a sub-item in others.

### **3 Participatory Process in Support of the Preparation and Implementation of the action Programme Coherent and Functional Legal and Regulatory Framework**

#### **3.1 Coherent and Functional Legal and Regulatory Framework**

Lesotho Environment Bill (1998) provides a basis for coordination of activities of different sectors and departments, and provides legal mechanism for setting minimum standards for the protection of the entire environment. In addition, the Environment Act 2001 has also been promulgated and is pending establishment of the Lesotho Environment Authority. This body will have autonomy with powers for law enforcement on matter of the environment. The purpose of the earlier discussed strategies to build capacity of environmental units within ministries is ensure that each line ministry can monitor environmental degradation arising from activities within its jurisdiction especially within on-going programmes in conservation, environment programmes including training and community mobilization. The implementation of such measures is programme specific within the certain contexts and framework of funding.

#### **3.2 Effective Participation of Actors in Defining National Priorities**

At the beginning of the NAP process in 1994 a desk-top study on the issue of desertification and drought was commissioned. This study was done as a first step in the process of providing a basis for a national dialogue and to create public awareness. It became the responsibility of the steering committee to review and approve the desk top study report as one of essential collections in the information kit on desertification. The report was accepted and then given wide distribution. This report paved a starting ground for the initiation of consultations for the participatory process.

The first planning workshop on the NAP process was held in mid-May, 1996. The workshop discussed modalities of disseminating the contents of the UN Convention to Combat desertification and of creating awareness on the UNCCD to the general public in all the districts. This workshop also decided on the first round of district workshops and the relevant stakeholders to attend such workshops; as well as the message to be

transmitted. The participants of this planning workshop came from relevant Government Ministries, NGO's and the private sector.

The district workshops commenced from September through December 1996. The participants were District Secretaries, Principal Chiefs, Heads of Government Departments at district level, representatives of farmers associations, Members of Parliament, Development Councils representatives, traditional healers\doctors and other representatives of community based organizations. During this initial round of workshops, presentations regarding UNCCD were made by resource persons. Participants identified causes and effects of land degradation, and developed objectives that offer alternative solutions to the problems identified as well as who would be responsible for implementing the solutions.

Further consultations were made during 1997 whereby a local consultant was engaged to pursue further countrywide sensitisation of the public on desertification and drought issues. This activity involved 37 meetings at community level, which were attended by a total of 3578 people out of which 1080 were women. Participants were also informed about the need to formulate National Action programme on the UNCCD and their contributions were sought.

In 1997 district level consultations were also undertaken among the key stakeholders who included Ward Development Councils, District Development Councils, and Principal Chiefs. Ward Development Councils are made up of representatives of Village Development Councils, the lowest local authorities in local structures; and are a representative of a large section of the rural population. District Development Councils are made up of representative from Ward Development Councils and as such are an important link between communities at village level and the Government at district level. Principal Chiefs represent traditional structures which are not subject to elections and are important in organizing the people at village level; and also provide a good basis for continuing of development programmes as they are permanent structures.

The district level consultation undertaken during 1997 in the form of workshops also included representatives of NGOs and relevant Government Departments at district level. At these workshops a summary concept paper on NAP was prepared in both English and Sesotho language highlighting important issues to be discussed. A format for capturing inputs of participants was designed to facilitate systematic recording and incorporation of their contributions into the concept paper. The concept paper was a working document for the National forum out of which to develop a National Action Programme document.

The National Forum was held in March, 1998. Deliberations at the National Forum started with paper presentations by experts to set the stage for discussions and then group discussions elaborated on strategies and action plans to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. This first national forum was attended by 122 participants composed of representatives of all stakeholders such as those of development councils, farmers, community based organizations, NGOs, Principal Chiefs, members of

parliament, Government departments, etc. At the end of the discussions, the national forum approved that the concept paper be developed into a National Action Programme document and finally made a resolution to be forwarded to the Government.

The resolution of the National Forum was that the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho should take note of the deliberations and recommendations made in the National Forum and must work to **integrate them into national planning**.

The resolution further stated that the Government should, *inter alia*, implement the following measures:

- improve the economic environment with a view to eradicating poverty;
- alleviate pressures on the natural resource base and fragile ecosystems;
- define roles of Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and communities, and build partnerships in natural resource management and encourage active participation;
- improve knowledge and national capabilities to manage natural resources, promote research in natural resource management and improve monitoring and assess the effects of land degradation and drought; and
- facilitate drought preparedness and drought relief schemes, including self-help arrangements; and promote and strengthen the means of resource mobilization, especially in natural resource management.

The resolution also urged Government to fully and effectively implement the provisions of the resolution, and requested the Secretariat of the forum to forward the resolution to the Office of the Prime Minister for presentation to the Cabinet and Parliament. The National Action Programme document has been translated into the Sesotho language and distributed to representatives of all the stakeholders.

### *3.2.1 NGO Involvement*

During the preparation of the National Action Programme a study was done on Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) undertaking land management, poverty alleviation and drought mitigation programmes. The study has described the conservation related programmes undertaken by the NGOs, their implementation strategies, and the lessons learned from implementation of past and ongoing programmes. These NGOs are: Plenty Lesotho; Africa 2000 Network Programme; Rural Self-help Development Association; Durham-Lesotho Link; Lesotho Red Cross Society; Machobane Agricultural Development Foundation; Care Lesotho; Christian Council of Lesotho; World Vision International; Lesotho Work Camps Association; and Lesotho Scout Association. Efforts have been made to form an NGO forum whose activities have relevance to land degradation. A workshop was held and a contact NGO selected as a focal point in UNCCD implementation.

### 3.2.2 *Networking*

Networking exists with the following bodies interested in the conservation of land based resources.

- Agro-forestry Network (AFNET): an informal grouping of interested parties in spreading and supporting land husbandry approaches;
- Innovative Farmer Network (IFN): an informal grouping of rural resource users who strive to combat land degradation and generate incomes through hard work and technical innovations;
- Grazing Associations and Village Grazing Schemes: though most promoted through government support, many have emerged out of own initiative to integrate range conservation with enhanced livestock production. A liaison committee for these community-based organisations has been formed.

## **4 Consultative Process in Support of the Preparation and Implementation of the National Action Programme and the Partnership Agreement with the Developed Country Parties and other Interested Entities.**

### **4.1 Support From International Partners For Cooperation**

From its inception the formulation of the NAP was financially assisted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The money allocated covered the preliminary activities regarding nation wide awareness and sensitisation campaigns as well as district workshops. Further assistance was received from the CCD Secretariat amounting to US\$20,000. This was used for a desk-top study on desertification in Lesotho, and two consultants were commissioned to undertake that study. After the sensitisation stage other processes This part of activities was financed by the grant provided by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with the sum of US\$200,000. The funding was used to do the following:

- preparation of a methodology and work plan for defining and formulating the National Action Programme process;
- preparation of a vision statement and brief concept paper for implementation of the CCD in Lesotho;
- preparation of requisite inputs to National Forum;
- organisation and convening of the first National Forum; and
- preparation of an umbrella framework programme document outlining all required elements for the implementation of the NAP process after the first National Forum.

Other assistance came from UNSO whereby a local level initiative was assisted with US\$10,000 as part of the community mobilization initiatives. The participating

community was the Ha Khoro in the district of Mafeteng where various land reclamation and production through conservation activities are being undertaken.

The Government of Lesotho through the NES in particular and other channels is actively pursuing partnerships and collaboration with various agencies. For example, UNEP has already made some commitment pending the submission of a proposal for support of National Capacity for Self-Assessment in matter of including biodiversity conservation, climate change and desertification. The Government remains engaged with international partners through various initiatives of the under the United Nations conventions. In this endeavours, the UNDP and World Bank are facilitating project development and acquisition of grants for proposed activities. For example, with the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank has facilitated funding of the Transfrontier Maloti Development Conservation initiative between Lesotho and South Africa, the UNDP is facilitating the funding for the National Environment Youth Corps while UNEP, as mentioned above, is currently facilitating the funding for the National Capacity for Self-Assessment.

## **5 Measures Taken Or Planned Within The Framework of the NAP, Including Measures to Improve Economic Environment, to Conserve Natural Resources, to Improve Institutional Organization, to Improve Knowledge of Desertification and to Monitor and Assess the Effects of Drought.**

### **5.1 Diagnosis of past experiences**

Considering the efforts of the past by Government and other organizations, it is obvious that the issue of land degradation in Lesotho is very old and continues to be a concern of many people and organizations. Although the Government is keen to conserve the land and the land based resources, this concern has not been met by individual Basotho assuming appropriate responsibilities and initiatives. Although Basotho rural people realize the problem of land degradation due to soil erosion, most of the efforts of Government supported programmes and of NGOs to assist them in order to sustainably manage the natural resource base and combat desertification have been unsuccessful as land degradation continues unabated. Apparently the root causes of the land degradation problems have not yet been addressed. It is possible, that this has been caused by partial views, professional bias, or lack of trust among the persons concerned with combating desertification. Some of the programmes and projects addressing desertification are

summarised below. Some have elapsed while others are on-going. These have provide the basis for the formulation of the NAP in addition to the consultations with various community development and natural resource management initiatives.

## **5.2 Established Technical Program & Functional Integrated Projects to Combat Desertification**

### *5.2.1 Farm Improvement with Soil Conservation (FISC)*

The project was aimed at helping the communities to implement conservation works on communal land; raising the general standard of living of the communities by promoting income generating activities and providing training to government staff, Village Development Committee members and farmers. This was implemented in the two southern districts of Mafeteng and Mophale Hoek. This project managed to find production strategies to support agricultural development in farming communities.

### *5.2.2 Matelile Rural Development Project*

The project was engaged in the following activities: Large scale tree and shrub nursery for plant introduction, propagation and bulking; livestock extension, including a bare foot veterinarian programme of basic livestock health; extension programme in agronomy, horticulture and range management and fodder production. Apparently, this has been one of the most successful projects in implementing and encouraging communities and individuals' initiatives.

### *5.2.3 Soil and Water Conservation (SoWaCo) Project*

This project supported the soil and water conservation in the southern districts. It was aimed at helping communities plan and implement soil and water conservation activities; introducing soil and water conservation practices into school curricula and training government staff in soil and water conservation techniques. This project achieved its main objectives in this area.

### *5.2.4 Maoamafubelu Integrated Watershed management Project*

The project was aimed at strengthening and institutionalising the watershed development committee as a democratically run people's organisation representing the interests and socio-economic institution of the 32,000 residents of Maoamafubelu watershed area. They used the Lihase Cooperative as a model for reactivating and strengthening three dormant cooperatives in the surrounding villages of Pitseng, Mahobong and Malaoaneng. By the end of the project; training of about 1100 community members in skill areas related to resources and credit management, cooperative development and improved agricultural techniques was accomplished.



#### 5.2.5 *Soil and Water Conservation and Agroforestry Programme (SWaCAP)*

**5.3 The project had four components: conservation based agricultural production; reorganisation of extension services of MOA; agroforestry research and development; conservation strategy and policy coordination.**

##### 5.3.1 *Production Through Conservation (PTC)*

The project was aimed at developing a clear strategy for extension with heavy emphasis on sustainable production where farmers were responsible for their own development programmes. The project has supported land users in increasing production through conservation of the natural environment upon which production depends; fostering self sustaining rural communities, capable of planning the development of their resources for a sustained and improved utilization and fostering self sustaining communities capable of carrying out economic land husbandry programmes and build government of Lesotho's service rendering capacity

The production through conservation concept is attempting to address the complicated problem of land tenure system in Lesotho. The program has encouraged individuals/associations/groups of people with similar objectives to initiate projects for production, while at the same time addressing conservation issues. Similarly, the incentive has been in terms of being a role model, not so much as offering economic incentives. The initiative for the programme comes from the individuals themselves. One of the most important projects under this programme is dongas reclamation. Individuals have been allocated dongas for reclamation and production. The emphasis on donga reclamation is not only on restoration of the degraded land but also on food production, biodiversity restoration and desertification/soil erosion control.

##### 5.3.2 *Range Management Area (RMA) Programme*

The programme is aimed at increasing the productivity and income of rural livestock producers; stimulating commercialisation of extensive livestock industry and allowing management of natural resources in a manner that is sustainable and socially acceptable to Basotho in rural areas while addressing the poverty problems of the communities involved via a concerted effort to sub-commercialise or commercialise the production enterprises.

The achievements of the RMA programme include: improvement of range condition, and improvement of quality of animals as a result of use of better breeding stock; empowerment of range users in administration and management of rangeland; provision of range and livestock husbandry skills to stock owners and extension staff; and strengthening the capacity of local authorities in range management issues. These programme is on-going and training and participatory research efforts are underway to align them with the principles of the UNCCD. Some of the recent research programmes included the Global Change and Subsistence Rangeland collaboratively conducted by a

team of multidisciplinary scientists in the National University of Lesotho and the University of Wales in Bangor under the sponsorship of the European Union frameworks. While this research has been independent of the NES and UNCCD mechanisms of funding, the goals and objectives are relevant. Within the context of the UNCCD, the NES has supported the launching of an on-going project for Conserving Mountain Biodiversity in Southern Lesotho funded by The Global Environment Facility through the UNDP. This programme is among other issues working with the establishment of botanical gardens with participation and collaborations of communities, establishment of protected areas and range management areas. Both of the aforementioned initiatives are addressing issues of local capacity by training, extension and participatory research initiatives.

### *5.3.3 Forestry Programmes*

Forestry initiatives in Lesotho date back to 1855. Overall their success record has been poor. Although millions of trees were planted, very few have survived to harvestable age. Both bio-physical constraints, mainly harsh climatic conditions, and socio-economic factors were responsible for this limited impact. Most of the earlier efforts were directed at encouraging individuals to plant trees, either for provision of wood or for soil conservation. Planting of trees for soil conservation purposes intensified from 1942 to 1947, and focussing on communal planting in dongas or other unproductive areas. This scheme was largely unsuccessful, as tree survival rates were constrained by sub-standard planting practices and the absence of supervision and protection of planted areas from human and natural damage.

Following the limited success of community plantings, the Lesotho Woodlot Project (LWP), which commenced in 1973, had as its intermediate objective the establishment of tree plantations that were owned and managed by the Government. The LWP established forest reserves with a total planted area of over 7000 ha. It also produced tree seedlings for planting in catchment areas. In addition, LWP set up the infrastructure that formed the basis of the Forestry Division, provided extensive staff training and undertook basic forest research.

In spite of the expenditure and effort put into LWP, which included contributions by the UK Overseas Development Administration (ODA), the World Food Programme and the South African mining companies Anglo-American and De Beers Consolidated, serious doubts were raised about the sustainability of the programme by donors.

The 1980s witnessed the introduction of a number of area-based projects that included a significant forestry component (e.g. Plenty, Matelile Project etc). These projects have tried to involve people in tree planting activities both on a communal and individual basis. Following such experiences and in line with worldwide trends, considerable interest in community or social forestry has been generated in Lesotho. This essentially entails assisting local people to plant their own trees under the new initiative of social forestry. Thus the Social Forestry Project financed by both GOL and German

Government started in 1993 aiming at supporting communities to plant trees of their own. Subsequently, there has been a paradigm shift on the part of the Ministry of Agriculture from government initiated forestry to social forestry programmes. The shift is not only in the implementation of the programme but is supported by a change in policy. This change is in line with the principles of the UNCCD and will foster sustainability and trigger commercial and sub-commercial aspiration for forestry enterprises.

#### **5.4 Established Technical Programmes and Functional Integrated Projects to Combat Desertification**

Measures have been undertaken by the GOL to address drought and desertification. Since the ratification of the UNCCD by Lesotho in 1995, steps have been taken to conform with the provisions of the Convention. There are currently a number of programmes by Government and NGOs being undertaken to combat land degradation and desertification. Government programmes are co-ordinated by the Ministries of Environment, Gender and Youth Affairs; and Agriculture, Co-operatives and Land Reclamation. Linkages with the NAP will be established to the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) now being elaborated. The other programmes are carried out by a number of NGOs active in the land management activities including the National University of Lesotho.

##### *5.4.1 National Environment Secretariat Programmes and Projects*

Currently, the NES is running and co-ordinating the programme of the National Environment Youth Corps (NEYC). The NEYC programme functions to educate the youth about environment and how to protect it. The youth are taught how to rehabilitate the degraded lands through soil conservation methods. The programme now covers all ten districts Lesotho where youth are involved in land rehabilitation activities. The NEYC also addresses poverty alleviation by engaging youth in income generating activities such as produce and sale of tree seedlings, recycling and off-farm activities. The activities of the NYEC programme are designed to pre-empt land degradation by raising awareness among the youth on land degradation issues. This programme is intended to prevent land degradation, rehabilitate and reclaim degraded lands.

Other related projects such as the Drakensberg-Maloti Mountains Conservation Project and the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Project are being co-ordinated by NES. These projects are also aimed at ensuring the conservation and sustainable utilisation of the unique alpine and montane landscapes in Lesotho. Working with local communities is one of the key strategies in these projects.

##### *5.4.2 Agriculture Programmes and Activities*

The sector most directly intertwined with environment in Lesotho is agriculture hence its activities directly affect environmental components, such as vegetation, biodiversity, water, etc. Due to an apparent lack of adequate technical know-how in land management and partial failure of past conservation approaches agriculture continues to impact

negatively on the environmental quality of the country. Currently agricultural activities are degrading Lesotho's environment as there is soil erosion, caused by bad agricultural practices, and overgrazing in the rangelands, poor arable cover due low crop productivity and excessive ecosystem destruction due to over-utilisation and over-harvesting of wood resources.

The Ministry of Agriculture has several programmes that deal with the conservation of soil, water and other related environmental components. Many of these are led by the Department of Conservation, Forestry and Land Use Planning (DCFL) and Range Management Division (RMD) of the Department of Livestock Services. In particular, the DCFL has over the years operated soil conservation programmes that dealt with rehabilitation of degraded lands and tree planting. Currently, the DCFL is placing emphasis on watershed management as a means of halting the degradation of rangelands and reducing soil erosion. In cultivated lands, the Department is emphasising conservation farming through the programme of Production Through Conservation.

In addition, the RMD plays a crucial role in advising Basotho rangeland users on ways to better manage their grazing areas. Through the programme of Range Management Areas (RMAs), the Division is advancing the vegetative soil erosion control concept (VSECC). The VSECC is based on the understanding that the ecological balance will be restored as rates of soil erosion and runoff will be reduced to acceptable levels when vegetative cover and top soil conditions are improved, and provided there is good management of cultivated and grazing lands. The Division recognizes that in order to attain an ecological equilibrium in rangelands, in which soil fertility, productivity and infiltration rates are increasing and soil erosion and runoff are decreasing, there must be involvement of land users as managers of the land rather than just users of the land.

The Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) aims at improving the productivity of the agricultural sector through a number of measures, including a unified agricultural extension service. In the framework of ASDP, additional projects are in the pipeline, such as the IFAD-funded Sustainable Agriculture Development Programme for the Mountain Areas (SADPMA) and the on-going World Bank Agricultural Policy and Capacity Building Project. The current proposals are in line with the ambitions of the NAP and, among others, stress the need for coordination through NES and aim at decentralized planning for natural resources management.

These programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture as set out in the ASDP must therefore be linked with the activities of the NAP so that partnerships are built, maximum impact is effected and duplication of efforts is avoided.

#### *5.4.3 NGOs' Programmes and Activities*

There are other land management programmes in the country, operated by Non-Governmental Organizations. These programmes are mostly rehabilitation work and improvement of crop production. The leading and very active programmes are the

Mafeteng and Phamong crop production improvement run by Rural Self-Help Development Association, the Taung land rehabilitation and tree planting programme run by World Vision (Lesotho), the Seapala and Mphaki tree planting by Durham-Lesotho Link, and the crop production improvement by Machobane Farming Systems Foundation. All these are community level projects with strong collaboration and participation of the communities.

#### *5.4.4 Local Initiatives*

About thirty local initiators have been identified in six districts. These are individuals who voluntarily rehabilitate the land by planting trees and protecting the natural resources. These individuals have been encouraged by providing them with hand tools such as wheelbarrows, spades etc to assist them to accomplish their tasks of land reclamation. Workshops have been held to enable them to learn from each other. The information on the work profiles of these local initiators is currently being documented.

#### *5.4.5 Identification of New Actions and Planned Measures*

A lot of work has gone into seeking solutions to Lesotho's land management and conservation problems. A number of management and institutional experiences were gathered in the 1980's to early 1990's through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded initiatives. These included the Lesotho Agricultural Production and Institutional Support Project (LAPIS) and Lesotho Agricultural Policy Support Programme (LAPSP). Experiences were also gathered through the World Bank funded Land Management and Conservation Project (LMCP). Many donors, notably the United Kingdom Overseas Development Administration (ODA), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have also contributed in the area of forest management and improvement, land use planning and soil conservation. As a result of these efforts, a number of action plans to protect and promote Lesotho's natural resource base have been drawn up by various institutions.

In 1997 the Government embarked on a programme comprising of tenure reform; land use planning; soil, water and nature conservation; range management and adjudication; and forest management and improvement. This programme is intended to address land management issues.

##### *5.4.5.1 Land Tenure Reform*

In order to speed up the land reform process and improve security of tenure and hence the prospects for agricultural investment, conservation and agricultural diversification, GOL intends to:

- simplify and translate land laws and make the information understandable to those without a legal background;
- mount nation-wide awareness and educational campaigns;
- streamline bureaucratic procedures that are involved in the processing of land leases;
- examine the feasibility of introducing land taxes and develop leasing laws in order to promote the commercialisation of land;
- develop alternative social security systems (safety net) for the rural poor and the landless.

#### 5.4.5.2 *Land Use Planning*

The GOL plans to carry out the following interventions to be undertaken by the Land Use Planning Division (LUPD) in close consultation with Department of Lands, Surveys and Physical Planning (DLSPP):

- streamlining, rationalising and co-ordinating agency responsibilities in the areas of land administration, planning and management;
- strengthening the capacity of the LUPD in the storage and manipulation of natural resources information for land use planning using Geographical Information Systems;
- incorporating village settlements planning into the community land use planning methodology;
- integrating natural vegetation into agro-ecological zones in order to determine suitability for different food crops, grasses and trees and hence to enable the creation of Managed Resource Areas as habitat for rare and endangered species.

#### 5.4.6 *Soil, Water and Nature Conservation*

Soil and water conservation programmes in Lesotho dates back to 1930s. however, until recently, such efforts mainly emphasised structural works such as terracing, contours, silt traps, diversions, etc. This strategy has been criticised for lack of participation and over-reliance on government resources and thus inherently non-sustainable. Government policy is now shifting towards biological conservation methods with strong emphasis on community participation. To solicit the latter, the strategy now seeks to marry production with conservation and environmental objectives. Successful agricultural diversification and commercialisation require the establishment of effective conservation and environmental protection measures. There is a need to adopt a holistic approach that integrates rural development with conservation and environmental planning, laying emphasis on acceptable and affordable techniques.

GOL is aware that crop diversification and intensive livestock production will require an increased and more reliable water supply throughout the country. The Water Supply and Action Plan that has recently been drawn up advocates for a country-wide coverage with sustainable water supplies. The Plan further advocates for the improvement of the management and rational exploitation of water resources to ensure adequate supply for all

water uses. It is expected that more comprehensive policies and programmes will emerge at the conclusion of the Water Resources Management, Policy and Strategies Study. In the meantime, a number of civil works projects involving dam construction for watering, animals and for crop irrigation have been financed from the Lesotho Highlands Development Fund (LHDF).

In the light of the above, Government is committed to implement the following measures:

- review the legal framework within which conservation activities are implemented;
- investigate both physical and social factors that lead to the deterioration of the land base;
- intensify efforts in water harvesting by rehabilitating old ponds and dams and by constructing new ones;
- adopt a participatory resource management approach that places more emphasis on the farmer and the community as agents of development;
- consolidate and rationalise the operations of institutions that deal with issues of environment, conservation and land use; and
- strengthen the programme of conservation of endangered indigenous species.

#### *5.4.7 Range Management and Rangelands Adjudication*

Communal grazing and /or overstocking in Lesotho has been blamed for severe overgrazing. There is a significant divergence between private costs of overgrazing and social costs, which are heavily dominated by national concerns about land degradation due soil erosion and declining soil fertility. In the late 1980s, GOL attempted to reduce overgrazing by adopting a number of donor supported policy initiatives, such as rangelands adjudication, breed exchange and culling programmes, introduction of grazing fees and auction sales. With the assistance of USAID, recommendations of a National Livestock Task Force (1987) were incorporated into a national livestock policy that was adopted by GOL in 1989. On the basis of this plan, a National Livestock Policy Implementation Plan was drawn up in 1990.

The livestock policy guidelines focus on reducing livestock numbers while increasing: (a) rangelands carrying capacities; (b) livestock productivity; and (c) marketing efficiency to absorb increased off-takes. The policies call for the introduction of grazing fees and intensification of culling and breed improvement programmes. They also stress the need for expanding the National Cattle Post Adjudication programmes in order to restrict livestock movements, for discouraging the seasonal movement of livestock from the Lowlands to the Mountains and for increasing the number of Range Management Areas (RMAs) for organised grazing management. The latter have gained popular farmer acceptance, particularly in the Mokhotlong, Leribe and Qachas' Nek districts where the programme has piloted its efforts.

Experiences in implementing livestock policies have demonstrated that customary practices and individual farmer decisions have to be dealt with. Lack of homogeneity

amongst livestock farmers, conflicts arising from the erosion of power of traditional authorities, as well as the absence of an enabling legal framework seem to be threatening potential of the RMA model. Government is committed to further research on possibilities of increasing private costs in rangelands utilisation as a strategy of arresting natural resource degradation while relying on community-based, voluntary de-stocking measures in the short-term. The strategy calls for extensive consultations with local communities and the delegation of authority to local structures and organisations. In the meantime, the component will therefore concentrate on the following interrelated areas:

- de-stocking and breed improvements;
- expansion of the RMA model; and
- infrastructure rehabilitation and improvement.

#### *5.4.8 Forests and Woodlands*

Lesotho's forest resources are extremely limited largely due to constraining agro-ecological conditions, poor soils, communal land tenure and inadequate extension that manifests itself in poor information dissemination, inadequate technical knowledge and poor logistical support. There have been a number of forestry interventions since 1960's. The pioneering ODA-supported Woodlot Project, planted 322 forest reserves on a total 6,332 hectares, mainly in the Lowlands. In addition to the state forest reserves, there are a number of communal plantations and homestead initiatives, mainly fruit trees.

A nation-wide energy survey carried out by the Energy Department in 1986 showed that firewood and shrubs contribute 62 percent of energy supply in rural Lesotho. Indeed, the Energy Department sees tree planting as the only realistic means of meeting the future energy demand of rural households. In addition to providing fuel and a range of other uses, the importance of forest resources in Lesotho lies in the protection of the already impoverished and degraded environment. The increased use of trees should support the conservation of soil and water resources, thus enhancing the productivity of both arable and livestock farming.

Although the Forestry Division has a network of nurseries in all the 10 districts, it is unable to meet the demand for seedlings, both in number and species. Thus government is advocating the adoption of people-based, participatory strategies in tree growing and forestry industries. It also encourages the participation of small-scale private nursery operators by reducing subsidies on seedlings. These strategies form part of the overall forest development strategies contained in the National Forestry Action Programme compiled by the Forestry Division.

The programme proposes the following plan of action:

- development of an enabling policy and legal framework to facilitate community and individual initiatives in forestry development;
- definition of appropriate extension packages, expansion of forestry education to



schools, production of a forest extension manual;

- development of local skills in wood utilisation and processing;
- promotion of private sector participation; and
- expansion of capacity through hands-on training, increased material support and strengthening of forestry research capacity.

## **6 Financial Allocations from National Budgets in Support of Implementation as Well as Financial Assistance and Technical Cooperation Received and Needed, Identifying and Prioritising Requirements.**

### **6.1 Adopted Financial Mechanisms**

The availability of funds for support of local initiatives have always and at best been limited. This far the NES has always identified local initiatives and targeted them for support. However, other sources of funding like the Lesotho Fund for Community Development (LFCD) available for funding community level initiatives are broadly canvassed especially by district level development officials. The LFCD is a permanent facility funded by Government from the Lesotho Highland Water revenue sources.

The sustainability of these support sources cannot be ascertained but supporting the ability by local actors to access funds within the frameworks of the Global Environment Facility and other community mobilisation will in the long term assure maximum benefit by many communities. The financing of NAP is overall a subject of national budgetary provisions and specific funding proposals in the context of projects designed by local actors or government. The communities must be empowered to have the ability to make proposal and submit them for funding of participatory research and other initiatives.

### **6.2 NAP Financing: Local Initiatives and Technical Cooperation**

As discussed earlier, proposals have been develop for funding under different mechanisms under the auspices of the Global Environment Facility. Some of the key partners internationally include the UNDP which currently funds the National Environment Youth Corps. The Drakensberg-Maloti Transfrontier is also one initiative attempting to secure funding for issues under the NAP. The total project funding frame for the project is US\$5.6 million while the UNEP has committed about US\$25,000.

Currently the NES requires technical advisory services in the form an environment Economist. This has been requested through the GEF under the United Nations Operations Service. The process is in an advanced stage as the Technical Advisor and Local Counter-Part are being short-listed for appointment by the respective authorities.

Other co-operations are in place such as the Chief Technical Advisor in the National Environment Youth Coops programme and also in the Convention for Mountain Biodiversity in Southern Lesotho. Technical cooperation must also be targeted by the NGO community and CBA.

The Government of Lesotho has several institutions that address land management issues. These include the Department of Environment and four Divisions of the Ministry of Agriculture. Their combined total operational recurrent budget per year is about US\$0.9 million (1US\$ = Maloti 10.00). The efforts of the institutions using this fund are directed to activities related to combating desertification. In the capital budget regarding land management programmes, a total amount of about US\$1.0 million is currently budgeted for, out of which Lesotho Government is contributing about US\$0.2 million. International Partners contributing in the capital budget include Sida, CIDA, GTZ, EU, IFAD, DFID, and UNDP and the World Bank.

Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) is currently contributing to the Rural Development Programme within the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) area. The projects relevant to land management that are underway within this programme include Animal Husbandry and Range Management, Community Forestry, and Land Use Planning with the people. These projects are to continue up to the year 2005 and have a total budget of about US\$5.3 million.

Another financial resource available for contribution to land resources management programmes is the Lesotho Highlands Water Revenue Fund (LHWRF) established in 1991 by Legal Notice No.82 of 1991. Financial regulations governing the Fund were published in Legal Notice No.91 of 1992. The objectives of the Fund include promotion of economic diversification and development by providing capital resources to the development process, stabilizing government development resources and providing additional revenues to government on a long-term basis. The Government perceived the Fund as a source of development resources, which were to be used for promoting the involvement of people at local levels in planning and executing development projects that they themselves have identified. The Fund's resources are to be used for introducing and maintaining the bottom-up development process, and therefore, reverse the top-down planning approach used in the past. Operations of the LHWRF commenced in September, 1994. The Fund's Development Committee forwarded appraised projects to the Management Board of the Fund. In 1995/96 the Management Board of LHWRF approved a number of projects including the following:

- 130 small dam construction projects, estimated at US\$1.59 million;
- 200 boreholes, allocated a budget of US\$0.08 million;
- Dam Construction by the Ministry of Agriculture at an estimated US\$0.46 million;
- Water resource Action Plan Study estimated at US\$0.44 million; and
- National Environment Youth Corps estimated at US\$0.32 million.

So far the National Desertification Fund (NDF) has not been established. A Cabinet Paper is in the process of being formulated to start the process towards the NDF establishment.

## **7 Review of the Benchmarks and Indicators Utilized to Measure Progress and an Assessment Thereof.**

### **7.1 Operational Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluation**

Benchmarks provide a baseline for monitoring at the local and national level; and are used to develop correlation between various parameters. Desertification indicators are measurable and/or observable parameters that should permit the assessment of an area according to its degree of desertification. They may be either physical or socio-economic characteristics.

At present various Government Institutions such as soil and Water Conservation Division, Range Management Division and Department of Water Affairs have established their own benchmarks to observe various attributes such as rate of soil erosion, range condition trend and sediment flow respectively. A concerted effort has not yet been made to determine standard benchmarks. This is due to be considered under the National Action Plan.

The Department of Water Affairs (DWA) has been monitoring the amount of rainfall and the information was used to design optimum water collecting tanks for assisting villagers. DWA has also been involved in reconnaissance studies for the construction of small and medium size dams at the constituency level; and for monitoring, construction and operation of water resources investment projects. Thirdly, DWA has formulated a National Action Plan and investment programme based on interactive database, forecasting models and environmental consideration. The data are collected by the Divisions of Meteorology and Hydrology on a real time basis and used for real time forecasting models development.

The establishment of the Early Warning System Unit and Disaster Management Authority (DMA) are new measures taken to help protect areas, including mountain ecosystems, against erosion, floods, landslides, snow avalanches and other natural hazards. Based on the information provided by the Early Warning System, the DMA has been enabled to be in a state of preparedness to assist vulnerable groups in times of snow, drought and early frost disasters. Material assistance has included fuel, medical and food supplies, and agricultural inputs; and has contributed to building capacity for sustainable agriculture and conservation practices.

To date the field level indicators of desertification for use in Lesotho have been suggested as indicated the National Action Programme. The aspects of monitoring and evaluation of the different initiatives related to the NAP implementation are not coordinated in any

formal way. This constraint is real and serious. It would require some support initiatives to set up formal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place. As discussed earlier, there is limited data collection within the NES in terms of land issues, chemical management, and persistent organic pollutants. The process of reviewing the state of the environment report, for example, requires dedicated monitoring and evaluation systems throughout and these are not in place. The result is that the dynamics of land degradation, and ground assessment of resource degradation are not monitored.

## **7.2 Scientific and Technical Desertification Control Activities**

Five programme areas have been identified under the NAP. These are reproduced here in relation with the respective scientific and technical activities envisaged under each program area.

### *7.2.1 Equity, poverty alleviation, solidarity and Participation*

It is generally accepted that poor people tend not to take proper care of the environment and the associated natural resources whilst their basic needs for food, shelter and health are not met. As a result the rural poor put undue pressure on their natural resource base than they would otherwise do in instances of less poverty. Thus the NAP seeks, through programme area 1, to offset to the rural poor the negative consequences of land degradation which express themselves as diminished access to the use of natural resources. To the extent that current livelihoods and resource use systems are not able to maintain living standards, measures to alleviate poverty and reduce pressure on the land must be sought and adopted. The following activities are relevant to the desertification control and drought mitigation within the NAP.

- a) Promote sustainable farm technologies with low external inputs for intensifying land use e.g. the low input agricultural systems such as the Machobane cropping system in Lesotho.
- b) Support privatization of tree nursery production, fruit trees, seed multiplication by enabling local people and groups to produce vegetative materials needed in programmes or projects of environmental rehabilitation and natural resources management.
- c) Promote local production and marketing capacity as a means of developing alternative livelihood systems that alleviate poverty.
- d) Establish and strengthen village associations focussed on economic activities of common agricultural interest.
- e) Promote the establishment and mobilization of rural credit and savings schemes.
- f) Contract local people for erosion works on roads, trails and other sites of the public domain.
- g) Organize and support local groups for rehabilitation works on communal lands
- h) Promote the establishment of entrepreneurship within rural groups to facilitate establishment of rural cottage industries and business ventures.
- i) Make the information on rights and obligations regarding natural resources management accessible and available to rural people, particularly the poor and landless.

### *7.2.2 Measures to Alleviate the Pressures on Natural Resource Base*

In combating desertification on rangelands, rainfed cropland and irrigated lands, it is important to distinguish in the degree of severity of degradation of the land and the corresponding need to address the desertification trend with appropriate measures. In a fragile ecosystem such as Lesotho, natural resources management must focus on establishing and maintaining adequate vegetative cover. Application of corrective measures and rehabilitation of moderately and severely degraded lands should be through the introduction of environmentally sound, socially acceptable, fair and economically feasible land use systems which will enhance the carrying capacity of the land and maintain biotic resources. The following activities are envisaged.

- a) Promote conservation agriculture such as Production Through Conservation.
- b) Promote the use of high yielding varieties and genes to enhance high productivity per unit.
- c) Promote the use of organic waste for soil fertility.
- d) Promote the development and use of water harvesting and retention techniques.
- e) Implement urgent direct preventive measures in vulnerable land.
- f) Promote in situ protection and conservation of special ecological areas through legislation and other means for purposes of combating desertification while ensuring protection of biodiversity.
- g) Carry out accelerated afforestation programmes using drought resistant, fast growing species, in particular native ones, combined with community based agroforestry schemes.
- h) Implement urgent direct corrective measures in moderately to severely desertified drylands with a view to restoring and sustaining their productivity.
- i) Promote participatory management of natural resources, including rangelands, to meet both the needs of rural populations and conservation purposes based on innovative or adapted local technologies.
- j) Promote and encourage investment in forestry development in dryland areas through various incentives including legislative means.
- k) Promote the development and use of sources of energy which will lessen pressure on local resources, including alternative sources of energy and improved stoves.
- l) Demarcate zones of appropriate types of land use as part of village level natural resources management.
- m) Reallocate fields which are not properly used to other users /leaseholders.
- n) Protect fields which are not properly used to other users /leaseholders.

### *7.2.3 Institutions, Organisation and Learning*

The social systems interacting with land resources make the problem of desertification much more complex, requiring an integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources. Thus action plans to combat desertification and drought should include management aspects of environment and development. This conforms with the approach

of integrating national development plans and national environmental action plans. In context therefore, this programme area must be considered an essential supporting component of all desertification control and drought relief activities.

- a) Develop and adopt policies at the national level regarding a decentralized approach to land resource management, delegating responsibility to rural communities and organizations.
- b) Strengthen capacities and management skills of rural organizations and communities to enable better management of village production and pastoral lands.
- c) Establish coordination among ministries, institutions, and organizations working on anti-desertification programmes at national and local levels.
- d) Develop specific sets of instruments and procedures for strategic environmental analysis and environmental impact assessment to be applied as part of planning for natural resource management at district and village levels.
- e) Develop district environmental strategies and include these in the district development plans.
- f) Establish local, national and intersectoral mechanisms to handle environmental and developmental consequence on land use.
- g) Adopt policies and establish administrative structure for decentralized decision making and implementation for sustainable natural resources management.
- h) Strengthen the organization and capacity of user groups to plan and negotiate natural resource management.
- i) Introduce legislative, institutional and financial measures to secure user involvement.
- j) Establish enforcement mechanisms conducive to fulfilling commitments from different partners concerning sustainable natural resources management and rehabilitation.
- k) Monitor budgets and funding available for sustainable natural resources management from government and non-governmental sources.
- l) Identify bottlenecks in funding for environmental rehabilitation.
- m) Establish taxation mechanisms of the agricultural lands and of grazing fees and use revenue at local level to manage grazing lands and other communal resources.
- n) Establish mining fees, and use those revenues at local levels to rehabilitate areas affected by mining.

#### **7.2.4 Knowledge Support, Learning and Communication**

Besides a better understanding of the physical processes that lead to desertification, a more thorough understanding is warranted of the socio-economic aspects of land degradation and natural resources utilization. Little is known, for instance, on the attitudes of rural people and the sense of urgency they feel towards resource degradation in their own environment, and the reason why they have so far not yet massively resorted to rehabilitation and land use intensification, even not in their own home gardens or farming fields. About these questions, one can find mainly hypothesis and suppositions, but no research data.

- a) Establish and strengthen environmental information systems at the national level.
- b) Strengthen national and local environmental assessment and ensure coordination /networking between environmental information and monitoring systems.
- c) Strengthen capacity of national institutions to analyse environmental data so that ecological change can be monitored and environmental information obtained on a continuing basis.
- d) Review and study the means for measuring the ecological, economic and social consequences of desertification and land degradation and introduce the results of these studies into desertification assessment practices.
- e) Review and study the interactions between the socio-economic impacts of climate, drought and desertification and use these results to identify priorities and to secure concrete action.
- f) Support the integrated data collection and research work of programmes related to desertification and drought problems.
- g) Support national programmes for integrated data collection and research networks carrying out assessment of soil and land degradation.
- h) Strengthen national meteorological and hydrological networks and monitoring systems to ensure adequate collection of basic information and communication among national centres.
- i) Establish national and local anti-desertification networks comprising authorities in government and local committees or associations of land users with a view to strengthening coordination between all actors.
- j) Establish monitoring systems that frequently feed back to planning levels information dealing with response and lessons learned which are relevant for future implementation of environmental rehabilitation activities.
- k) Make study, at an early stage of planning for environmental rehabilitation, of successful and /or innovative actions and experiences by local resource users and authorities.
- l) Use successful cases for farmer to farmer exchange.
- m) Document successful cases for use in extension and awareness programmes.
- n) Establish and utilize mechanisms for the consultation and involvement of land users and enhance capacity at the grass-roots level to identify and contribute to action programmes.
- o) Develop training programmes to increase the level of awareness and participation of people, particularly of the rural poor, women and local user groups.
- p) Hold awareness campaigns for village chiefs, village development councils and district development councils.
- q) Introduce community level educational systems to help spread knowledge among affected groups.
- r) Study the relevance of local land tenure and customary rights for environmental rehabilitation and sustainable natural resources management.
- s) Document lessons learned and formulate recommendations for modifications in land tenure and /or legislation at an early stage of planning environmental rehabilitation programmes and projects.

### *7.2.5 Drought Preparedness and Drought Relief Schemes*

Drought, in differing degrees of frequency and severity, is a recurring phenomenon in Lesotho and the economic costs associated with drought-related disasters are high. During periods of drought, there are costs associated with lost production, misused inputs, and diversion of development resources for drought relief. Drought has both human and physical dimensions. Therefore, early warning systems to forecast drought are necessary to enable drought preparedness and implementation of drought-relief schemes. Integrated packages at the farm and watershed level, such as alternative cropping strategies, soil and water conservation and promotion of water harvesting techniques, could enhance the capacity of land to cope with drought and provide basic necessities.

- a) Design strategies to deal with national food deficiencies in periods of production shortfalls.
- b) Improve national capacity for agro-meteorological contingency crop planning.
- c) Establish contingency arrangements, where necessary. For food and fodder distribution and water supply.
- d) Establish budgetary mechanisms for providing, at a short notice, resources for drought relief.
- e) Establish safety nets for the most vulnerable households.
- f) Develop early warning systems and strengthen the flow of early warning information to decision makers.
- g) Prepare rural projects for providing short-term rural employment to drought-affected households to alleviate distress in times of drought.
- h) Develop drought relief schemes and means of coping with environmental refugees.

The consultative process leading to the development of the NAP document has involved a broad spectrum of stakeholders and was in particular lead by the experts in the field. This has allowed the process to be in conformity with the principles of the convention. The activities listed above attest to this conformity in specificity and in the general context of the convention. The implementation of the various activities has mostly been left to each line ministry to integrate into the annual plans and operational budgets. The discussion of the on going projects within the different stakeholder group both public and private has spoken to the various attempts to implement the activities under the convention.

### **7.3 Implementation of the Recommendation of the Committee on Science & Technology**

This area has lacked behind in the reporting period mainly due to lack of resources. It is however, going to be prioritised in the next phase of the implementation process.