

**NAMIBIA'S SECOND NATIONAL REPORT**  
**ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN CONVENTION**  
**TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**  
**APRIL 2002**

**(i) TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Summary . . . . .	1
Strategies and priorities established . . . . .	8
Institutional measures to implement the programme . . . . .	13
The participatory process in implementing the programme . . . . .	17
The consultative process in implementing the programme . . . . .	25
Measures taken within the programme . . . . .	27
Financial allocations and assistance . . . . .	33
Review of benchmarks and progress . . . . .	35

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## Summary

Since the submission and presentation of Namibia's First National Report on the Implementation of the UN convention to combat desertification, at the third and fourth conferences of the parties, Namibia has continued to implement Phase III of Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification known as Napcod.

Desertification issues are addressed in the current National Development Plan (NDP2), which emphasises sustainability. Activities that led to the development of the Programme and the initial four- year implementation phase are dealt with in the 1<sup>st</sup> national report, and form part of Namibia's National Assessment Report prepared for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Land degradation issues warrant a chapter in the Natural Resources Sector of the recently drafted Vision 2030. Independence, just over a decade ago, presented the opportunity to reform outdated legislation and revise policies, many dealing with the conservation, management and use of natural resources, including community participation. Napcod reviewed the policies pertinent to desertification in 1996 and identified disincentives to sustainable development. As several of these policies have since been revised and new policies developed, the most pertinent being the National Drought Policy of 1997, it is now opportune to assess the pertinent policies, plans and legislation and how they relate to combating desertification.

Namibia signed the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in 1994 and ratified it in 1997 and is also a signatory to the UN Convention on Biodiversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Ramsar Convention. As reported in the first country report, Napcod is jointly administered by two government ministries, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, MET, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development, MAWRD. What is more unusual is that Napcod activities are jointly implemented by government and an NGO consortium. The NGOs involved are the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DFRN) and Namibia Economic Policy and Research Unit (Nepu). Several related projects, including a project on bush encroachment, a SADC- wide network for information exchange, and the recent Desertification 2000 – 2002 Conference process, make up the broader Napcod activities. Routine activities of government sectors dealing with sustainable resource utilisation ranging from water to rangeland resources are not included under Napcod and are often not recognised by government as being actions contributing to the overall goals of the Convention to Combat Desertification. The term desertification is still often poorly understood, even by those actively promoting sustainable rangeland practices, water resource and drought management, soil conservation measures and ways

to combat deforestation and bush encroachment. The link between the loss of productivity and desertification needs to be clarified at all levels.

Participatory activities to combat desertification are essentially carried out at two levels, national and local or community level. National activities are mainly dealt with by responsible ministries whilst the community level activities are dealt with by specific (often donor funded) projects and programmes which have a greater potential for community participation and development of more integrated approaches. At national level the MAWRD is particularly active, yet does not always recognise that they are combating desertification. One important community driven approach is known as the Firm (Forum for Integrated Resource Management) approach. This is a community based initiative by the Grootberg Farmers Association and the #Koadi //Hoas Conservancy in north western Namibia, and it is now being introduced to communities elsewhere.

Core Napcod activities occur at both national and local level, with the emphasis on community-based action in pilot sites in a range of communal areas in the north, west and south of the country. Expansion to the east is envisaged and funding has been sought both through the Global Environment Facility's Desert Margins Project, and a transboundary project that deals with the Kalahari ecosystem in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana. Napcod components dealt with by the NGO consortium are the development of national and local level indicators to monitor desertification impacts and strengthening the capacities of Community Based Organisations and their Service Organisations to enable them to better cope with the realities of making a living in dryland areas. Highlights of these activities have been:

- the valuable input of Napcod into the National Environmental Monitoring and Indicators Network;
- research involving direct participation of community members in monitoring their natural resources and developing farmer-friendly local indicators of land degradation;
- the expansion of the Firm approach beyond Grootberg.

Napcod activities dealt with by the Directorate of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in MET are linked to the following components: policy review; sharing experiences with the rest of SADC, the Africa region and internationally; and the management of Napcod. The main highlights have been:

- involvement in the development of the National Water Policy;
- the establishment of the SADC-wide networking project to exchange information pertinent to the convention, SADC-DRFN Desertification Interact;
- the recent appointment of a chief programme planner in the MET to be responsible for the coordination of the UN environmental conventions and programmes.

The entire Napcod process was evaluated by the German Government at the end of 2001, whilst the bush encroachment project was subject to a mid-term review by Finnida earlier this year. Improvements suggested will be incorporated into the ongoing activities of the programme. One of the best practices identified by the German evaluation team and submitted as a case study for a GEF publication on land and water management is the successful community-driven Forum of Integrated Resource Management, Firm. Two programmes dealing essentially with sustainable rangeland management and livestock improvement and thus relevant to Napcod activities are the Sustainable Animal and Range Development Programme, Sardep and the Northern Regions Livestock Development Programme, Nolidep. Several Napcod sites are at previous Sardep pilot sites.

The main consultative process in implementing Napcod is the sub-regional SADC-DRFN-Desertification Interact (SDDI) project that brings together both government and NGO desertification focal point persons to share experiences. The Gobabeb Training and Research Centre, designated by the SADC Council of Ministers as a SADC Centre of Excellence for desertification training and research, offers training opportunities.

Agreements with developed country partners are the results of bilateral negotiations with the Governments of Germany and Finland and several smaller grants particularly for funding the participation of a broad spectrum of SADC and community participants in the Desertification 2002 Conference Process. Despite this, desertification does not yet feature prominently in discussions with international development partners.

The main emphasis in Napcod III has been community participation. Communities have been involved in conducting their own surveys to assess natural resource and socio-economic conditions and changes, to plan activities that promote sustainable development and combat desertification, to operationalise planned activities, and to monitor and evaluate progress. This hands-on approach has been successfully used at Napcod pilot sites throughout the country and the support is provided on request from communities themselves.

Although too many plants may seem a contradiction in terms of desertification, the national bush encroachment project falls under the umbrella of Napcod because bush encroachment is also a symptom of poor land management and reduces the productivity of grazing land, a serious problem particularly in central Namibia. The project is nearing the end of the first phase that concentrated on gathering the information on which to base a national bush monitoring and management project.

The main achievements in monitoring desertification are the development of the national and local level indicators to monitor desertification and land degradation. The current index is based on four key indicators: population pressure, livestock pressure, rainfall and soil erodibility. Nationally the Directorate of Forestry in MET has three projects monitoring woody vegetation north of the 20<sup>th</sup> latitude, i.e. the region that receives sufficient rain to support woodlands.

The main activity to create awareness of desertification issues has been the Desertification 2000 – 20002 Conference process that successfully brought together scientists from around the world, government and NGO representatives responsible for the implementation of the UNCCD from mainly African countries and community representatives from South Africa, Namibia and Zambia to share experiences. A highlight of these experiences were the community visits where delegates could see for themselves the realities of coping with making a living in areas vulnerable to desertification.

Although different line ministries carry out activities that assist in combating desertification and use funds from their own budgets to do so, there is as yet no specific commitment in the capital development budget for Napcod or any of the other programmes dealing with the implementation of the UN environmental conventions. Napcod is funded directly through bilateral agreements with the governments of Germany and Finland and seeks additional funding for smaller related projects as the need arises.

One of the shortcomings mentioned in the German evaluation report is the lack of a consistent monitoring system for self-evaluation of the Napcod process and community involvement.

The process of preparing the second National report has revealed several challenges that Napcod should address in future. These include:

- the fact that, with the possible exception of the pilot sites, Napcod has not yet changed the way people use and manage natural resources;
- practical commitment to sustainable resource management remains low and alternative methods of income generation are viewed as supplementary sources of income, thus having an impact on poverty reduction but not necessarily relieving pressure on natural resources;
- the lack of recognition that many government activities are in fact contributing towards combating desertification;
- the challenge of replication of pilot area activities to the national level to make Napcod a truly national programme;

- the need to produce tangible impacts and to distribute useful outputs;
- ultimately, to ensure user rights over communal rangeland resources similar to those now available for wildlife, water and forestry resources.

## List of abbreviations

BMZ	German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource
CBO	Community based organisation
CN	Counterpart Network
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CTA	Tropical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DEA	Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism
DEAT	Directorate of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, SA
DEES	Directorate of Extension and Engineering Services
DoF	Directorate of Forestry, Ministry of Environment and Tourism
DRFN	Desert Research Foundation of Namibia
EMIN	National Environmental Monitoring and Indicators Network
Finnida	Finland International Development Agency
Firm	Forum for Integrated Resource Management
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MAWRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
MLRR	Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
MME	Ministry of Mines and Energy
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MRLGH	Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing
NACSO	Namibian Association for CBNRM Service Organisations
Nangof	Namibian Non-Government Organisation Forum
Napcod	Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification
NAU	Namibian Agricultural Union
NBI	National Botanical Institute, SA
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
Nepu	Namibian Economic and Policy Research Unit
NFFP	Namibia Finland Forestry Programme
NFFP	Namibia Finland Forestry Programme
NGO	non-government organisation
NNF	Namibia Nature Foundation
NNFU	Namibian National Farmers Union
Nolidep	Northern Livestock Development Programme
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSC	National Steering Committee
Ramsar	International Convention on Wetlands (named after the town where the Convention was adopted)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-ELMS	SADC Environment and Land Management Sector
Sardep	Sustainable Animal and Range Development Programme
SO	Service organisation
TWG	Technical Working Group
Unam	University of Namibia
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biodiversity

UNCCD United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification  
UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
USAID United States Agency for International Development



## **Strategies and priorities established within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies**

Most of the framework for sustainable development has been developed in Namibia since Independence in 1990. Activities carried out during the 1990s and the parties that were responsible for implementing them are discussed in Namibia's First National Report on Implementation of the UNCCD, tabled in 2000, and in Namibia's National Assessment Report to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002).

### **National Development Plan**

The National Development Plan (NDP) guides the overall direction of development in the country. NDP1 covered the period 1995/'96-1999/2000, and NDP2 is currently being implemented (2001/'02 – 2005/06). NDP2 has sustainable development and environmental considerations at its heart. This was achieved by combining Namibia's Green Plan and NDP approaches into one process, so that sustainable development issues are mainstreamed, together with a far more integrated approach to development than has been the case in the past. The different Government Ministries participated in the development of these guidelines and objectives set out for each sector in the plan and their activities are guided by it.

Although 'combating desertification' is not explicitly mentioned in NDP2, personnel within Napcod made inputs to a series of cluster workshops on natural resources, social development, institutional and financial planning, all of which went to identify cross-cutting issues for NDP2. In addition, Napcod made specific input to the chapters on Agriculture, Water and Lands, and participated in the workshops that discussed these sectors. It also reviewed the contents of these chapters to ensure that suggested measures promote sustainable natural resource management and contribute to sustainable development, thereby contributing to combating desertification. For instance, the Agricultural chapter within NDP2 promotes greater diversification of crops and breeds of livestock that are better adapted to dry conditions. The National Drought Policy and Strategy, drafted in 1997, forms part of the content of NDP2, and is discussed on page .

### **Vision 2030**

Vision 2030 is a compilation of the wishes of all the people of Namibia for the future. It states: *"The national Vision for 2030 is that the people of Namibia are well developed, prosperous, healthy and confident in an atmosphere of interpersonal harmony, peace and political stability; and as a sovereign nation, Namibia is to be reckoned with as a high achiever in the comity of nations. This Vision will be achieved through full mobilisation of the nation's human and natural*

*resources in vigorous pursuit of sustainable development, peace, liberty and justice in the interest of our people, our neighbours and the international community.”*

Eight thematic areas have been elaborated in the Vision, containing details of how the Vision is to be achieved. The Natural Resource Sector in this Vision includes a chapter on Land Capability, Rangelands and Agriculture that highlights the severe constraint that low land capability places on sustainable agriculture in Namibia, and the reliance of the majority of the rural population on subsistence agriculture, especially livestock farming on communal land. Key uncertainties identified in the report include poor and fragile soils that are easily degraded, highly variable rainfall, rangeland carrying capacity and, where viable, rain-fed crop production. Several development programmes, including Napcod, have promoted community based natural resource management during the last decade. These have assisted rural communities to develop alternative and supplementary income generating activities (mainly community based tourism), and helped to improve breeding stock and crop varieties better suited to the Namibian climate e.g. the Sustainable Animal and Range Development Programme (Sardep). This is in keeping with the need for economic diversification within the natural resource sector identified in the Vision 2030 situation analysis. An entire section within the Natural Resources Sector report is devoted to Land Degradation as a threat to future agricultural output, and one of the key strategies proposed in the Vision is to combat land degradation. The chapters on Freshwater, Wildlife, Forestry and Tourism are also relevant to the implementation of the UNCCD in Namibia.

The compilation of Vision 2030 has involved a high level of commitment from a wide range of decision makers, and it gives a long-term view of where the country should be heading. The thread of sustainable development – development that is sustainable economically, socially and ecologically – runs through all the chapters. The ideals set out in the Vision do not set out day-to-day operational guidelines on how they should be achieved, but the 5-year National Development Plans will be used as stepping stones to achieve the Vision, and they will incorporate a monitoring and evaluation component to assess progress.

### **Policies relevant to sustainable development**

Policies such as the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Policy (MAWRD) 1992, Integrated Coastal Zone Management project (MET, MFMR) year and Decentralisation Policy (MRLGH) 1998 listed in the First National Report remain relevant to promoting sustainable development and combating land degradation. More recently developed policies relevant to combating desertification and some of those omitted in the first report are given here. At present some of these

different policies are not fully compatible, and one of the challenges that Napcod faces is to scrutinise each of these policies and critically assess their relevance and impact on combating desertification and land degradation. In addition, Napcod must increase awareness of the need to harmonise these policies to truly promote sustainable natural resource use and integrated resource management.

- The most pertinent of these is the National Drought Policy (MAWRD) 1997. Being an arid to semi-arid country, there is great variability in the climate with a high probability of drought occurring at any time and affecting smaller or larger parts of the country. This vulnerability has been addressed in the National Drought Policy approved by Cabinet in 1997. The development of this policy serves as an excellent example of cooperation between MAWRD and MET and support by Napcod. The Policy emphasises the distinction between aridity and drought, so that naturally dry conditions do not qualify for emergency drought relief. It shifts the emphasis away from the government to the farmer and from the emergency measures required in the event of a disaster drought, to increasing the preparedness for drought through diversification of livelihoods. Financial assistance and food security interventions are only recommended in the event of a disaster drought. Although drought relief measures have not been needed since 1997, drought preparedness measures have continued. MAWRD has distributed a user-friendly, summarised version of the National Drought Policy to all regional offices and Agricultural Development Centres throughout Namibia with instructions to pass on the information to farmers. The policy carries commitment from senior-level decision makers in the MAWRD, but the envisaged National Drought Fund has not materialised yet.
- Namibia's Environmental Assessment Policy (MET) 1995. Principles of sustainable development are found within Namibia's Environmental Assessment Policy and the Draft Environmental Management Act (1999). The Act is expected to enforce the principles set out in the Policy, but it is still only in Draft form.
- Soil Conservation Act (MAWRD) 1969. This Act actively promotes erosion control measures but is currently only applicable in the commercial areas. Attempts to revise the Act to also apply to communal land were made in the 1990s, but not followed through. To some extent the current Northern Livestock Development Programme (Nolidep) addresses this issue and incorporates activities to control soil erosion, particularly in regions vulnerable to gully formation.
- National Water Policy (MAWRD) 2000. This policy provides the national framework for equitable, efficient and sustainable water resources management and water services. It recognises water as a fragile national resource, identifies water scarcity as a natural

constraint to development options, stresses the rights and obligations inherent in managing internationally shared resources and promotes basin management. The fundamental principles outlined in the policy form the basis for the Water Resources Management Bill (MAWRD), now in its final draft and due to be submitted to Cabinet in 2002. Napcod inputs to this process are discussed on page XX

- Wildlife Management, Utilization and Tourism in Communal Areas (MET) 1995 and resulting amendment to 1975 Nature Conservation Ordinance (MET) 1996. This allowed the establishment of conservancies in communal areas, and currently there are 15 conservancies that are fully established and another 13 listed as ‘emerging’. Essentially conservancy status gives communities rights over their natural resources, particularly wildlife. The recent trend is to expand this concept to include other natural resources such as water, grazing and freshwater fish.
- Forestry Act (MET) 2000. This Act grants communities rights over forest products and makes provision for community managed forests.
- The National Land Policy (MLRR) 1998 has been drafted into the Communal Land Reform Bill (MLRR) 2000, but this is not yet promulgated. The lack of a clear policy and precise legislation concerning land tenure is a major drawback in implementing sound management of natural resources.
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPC) 1998 focused its agricultural proposals on increasing crop production and crop value in the northern (better watered) regions of the country, but these objectives have, in the main, not been achieved. Another focus, on spreading the benefits that accrue from the growing tourism market, has been more successful, as shown above by the promotion of community based tourism and conservancies.
- The Cooperative Act, promulgated in 1996, encourages capacity building and human resource development in cooperatives and other supportive organisations in the country. These can potentially help the implementation of sound natural resource management in communities.
- The Policy of Foreign Investment strongly supports private sector investment for the development of the country’s agricultural sector and agro-industrial ventures. Enhancing productivity in these sectors in a sustainable way could potentially reduce the pressures on the environment that create land degradation.

Other policies that may be relevant to combating land degradation include:

- White Paper on Energy (MME) date?

- National Agricultural Policy (MAWRD) 1995
- Community –based Tourism Policy (MET) 1995
- Regional Planning and Development Policy (NPC) 1997
- Namibia: Policy and Programme on Small Business Development (XXX) 1997
- Agricultural Commercial Land Reform Act ( ) 1994
- Special Incentives Act for Manufacturers and Exporters ( ) 1995
- Finance Policy on Small and Micro enterprises in Namibia – drafted 1998
- Livestock Improvement Act ( ) 1977
- Food Security Policy ( ) date

## **Institutional measures taken to implement the programme**

### **International Conventions**

Namibia is party to the major UN Environmental Conventions, namely:

- the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD),
- the Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD),
- the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),
- the International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar).

These Conventions share some common principles, so that action done under one convention can benefit another. For instance, managing land in an ecologically sustainable way will benefit biodiversity as well as slow down land degradation – both aims are achieved by the same action. Workplans have been developed to put all of these Conventions into action in Namibia, and all are coordinated through the DEA. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism recently appointed a Chief Development Planner responsible for national coordination of Conventions and Programmes.

### **UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)**

#### **Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification (Napcod)**

The Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification (Napcod) is regarded as the National Action Programme by the UNCCD. It is jointly administered by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD), and jointly implemented by Government and NGOs. The Programme started in 1994 and is now in its third phase. The strong Government / NGO collaboration is an important and successful characteristic of Napcod. The NGO consortium of the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) and the Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit (Nepru) are implementing the national- and local-level monitoring and the community-based components of the programme, whilst the other components, relating to policy, awareness, international collaboration and national management, are coordinated through the Directorate of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in the MET. Another NGO, the Namibian Nature Foundation, NNF, is responsible for the management of the financial contributions allocated to the implementing partners by the German and Finnish governments. A recent evaluation of Napcod concluded that this alliance of government and NGO has proved a successful and effective way to carry out a complex national programme, drawing on the strengths of each partner to counter-balance weaknesses of the others.

Napcod activities are coordinated through a National Steering Committee (NSC), equivalent to a National Coordinating Body (NCB). The Steering Committee has representatives from a number of organisations actively involved in combating desertification and land degradation.

Organisations that have been represented on the Steering Committee since the start of Napcod are listed below, and those currently serving on the Committee are in **bold**:

- government ministries (**MAWRD, MET, MLRR, MRLGH and MoF**),
- NGOs (**DRFN, Nepru, NNF, NDT, Nangof**),
- agricultural unions and boards (**NAU, NNFU and Agronomic Board**),
- aid/donor organisations (**GTZ, Finnida, UNDP, Oxfam**)
- academic organisations (**Polytech, Unam**).

The Steering Committee meets 3 times a year and is chaired by either the Director of the DEA (MET) or the Director of DEES (MAWRD). Between meetings a smaller group of six Steering Committee members, the Project Support Team (PST), allows a more flexible and efficient operation by dealing with matters as they arise. Their duties are to take ad-hoc decisions within the framework of the policies and budgets set by the Steering Committee and to report to the Steering Committee on these decisions, to facilitate communication between Napcod partners and to review and evaluate reports produced for Napcod and advise the Steering Committee on further action. Within Napcod, day-to-day coordination is the responsibility of the National Coordinator, who is also the National Focal Point, based at MET.

As reported in the first National Report, the Steering Committee has not always enjoyed active and broad support. It went through a difficult period during Phase II when only a few core members were active. This could have been from domination of the proceedings by the few active members, or from the fact that members from other government ministries did not directly see desertification as their business. In response to this, composition and functions of the Steering Committee were critically reviewed and revised at the start of Phase III. A group called the Counterpart Network (CN) was established. It comprised professionals in the agricultural and rural development fields and aimed to draw on their expertise and achieve more active integration from other sectors. With time the CN proved unwieldy and CN members were absorbed into relevant Technical Working Groups. These TWGs were established to provide expert inputs into each of the components of Napcod III, each focused on a specific aspect of desertification. Thus there are TWGs for: the National overview of desertification, the Livelihood approach and local level monitoring, Capacity Building of CBOs and SOs, Bush-encroachment, International Relations, Awareness, Training and Policy. To better involve Steering Committee members in the activities of Napcod, the TWGs are chaired by SC members, who liaise with those involved in the implementation programme and

report on progress directly to the NSC at each meeting. Although not yet ideal, these measures have gone some way towards streamlining the involvement of national level partners in the activities of Napcod.

The recent activities of Napcod are summarised in the following section. Broadly, the Programme to Combat Desertification has been carried forward under the following initiatives:

- (i) Community-based projects that focus directly on improving skills and practices of natural resource management, mostly in communal farming areas. These projects and programmes include:
  - Sustainable Animal and Range Development Programme (Sardep), MAWRD,
  - Northern Livestock Development Project (Nolidep), MAWRD,
  - A range of activities directed towards community based natural resource management (CBNRM), MET. (The Namibian Association for CBNRM Service Organisations (NACSO) is an association of government and NGO organisations working under the policy framework provided by MET's policy on CBNRM, with the MET being a key partner that has created an enabling environment for community management of open access common property resources.
  - Napcod components dealt with by the DRFN-Nepu Consortium
- (ii) The Bush Encroachment programme run in the MET, to recover the productivity of land that has become bush-encroached, with strong emphasis on active participation by both free-hold (commercial) and communal farmers.
- (iii) Regional networking and training provided through SADC-DRFN Desertification Interact (SDDI), a project of the DRFN in close cooperation with SADC-ELMS and Napcod.
- (iv) Training and research carried out at the Gobabeb Training and Research Centre, which is designated by the SADC Council of Ministers as a Centre of Excellence for Desertification Training, Networking and Research for the SADC Region. A joint undertaking of MET and DRFN.
- (v) The Desertification 2000-2002 Conference Process, an international conference and workshop entitled 'Alternative ways to combat desertification – connecting community action with science and common sense'
- (vi) Napcod components dealing with policy, awareness, sub-regional, regional and international collaboration and national level management undertaken by DEA, MET.

#### **UN CONVENTION ON BIODIVERSITY (UNCBD)**

Implementation of this Convention is guided by Namibia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The goal of the strategic plan is "*to protect ecosystems, biological diversity*



*and ecological processes, through conservation and sustainable use, thereby supporting the livelihoods, self-reliance and quality of life of Namibians in perpetuity”.*

The Strategy specifies a number of themes that contribute to combating desertification, such as sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable management of land and wetlands, and integrated planning. The Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy has a 10-year horizon (2001 – 2010), but is only beginning implementation now. The NBSAP Implementation Unit is expected to be staffed and fully functional by mid 2003.

### **UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

The prediction for Namibia is that the climate is likely to become hotter and drier, presenting a challenge for combating desertification and land degradation. Although this country is not a major emitter of the greenhouse gases that are driving climate change, it is highly vulnerable to its impacts, partly due to increased unpredictability of rainfall and the high reliance of all agricultural activity on limited water resources.

Namibia has undertaken a country study on climate change and is in the process of preparing its first National Report. Slowing down the rate of climate change will reduce the level of risk to unexpected habitat changes, and reduce the vulnerability of farmers to harsher, less predictable climates in future.

### **RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE**

Given the broader Ramsar definition of wetlands as essentially all surface waters, Namibia has few but vital wetlands, all the more precious for sustaining drylands. All farming activities are ultimately linked to viable water resources. Ramsar affords our water resources a degree of protection and encourages ecologically sustainable water resource management, a factor recognised in Namibia’s National Water Policy.

The common thread linking all these environmental conventions is the natural aridity of Namibia, the high reliance of the majority of Namibians on natural resources and the growing pressure on these resources as the population doubles every 20 years. These resources are directly dependent on scarce and unpredictable rainfall. Adaptation to, and coping with, droughts are the realities of living in this dry environment, equally applicable to wildlife, plants, livestock and man. Strategies to understand and protect the environment, sustainably use and better manage natural resources, and to help people to better cope within the limitations posed by climate and man-made factors, form the basis of all these conventions.

## **The participatory process in support of the preparation and implementation of the action programme**

In Namibia there are essentially two scales at which activities to combat desertification and promote sustainable resource management are carried out:

- the national scale, dealing broadly with issues such as the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, mainly carried out through ongoing, sectoral line ministry activities;
- the community scale that is the focus of more specific cross-sectoral programmes such as Napcod, Sardep and Nolidep, and which are targeted at pertinent rural development issues in pilot areas. At the pilot scale attempts have been made to develop approaches, such as the Firm approach that integrate activities across sectors.

Both levels include participatory approaches to natural resource management.

A good example of activity on the national scale is the Livestock Development Task Force chaired by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture. The activities of the Task Force are based on sustainable rangeland management principles, and they ensure the active implementation of sound livestock management and drought preparedness. Sound rangeland management principles and practices are specifically included in the training manuals provided to each of some 300 agricultural extension officers who interact directly with farmers in the field. Every extension officer is well aware of sustainable rangeland issues and can identify the grasses and bushes to assess rangeland condition, and s/he is tasked to assist farmers and sensitise them about these issues. One of Napcod's future challenges is to link such national activities to the basic understanding that they contribute directly to combating desertification and land degradation. Also, Napcod must create the awareness amongst major stakeholders such as the Agriculture ministry, that their efforts to prevent land degradation and loss of agricultural productivity make them active participants implementing the convention to combat desertification.

In addition to the extension officers, researchers in the Farming Systems Research and Extension (FSRE) units in each region follow an approach of working with smaller groups of farmers to build up 'best practises', and the focus is on communities. This FSRE approach is used as a vehicle to develop and test strategies for wider implementation.

The narrower focus of programmes working at the community scale such as Napcod, Sardep and Nolidep provide opportunities to get things going, to test policies and strategies and to implement participatory approaches in a more integrated way. The projects discussed below show the practicality of testing and implementing measures to combat desertification at the pilot scale and

how these programmes and their approach allow more intensive collaboration with communities. Napcod can be seen as one of several country-wide initiatives promoting participatory, sustainable natural resource management which, together with other stakeholders, contribute to combating desertification.

### **Napcod Phases I, II and III**

Details of Napcod Phase and the two subsequent implementation phases are given in the First National Report. A brief overview of the progress of the Namibian Programme to Combat Desertification is provided here and deals mainly with activities since 2000.

Phase I, in 1994, concentrated on:

- raising awareness,
- making a preliminary assessment of desertification in all 13 Regions of Namibia,
- understanding the economics of desertification in terms of the cost of loss of productivity,
- developing a shared understanding between rural resource users and technical personal on what desertification is, and
- planning the Programme which is now being implemented.

Government and non-governmental participants from a broad range of sectors (rural communities to line ministries) attended a National Desertification Workshop at which the Programme was elaborated. The overall goal of the programme was defined as follows: *“To contribute towards curbing desertification and thereby securing livelihoods of the Namibian population”*.

Phase II (1995 – mid 1999) followed eight objectives identified at the National Desertification Workshop in 1994. Those in which broad participation was sought were:

- *to involve key players and stakeholders,*
- *to develop integrated planning methods and strategies,*
- *to empower communities to implement sustainable resource management,* and
- *to improve the policy framework for sustainable resource management.*

The National Steering Committee improved collaboration of professionals from different sectors.

Phase III (mid 1999 – 2003) is being jointly implemented by government (the Directorate of Environmental Affairs DEA in MET and MAWRD, mainly through the Directorate of Extension and Engineering Services, DEES), and by an NGO consortium of DRFN and Nepru. . The purpose of Phase III is to ensure that *“the renewable natural resources of Namibia are used sustainably by the various user groups.”* Six objectives have been identified for the current four-year implementation phase. Each of these is dealt with as a separate but related component of the

programme. DRFN/Nepu are implementing Components 1a, 1b, 2 and 3, while Components 4, 5 and 6 are the responsibility of the DEA, MET.

Component 1a: *The establishment of a national-level monitoring system to track desertification*

Component 1b: *The establishment of local-level monitoring systems, based on the livelihoods approach, to track desertification and to enhance decision making at local level.*

These involve developing a monitoring system for tracking the extent and severity of land degradation over the whole country.

Component 1a is now operational and being improved with the active involvement of national remote sensing and climate monitoring experts on the National Overview Technical Working Group. A highlight of this component has been the active involvement of Napcod in the National Environmental Monitoring and Indicators Network (EMIN). One of the key papers at the EMIN workshop held in May 2001 was an analysis of the development of indicators in the State of Environment Reports for Namibia for 1998 – 2000, prepared and presented by Napcod. The 99 indicators, suggested in the 5 reports, were evaluated in terms of their scientific relevance, data availability, historical data/time series, accuracy/sensitivity and threshold values. Only 9 fulfilled all the criteria and a further 16 met 4/5 of the criteria. These 25 were not yet considered an effective functional core of indicators for Namibia's proposed annual State of the Environment Reporting. About 50 experts, from a wide range of disciplines related to natural resources and more general environmental monitoring, participated in the workshop and identified degradation of ecosystems, desertification and loss of productivity as the most significant environmental problem facing Namibia, closely followed by the decline in water availability.

Component 1b, the monitoring of local conditions, is being done at Napcod pilot sites by the communities for their own information and as a means of ground-truthing the national monitoring system. The approach used is essentially the Livelihoods approach and the researchers are assisted by the TWG for the Livelihoods approach and local level monitoring. The challenge is to develop farmer friendly indicators, drawing on local knowledge and the experiences of the farmers themselves.

The current emphasis of the project lies in Components 2: *Strengthening the capacity of selected community-based organisations to implement natural resource management*; and Component 3: *Strengthening the capacity of service organisations to implement natural resource management*. Work is continuing with the pilot communities of Phase II at Grootberg in the west, Nico Noord (in the Gibeon area) in the south and Onkani in the north, and has been expanded to include several additional communities, such as Oskop Conservancy, Tsub/Gaus and Blankenese, all recently

established in the Gibeon area (Figure 1, p ..) Omatjete in the west, another pilot site, was formerly a Sardep pilot area where Napcod is now active. GEF funding has been secured to further expand Napcod activities to pilot sites in the east through participation in the Desert Margins Programme.

These two components are dealt with together and integrated through what has become known as the Firm (The Forum for Integrated Resource Management) approach. Firm is discussed in detail on page 14. The core Firm committee serves as the TWG for Capacity Building of CBOs and SOs. Napcod activities with community based organisations in the pilot areas are reported on page XX under “Achievements in improving natural resource management”

As reported in the first country study a detailed review of the national policies and legislation pertinent to combating desertification was undertaken by Napcod and published in 1996. This report on *Policy Factors and desertification- Analysis and proposals*, known as the Dewdney report, identified several important omissions, contradictions and in some cases disincentives regarding combating desertification and land degradation. Since then, several of these policies, including those on water, agriculture and lands have been revised.

Component 4 of Napcod Phase III, *The improvement of the policies and framework conditions for sustainable resource management practices*, will address these changes and update the Dewdney report and evaluate the current National Development Plan and Vision 2030 in terms of desertification and land degradation. Both NDP2 and the Vision 2030 process updated the 1996 Napcod policy review and highlighted key policy issues that require attention. While there are many policy issues that could be addressed, focus will be on those few key ones that will make the most difference. Napcod Steering Committee members continue to provide inputs to policies that affect natural resource management and serve on national task forces to develop these and related legislation.

Active involvement in the Namibian Water Resources Management Review, initiated by MAWRD in 1998, ensures a strong commitment to community based management. This will be achieved through basin management committees, better collaboration between sectors and recognition of the requirement of an environmental water reserve or priority allocation of domestic and subsistence livestock watering needs and ecological water requirements. The National Water Policy highlights the need to develop a system of water resources risk management that can meet the challenge of sustainable management in the face of hydrological and ecological uncertainties inherent in a country as dry as Namibia. This challenge to anticipate climatic variability and manage scarce

water resources well, particularly during periods of prolonged drought, is one most pertinent to Napcod's commitment towards helping rural communities cope.

Component 5 of the Napcod III programme focuses on *sharing Napcod experiences with sub-regional, SADC, regional and international desertification partners*. Napcod remains an active partner at sub-regional level through participation in the activities of SADC-Elms, at regional level through participation in the African preparatory meetings, and internationally through participation at both COP4 and 5. The most important contribution at sub-regional level has been the establishment of the SADC-DRFN Desertification Interact (SDDI) project funded by German government (BMZ) through GTZ. It aims to improve networking between SADC countries on desertification issues through the involvement and training of both government and NGO UNCCD focal persons. As a reflection of Namibia's involvement in the African region, Namibia has been invited to host the 6<sup>th</sup> African regional UNCCD Conference in Windhoek in July this year. At this occasion all African member states will be given the opportunity to present their second national reports to the UNCCD in preparation for the first meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) in Bonn in November 2002. At international level, Napcod and particularly the DRFN have been actively involved throughout the Desertification 2000-2002 process. The highlight of this was the recent series of training courses and the international symposium held in Cape Town, the very successful community visits allowing delegates to see for themselves the realities of coping with a harsh environment, and the synthesis workshop at Gobabeb. Namibia, through Napcod, contributed a case study on the FIRM approach to a GEF publication on Integrated Land and Water Management.

The appointment of a National Napcod coordinator at MET at the beginning of 2000 and more recently a research coordinator within DRFN and a Chief programme planner responsible for conventions at MET, together with the revision of the National Steering Committee and the establishment of the Project Support Team (PST) and TWGs were initiatives under Component 6, *The development of the capacity to operate and manage Napcod*. During 2001, Napcod was subject to an evaluation by a team appointed by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ, the major donor. The aims of the evaluation *were to assess the project's experiences and the effectiveness of its strategy, concept, organisation and process of implementation, to recommend ways of optimising or adjusting the promotion inputs by the Federal German Government and to point out "lessons learnt" which can be applied in other projects or countries*.

The main positive findings were the good cooperation between Government and NGOs, and the empowerment of communities through Firm. The Firm approach was commended because it

offers a clear challenge to service organisations and other development partners to respond efficiently to identified needs and the participatory research approach. On the negative side, concerns were raised on the limited buy-in by government and other stakeholders, the narrow base of the current programme that mainly focuses on activities in a few pilot areas more typical of development projects than national programmes, and the lack of a coherent project monitoring system. Monitoring and self evaluation are still largely based on the completion of activities rather than following impacts and the process of implementation. Lessons learnt included the flexible, process-orientated, comprehensive approach of Napcod, the successful alliance of government and NGO partners, successful awareness raising in the earlier phases of Napcod, and the local level participatory research on desertification processes with communities and the Firm.

Early in 2002, Finnida also conducted a mid-term review of the bush-encroachment component to the programme. The results of these evaluations will be critically assessed by Napcod, and the recommendations will be incorporated into Napcod implementation for the remainder of the current phase and in the planning of Phase IV, intended to run from 2003 – 2006.

#### **Forum for Integrated Resource Management (Firm)**

Combating desertification and managing resources sustainably are activities which cut across sectors, and their successful implementation is largely dependent on communities in rural areas. Therefore, an integrated approach to resource management is essential. The traditionally sectoral approach of Service Organisations towards communities has several shortcomings, including duplication of efforts, confusion of who is responsible for what and absence of a holistic view. It can also be a drain on local involvement as the same people tend to serve on several different committees. In response to these shortcomings, some communities in Namibia now drive a system in which service organisations (SOs), NGOs and donors integrate their activities amongst each other and with the needs and capabilities of the communities. This is called the Forum for Integrated Resource Management, or the Firm approach. It is supported by a range of partners including Napcod, SOs and NGOs working with the relevant communities.

The Firm approach was initiated, and has been most successfully implemented, by the Grootberg Farmers Association and the #Khoadi //Hoas Conservancy in the north-west of Namibia. The community leaders in the Grootberg area call regular meetings with service organisations, where the needs of the community are identified and the actions of the SOs and community personnel and the money from community enterprises together with that of donors are coordinated. Napcod and other Firm partners have assisted the Farmers Association and the Conservancy with institutional strengthening, operational planning, a goat-breeding programme, establishment of water points and

vegetable gardens, tourism development initiatives, activities of the women's group, game counts, a livestock survey and assessments of rangeland condition. The latter are used as the basis for Management Plans drawn up by the communities.

Essentially the Firm approach tackles the problems of sustainable natural resource management from the viewpoint of the community, and finds ways to implement solutions that are practical and that have the full involvement of the community members. As the success of the Firm approach has become evident at Grootberg, other communities working with Napcod have started to follow this approach, and it is being implemented more widely, most recently at Napcod pilot sites in the Gibeon area in the south and Onkani in the north. The integration of farming activities with wildlife conservation principles at the #Khoadi //Hoas and Oskop Conservancies has created the opportunity to widen Napcods' national impact through the network of communal conservancies.

One of the conclusions of the 2001 BMZ evaluation of Napcod is that *“the Firm approach provides an instrument for extension that consists of inter-sectoral approaches and solutions specific to the local conditions at community level and the intervention of service organisations and projects in a flexible, collaborative and interactive manner upon demand according to needs expressed by the communities”*.

### **Sustainable Animal and Range Development Programme (Sardep)**

Sardep was started in 1991 and is now in its final year. From now on the strategies and activities promoted by Sardep are to be continued by the MAWRD. Sardep realised that technical solutions alone will contribute very little towards sustainable rangeland management and improved livestock production. A community based structure with high levels of motivation and self-help capacity is needed for the sustainable introduction of technical interventions. It took Sardep longer than expected to build this capacity that resulted in less time and resources being available for technical interventions. As mentioned earlier, many of the Napcod pilot sites were originally Sardep study sites and where appropriate, Sardep staff members are now employed on Napcod projects.

### **Northern Regions Livestock Development Programme (Nolidep)**

Nolidep has similar aims to Sardep but is implemented only in the northern regions of Caprivi, Kavango, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Oshana, Omusati and Kunene, by the MAWRD with a loan from IFAD, the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The 5 components to the Project are Sustainable Range Management, Livestock Development support services, Animal health, Training and Institutional support systems.

Technical activities (such as development of water points) have been well implemented, but the support for sustainable range management has been much less. Communities do not readily see the



relationship between establishment of water points and the management of the surrounding grazing areas. The project funded crush pens and auction pens and gave training on aspects such as animal husbandry, range management and livestock marketing. The opinion of a senior manager of the Nolidep project is that community members see their land being degraded but do not readily seek solutions to prevent the process. There is a reluctance to sell livestock when conditions become poor, and rotational grazing of pastures is little practised.

The Nolidep and Sardep project managers serve on the National Napcod Steering Committee and the Grootberg Firm Committee. Napcod in turn participates actively in annual rangeland conferences organised by Sardep and Nolidep. Sardep and Napcod presented a joint display at Expo 2000 in Hamburg.

## **The consultative process in implementing the programme and partnership agreements with developed country parties and other interested entities**

### **SADC-DRFN Desertification Interact (SDDI) Project**

This sub-regional project is run by DRFN through Napcod and reports to the Steering Committee of Napcod under the Technical Working Group on International Relations. The aims of the project are threefold:

- Coordinating and sharing experiences of the different SADC countries that are implementing desertification National Action Plans (NAPs);
- Facilitating the flow of information between the focal points for the different countries' NAPs;
- Improving networking between the focal points.

In addition to this there is a training component that focuses specifically on aspects of development and implementation of NAPs. For example, training courses were offered to participants of the Desertification 2002 Conference Process in Cape Town in April 2002. These covered:

- Effective ways of developing project proposals
- Development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of NAPs
- Remote sensing and measuring the impact of desertification at global level.
- Additional courses that were due to be given at the Cape Town Conference will be given during 2002. One in particular will cover electronic- and internet-based networking, using the Netwise website and a collaborative internet programme, BSCW.

SDDI works in close collaboration with the SADC Environment and Land Management Sector (ELMS), whose headquarters are in Lesotho. The contacts in the southern African countries are the National Focal Points, both government and NGO. In this regard Namibia is exceptional in Africa as there are very close and formalised relationships between government and NGOs. These links are most evident in Napcod, where the DRFN/Nepu consortium is responsible for the implementation of the major components of the current phase and over 80% of the budget is allocated to the consortium. DRFN serves as the Secretariat for both government and NGO preparations towards the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

### **Agreements with developed country parties**

Major funding for the Napcod programme, since it started in 1994, has come from the German Government (BMZ) through the Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). GTZ has financially

supported many projects that are connected to combating desertification, such as Sardep, the Namibian Biodiversity programme, the Namibian Water Resources Management Review programme, and others more distantly linked such as education projects.

Additional funding for Napcod has come from the Secretariat of the UNCCD and from the FAO via the UN Development Programme, as well as from the Government of Namibia, which provides office accommodation to the Napcod Coordinator, Bush encroachment Project Manager, GTZ Desertification advisor and staff. As part of the bilateral agreement between the Republic of Namibia and the Federal Republic of Germany a senior technical advisor on desertification is seconded to Napcod. Together with the National Coordinator at DEA, he is responsible for taking care of policy issues relevant to desertification process, mainstreaming desertification issues at national level and the exchange of experiences with other SADC countries, the UNCCD and the German government. The technical advisor chairs the TWG on International relations and is also responsible for other projects funded by Germany. This link strengthens integration with aspects of biodiversity and rural water supply.

Finnida has funded the bush encroachment programme, and there is substantial Finnish involvement in the remote sensing projects being undertaken in the Directorate of Forestry, MET.

The Canadian International Development Agency, Cida, the UNDP from the Japanese Government, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, USAID, the Government of the Republic of South Africa through the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) funded the Desertification 2002 Conference Process. In-kind sponsorship for the process came from the U.S. Department of the Interior – Bureau of Land Management, the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) and the National Botanical Institute (NBI) in South Africa.

A major issue to be addressed by Napcod is that desertification must be placed on the agenda in bilateral and multilateral negotiations with development partners. Napcod must develop a strategy to address this and provide information in a manner that is appropriate to high-level decision makers, to ensure that combating desertification is taken up in future dialogue at a political level. The term desertification is still often misunderstood and not linked to issues of sustainable resource management and sustainable development.

**Measures taken or planned within the framework of the programme, including measures to improve the economic environment, to conserve natural resources, to improve institutional organisation, to improve knowledge of desertification and to monitor and assess the effects of drought.**

### **Achievements in improving natural resource management**

As mentioned earlier, many of the line functions of government institutions are working towards improving natural resource management. Yet there is still a basic lack of understanding that many of these activities carried out by government are in fact in the field of combating desertification. Perhaps because of this, there is still no proper funding mechanism for desertification issues in government. This section does not deal with the broader sectoral activities of government but concentrates on activities directly linked to the current implementation phase of Napcod and cooperation with partner organisations.

Service Organisations such as the Directorate of Engineering and Extension Services (DEES) in MAWRD, the National Development Trust (NDT) and the Sustainable Animal and Range Development Programme (Sardep) are now directly involved in integrated planning with community based organisations. Operational planning sessions were conducted at Napcod pilot sites at Grootberg and Oskop in 2001 with follow-ups in 2002, and at pilot sites in the Gibeon area (Nico, Tsub/Gaus, Blankenese) and at Onkani in early 2002. This process was initiated at Grootberg by NACSO, and has been expanded to other areas, drawing in Napcod and other partners.

Oskop Conservancy elaborated an integrated workplan with relevant service providers for the first quarter of 2002. Important service providers reflected in this workplan were Napcod, DEES and NDT. This workplan will be used as the basis for monitoring and assessment of their progress in implementation.

Communities learned about the bio-physical and socio-economic conditions in their own areas through participation in extensive baseline studies that were done during 2001 in Grootberg, Oskop, Nico, Tsub/gaus, Blankenese and Onkani, whilst livestock surveys and rangeland assessments were done on 40 farms at Grootberg. Omatjete farmers have requested assistance

with a similar livestock survey in May 2002. The emphasis for 2002 has been to identify gaps in the information base and to do follow-up surveys where needed. The identification, confirmation and implementation of local level indicators is receiving priority attention during 2002. A proposal for major funding (N\$3 million) to develop farmer-friendly local-level indicators over the next three years has been submitted to USAID.

A component of improving natural resource management includes developing alternative livelihoods so as to reduce the vulnerability to drought and to relieve pressure on resources. To this end, training courses on various topics, including hospitality, conflict resolution, development of management plans, and financial and business management have been provided to communities.

Bush encroachment is regarded as part of the process of desertification because it results in a very significant reduction in productivity of grazing lands. The decline in the capacity of Namibia's rangelands is estimated between 50 – 100%, with a concomitant loss in income of more than N\$400 million per annum.

The Bush Encroachment Project, managed by the DEA in MET, is building on long-term research by the MAWRD, to tackle this problem with support from Finnida. The overall objective of the project is to promote and establish appropriate systems for diverse and sustainable land management in bush-encroached areas. Specifically, the project will develop a common information base on and understanding of the issues related to bush encroachment, and prepare a monitoring and integrated management programme.

The management structure of the project consists of a Supervisory Board, the National Napcod Steering Committee controlling policies and progress, the smaller Project Support Team dealing with operational issues and a Technical Working Group on Bush encroachment for practical and scientific inputs. Progress is discussed here for each of the seven expected results of the project:

- 1) *Improved understanding of the causes and impacts of the species-specific bush encroachment process;* An extensive literature study has been conducted to assess the contribution of factors such as climate and soils, fire regimes, poor rangeland management (high stocking rates, wrong practices), reduction of herbivores, biological interactions and temperature. A report is being compiled.
- 2) *Improved understanding of the impact of bush encroachment on the socio-economic situation of farmers as well as the impact on biodiversity.* These results will reflect the productive status of the land. Surveys to determine the impact of bush encroachment on

fauna in both communal and commercial farming areas were carried out and the data are being processed and analysed. Economic losses in income and land productivity were also investigated and recorded.

- 3) *Up-dated and time-sequenced, historical information in map- and GIS-database form available for researchers, planners and general public;* The data of approximately 160 case studies in commercial areas, 110 sites surveyed by the MAWRD, and 200 sites in communal areas are in the process of being analysed. Bush densities, height classes, species composition and wood freight will be determined and mapped for the affected areas. These findings are also used for satellite image interpretation to determine the future value of satellite imagery to monitor and track national trends in bush encroachment.
- 4) *Improved monitoring systems and methodologies for land capability assessments purposes;* Indicators and methodologies to measure change were investigated and tabled.
- 5) *Sustained and functional mechanism and capacity to operate and manage the Bush Monitoring and Management Project* is being developed for Phase 2 of the project. On-farm research data obtained from commercial farmers are being processed to determine best practices and options for combating bush encroachment. These data will be supplemented by scientific research findings and stored in a Bush Expert Database for use by interested parties.
- 6) *Compiled policy analysis of bush encroachment related issues for policy reforms.* This study has been completed, existing policies were assessed for their appropriateness, shortcomings were identified and recommendations were made for policy reform.
- 7) *Increased awareness of bush encroachment dynamics and operational networks for information and experience sharing.* All key stakeholders are working closely together through Technical Working Groups, Ministries with direct interest in the problem, NGO's, scientific institutions and members of the Steering Committee. A few institutions have been identified for inclusion in the existing informal network. A great deal of awareness has been created through these partners as well as through presentations at international and national conferences and local farmers meetings, radio talks and press releases.

### **Achievements in monitoring desertification**

The Directorate of Forestry (DoF) within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) is the main government body concerned with remote sensing of environmental characteristics in the northern, highly populated, higher rainfall parts of the country. Currently there are three projects that are monitoring the extent of land degradation. Although the monitoring system is in place, interpretation has yet to be done. These projects fall under the National Forest Inventory in the Directorate of Forestry, as part of the Namibia Finland Forestry Programme (NFFP).

- (i) Monitoring of woody cover north of 20° latitude. Landsat images are correlated with field-collected data to estimate the extent/density of woody vegetation. The project is comparing data sets from 1990 and 2000 to detect overall change in the amount of woody vegetation (trees).
- (ii) Monitoring of extent of land clearance in the northern regions of the country. Landsat images are being compared from 1990 and 2000.
- (iii) Monitoring of fires using landsat images. Although frequent, uncontrolled burning is deleterious to the environment, fire can be used as an important management tool, provided it is controlled and is integrated with spatial and temporal data. Fire scar mapping, giving the total coverage of fires in northern Namibia, helps to assess the effectiveness of fire-breaks that are being established.

Napcod has developed a national-level monitoring system for desertification that generates information useful to national level decision makers. This has resulted in a risk map showing the risk to desertification based on four indices, viz population pressure, livestock pressure, rainfall and soil erosion. The accuracy of the monitoring system is being evaluated on the ground at two of the Napcod pilot areas, and so as to integrate the local-level monitoring system with the national-level indices. An implementing institution is being identified to continue the national-level monitoring after the end of the contract period of Napcod III. As already mentioned, a functional mechanism to monitor bush encroachment at national level is being developed for Phase 2 of the National bush encroachment project.

### **Achievements in improving the knowledge of desertification**

Most of the achievements in improving knowledge of desertification and awareness raising activities since the last country report have been through the Desertification 2000-2002 process. This ongoing process has sought to actively involve communities and scientists in combating desertification in southern Africa. The theme of the conference was 'Alternative Ways to Combat Desertification: Connecting Community Action with Science and Common Sense.'

The development of this Conference Process originated in 1997 at an international desertification conference in Tucson, USA, and started in earnest at the Drylands Community-Based Tourism Workshop held at the Gobabeb Training and Research Centre (GTRC) in 2000. The Conference Process involved the main Conference in Cape Town, two community visits in the Northern Cape region of South Africa and three in Namibia, and a consolidation workshop at the GTRC. The aim was to create the conditions for people working in this field to learn something as well as to teach something to their counterparts.

One of the first activities in the process was a workshop on Community based tourism as an alternative or supplementary means of income generation for rural communities. This workshop was held at the GTRC in April of 2000 and set the scene for active community involvement in the process. During 2001 this was strengthened by a series of exchange visits between the participating communities, each being given the chance to host representatives from another community and to visit another community as “tourists”.

Training courses before the Conference started are discussed under SDDI and were directed at both government and NGO focal points or their representatives from the SADC region. Participants from 11 SADC countries as well as India, Kenya, Tunisia and Senegal attended. A series of training courses directed at communities and people working with communities in southern Africa will be presented at the GTRC later in 2002, and will deal with topics ranging from community based tourism, craft development, environmental impact assessments and electronic networking.

Speakers at the International research symposium on alternative ways to combat desertification, came from many African countries as well as India, Europe, Iran, India, Argentina, Canada and the USA. Topics that were discussed included alternative income generation, land tenure, indigenous knowledge, gender issues, desertification processes and rehabilitation, and the implementation of appropriate technology. The presence and input of communities was noted and commended. A conclusion was that research does have a role to play in combating desertification but it must be carried out in close collaboration with local rural communities, and that research findings should be clearly communicated in languages appropriate to rural communities. Examples where community common sense prevailed to ensure practical solutions and debunk myths (such as ‘the tragedy of the commons’) held by researchers were given. The symposium succeeded in initiating discussion between scientists, government officials, NGO representatives and community members.



About ninety of the participants at the Cape Town symposium proceeded to visit communities, at Wuppertal, Suid Bokkeveld and Paulshoek in South Africa, and at Gibeon, the Kuiseb valley and Grootberg in Namibia, before meeting again for a synthesis workshop at Gobabeb. This workshop achieved the objective of bringing together scientists, government and NGO focal points and community representatives to share experiences and put into practise lessons in clear communication and active partnership. The entire process has been documented on a video that will be shown on National television throughout southern Africa on 17 June to mark World Desertification Day.

As already mentioned, expert inputs by Napcod team members in ongoing national initiatives including NDP2, Vision 2030, the national monitoring and indicator network and the development of a variety of policies ensured the transfer of knowledge and awareness of desertification issues at national level. At local level, Napcod contributed to improved knowledge and knowledge exchange of desertification issues with communities at Napcod pilot sites and improved natural resource management capabilities. Community members were actively involved in household and livestock surveys, rangeland assessments and resource monitoring whilst Napcod staff members participated in community driven planning exercises. A highlight of community interaction during 2001 was the successful nomination by Napcod of a community representative of the Grundorner Farmers Cooperative near Gibeon for the NNF Environmental Award. This achievement brought to public notice the initiatives of communal farmers in combating desertification and coping with conditions in drought-prone areas.

## **Financial allocations from national budgets and assistance and technical cooperation received and needed, identifying and prioritising the requirements**

At national level, many of the activities pertinent to combating desertification and controlling land degradation are dealt with directly by ministries responsible for natural resource management as part of their line functions, and are budgeted for in the budgets of the sectors responsible. For instance, within the MAWRD, ongoing activities such as soil mapping, determination of agro-economic zones, on-farm research, Farm Systems Research and Extension (FSRE), and the tasks and training of agricultural extension officers working directly with farmers, are covered by the Agriculture budget. The community based water resource management, together with the support and training of some 200 Water Point Committees throughout Namibia are budgeted for as part of the ongoing activities of the Directorate of Rural Water Supply. Within the MET there is financial commitment to community based natural resource management particularly through support to established and emerging communal conservancies, and commitment to ongoing community based forestry programmes. Napcod activities and those of the other environmental conventions are coordinated through the MET and a senior staff member is dedicated to this task. To date there has been no specified budget line in the Namibian capital development budget for the national programme to combat desertification or for any of the other UN Environmental Conventions. As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of basic understanding and many pertinent activities are not considered activities to combat desertification.

Napcod has yet to address the challenge of mainstreaming desertification issues in national budgets and needs to develop a strategy to better integrate Napcod into national planning and budgeting. One approach would be to review the budgets of all the pertinent ministries to assess which activities can be linked to desertification control and how much government has committed to these. Similarly NGOs and private sector stakeholders (such as the Namibian Farmers' Union) who are involved in desertification issues can calculate their contributions to combating land degradation. Once known, these figures can be used to sensitise government and make stakeholders aware of the real financial contribution of government and other Namibian partners to combating desertification. Although Institutions such as the National Planning Commission can use these figures to show donors the commitment of government, it will still be necessary to clearly show a financial contribution to meet the obligations of the UNCCD and to secure future donor funding. This requires a clear financial commitment to Napcod in the capital development budget.

Most direct funding to Napcod is through bilateral agreements, with the Governments of Germany and Finland. As an obligation under the UNCCD, and as was stressed during the 2001 Namibian-German government bilateral negotiations, Namibia has yet to provide contributions from the national budget to Napcod. Additional project specific funding has been received from UNDP, Cida, CTA, DEAT and DBSA. Proposals for future desertification-linked projects have been submitted to

- GEF (Desert Margins Programme),
- USAID (Local level monitoring),
- UNEP (SADC network for the 10 anglophile countries),
- through SADC-ELMS and the Global Mechanism, the Kalahari/Namib transboundary project and another to facilitate Community Exchange and Training have approached GEF for funding.

Furthermore, Namibia is currently engaged in a participatory self-assessment to determine the capacity needs nationally to implement the three UN conventions.

## **Review of benchmarks and indicators used to measure progress and an assessment of progress**

The overall objectives and indicators for Napcod Phase III are set out in the “Angebot” or original offer that governs the funding from BMZ, and all activities are subject to these. Phase III of Napcod was designed to meet specific objectives, each forming a component of the implementation. Within each component, milestones to measure progress were identified. As the programme evolved, some of these have had to be shifted, and detailed annual planning allows for this. Each year, the progress of the previous year is assessed against the workplan, indicators and milestones developed the previous year. A detailed plan for the next year, together with indicators and milestones, is agreed in a consultative process involving both the DEA and the DRFN/Nep ru consortium. Within the consortium quarterly reports are submitted and progress is evaluated against the annual workplan.

### **Critical Assessment of Progress**

To quote the recent BMZ evaluation report “ *Napcod has developed a flexible, process-orientate, comprehensive approach, addressing desertification control in a holistic manner. The approach reflects the diversity of factors leading to desertification and has led to well targeted actions for different stakeholders. Priority is given to strengthening institutional capacity, influencing frame conditions at the policy level, awareness-raising to empower decision making and participation of all stakeholders in natural resource management as well as to the promotion and implementation of community based activities and participatory action research.*”

The process of preparing this second National report on the implementation of the UN Convention has highlighted that although Namibia’s Programme to Combat Desertification has achieved much, many challenges remain:

- On a country-wide scale, Napcod has not significantly changed the way people use natural resources. Over-exploitation and unsustainable use are still widespread, and the proportion of the population living in poverty and vulnerable to the risks of drought has not significantly changed. In fact, good rains over the last three years have effectively masked land degradation symptoms. The pilot areas for programmes related to combating desertification are small islands in a much larger area of unsustainable practices, and the message is not spreading spontaneously.
- The level of practical commitment to sustainable use of natural resources is low. The term is used widely but its practical implementation beyond selected pilot areas, remains the exception, not the rule.

- Many of the major national players, such as the ministries responsible for agriculture, water and forestry, do not yet recognise that their activities towards sustainable use of natural resources are essentially aimed at combating desertification. For example, many of the ongoing activities of the Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development in MAWRD are directly linked to the principle of sustainable rangeland management and sustainable utilisation of this resource, yet are not considered as contributing to ‘combating desertification’.
- The challenge of replication to national level remains and will ultimately be the function of the government extension officers working throughout the country. The reality is that Government is tasked with addressing issues related to land degradation at a national scale, yet it is always easier to make things work at pilot level and difficult to replicate results nationally. Strengthening the link between the pilot programmes and those service organisations tasked with national implementation of sustainable development policies is the focus of several current rural development programmes, including Napcod. Napcod is not yet a truly national project, with particularly the community-based activities limited to those communities in a few pilot areas.
- At the moment, it is convenient for government ministries to support anti-desertification measures as the programme is donor-funded and implemented mainly by NGOs. The commitment by government to support and continue to implement Napcod once external funding ends is not clear. Napcod has a challenge to make government aware of the obligations undertaken on ratifying the UNCCD and to mainstream the concept of combating desertification into national plans and particularly into the national budget.
- As an incentive for sustainable resource management, people need exclusive rights over rangeland and grazing resources. The lack of a sense of “ownership” regarding rangeland resources is a serious constraint to the implementation of sustainable rangeland practices such as rotational grazing, resting and clearing of bush encroached areas.
- A window of opportunity exists for Napcod to help widen the scope of current legislation on conservancies. The aim would be to grant communities similar user- and management rights for rangeland resources as is the case with wildlife, water and forestry resources.
- Napcod needs to focus on producing tangible impacts as a vital priority, or it will suffer loss of credibility. Some achievements have been the inclusion of livestock surveys and rangeland in routine monitoring by environmental shepherds in conservancies, and communities working with Napcod have gained knowledge on how to monitor their natural resources (such as grazing, livestock, wildlife or rainfall) and assess changes.

- Napcod needs to have useful outputs that can be distributed. The series of brochures compiled to create a greater awareness of Napcod activities should be finalised and disseminated widely.