

**IMPLEMENTATION OF UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT
DESERTIFICATION**

NATIONAL REPORT

NEPAL

For
***Fourth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)***

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April 2000

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ACRONYMS

AusAID	-	Australian Agency for International Development
APN	-	Asia Pacific Network
APP	-	Agricultural Perspective Plan
BZMUGs	-	Buffer Zone Management User Group(s)
CBD	-	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO(s)	-	Community Based Organization(s)
CFUG	-	Community Forestry User Group
COP	-	Conference of the Parties to UNCCD
CSCUG(s)	-	Community Soil Conservation User Group(s)
DANIDA	-	Danish International Development Agency
DDC	-	District Development Committee
DOA	-	Department of Agriculture
DSCWM	-	Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management
EAP	-	Environment Assessment Program
ECG	-	Environment Coordination Group
EEC	-	European Economic Commission
EFEA	-	Environment and Forestry Enterprise Activity
EIA	-	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	-	Environment Protection Act
EPC	-	Environment Protection Council
EPF	-	Environment Protection Fund
EPR	-	Environment Protection Rules
EU	-	European Union
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
FARM	-	Farm Centered Agriculture Resource Management Program
FINNIDA	-	Finnish International Development Agency
PMWATA	-	Participatory Watershed Management Training in Asia
GEF	-	Global Environmental Facility
GM	-	Global Mechanism
HMG/N	-	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
IBSRAM	-	International Bureau of Soil Resources and Management
ICIMOD	-	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IFAD	-	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IG	-	Income generation
INGO	-	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPGRI	-	International Plant Genetic Resources Institute
IUCN	-	The World Conservation Union
JICA	-	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KMTNC	-	King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
MFSC	-	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
MOPE	-	Ministry of Population and Environment
MOWR	-	Ministry of Water Resources
NAF	-	Nepal Agroforestry Foundation
NAP	-	National Action Program
NARC	-	Nepal Agriculture Research Council
NBAP	-	National Biodiversity Action Plan
NCB	-	National Coordinating Body
NCS	-	National Conservation Strategy
NEFEJ	-	Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists
NEPAP	-	Nepal Environmental Policy and Action Plan
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	-	National Planning Commission
PA	-	Protected Area
RAP	-	Regional Action Plan
SAARC	-	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACEP	-	South Asia Cooperative Environment Program
SAP	-	South Asia Partnership Nepal

SchEMS	-	School of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development
SOE	-	State of the Environment
TPN	-	Thematic Program Network
UNCCD	-	United Nations Conventions to Combat Desertification
UNCED	-	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	-	United Nations Environment Program
UNFCCC	-	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	-	United States of America
VDC(s)	-	Village Development Committee(s)
WUA	-	Water Users Association
WWF	-	World Wildlife Fund for Nature
WMTUH	-	Watershed Management in the Tropics and Upper Himalayas

Summary

This report has been prepared under the guidance of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee and two working groups and the outcomes of the national seminar.

Background Information

Nepal, roughly rectangular in shape, has a total area of 147,181 sq. km and an estimated population of 22.367 million in 1999. Uneven distribution of human and livestock population has exerted pressure on natural resources, particularly on land and forests. In broader perspective, about 59 per cent of the total land is steep or very steep, and 22 per cent has moderate to steep slopes. These areas are prone to soil erosion and landslide. Nepal's intra-Himalayan high basins receive less than 500 mm of precipitation a year. Evapo-transpiration is high in the western Terai, and the ratio of annual precipitation to potential evapo-transpiration ranges from 0.02 in the trans-himalayan region to 2.99 in high rainfall area, the Pokhara Valley. About 10,000 ha in highlands in West Nepal experience the desertification problem and areas of desert-like condition are spreading in the trans-himalayan region. Some areas also experience seasonal drought. Based on soil erosion and landslide information, about 13.6 per cent of the total watersheds are in very poor to fair conditions. Furthermore, about 1.8 million tons of plant nutrients are removed by crop harvesting (0.5 million tons) and soil erosion process (1.3 million tons) each year. Out of this, only 0.3 million tons are replenished by organic and mineral fertilisers. This has affected production of major crops which have not increased at par with the use of agri-inputs such as fertiliser, improved seeds and irrigation facilities.

The climatic and physiographic variations and fragile geology are major factors for the loss of nutrient rich top soil, landslide, and flood. The problem is compounded by high population growth, rural poverty, over-grazing, shifting cultivation and use of fertile land for infrastructure development, settlement expansion, and establishment of social service facilities. Poverty has further accelerated the land degradation problem.

In order to address these concerns, policies and programs have been formulated and implemented with the long-term objectives of promoting sustainable use of resources to alleviate poverty and bringing different stakeholders in the mainstream of sustainable development. Nepal has also joined the international environmental movement as a Party to sixteen Conventions, including the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The UNCCD entered into force in Nepal on 13 January 1997, and Nepal is implementing the Convention by establishing its linkages with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Sustainable Development Plans and Priorities

Nepal has a long-term vision of involving stakeholders in natural resource management to alleviate poverty. In the mid-1980s, Nepal further stressed the need for halting the expansion of desert-like conditions in the mountains and launched massive afforestation and soil conservation and watershed management activities. Since then, a concept of land management and sustainable resource use has been integrated into national development plans to alleviate poverty along with the integration of environmental assessment system in major infrastructure projects. The current Ninth Plan (1997-2002) has the single objective of poverty alleviation, and it emphasizes the importance of soil and water conservation. The Plan has placed agriculture and forestry sector in the first priority. The Plan recognizes poverty and unmet needs of the people as a challenge for environmental management and sustainable development. Furthermore, the Plan also emphasizes, *inter alia*, to enhance community participation in natural resource management, and encourage cultivation of perennial crops in slopes and environmentally sensitive areas.

Nepal is implementing the National Conservation Strategy and Forestry Sector Master Plan, Agricultural Perspective Plan and Environmental Policy and Action Plan through institutional and legal reforms. The plans aim to protect land against degradation by soil erosion, floods, landslides, desertification and other phenomena of ecological imbalance. Policies and programs related to combating desertification are also included in the draft National Agenda 21 which emphasizes the need for integrating poverty alleviation issues into the mainstream of social and economic development process by, *inter alia*, reforming land tenure system, and accelerating forest and soil

conservation activities. It also emphasizes the need for strengthening the roles of women, youth, indigenous people, NGOs and CBOs and individual farmers in natural resource management.

Land related issues have also been a part of sectoral policies such as of forestry, hydropower and irrigation, industry, tourism and housing sectors. Recently, policy directives have been issued to enact legislation, and develop procedures for the implementation of the Conventions. Prior to UNCCD, the problems of desertification and desert-like conditions were recognized, and HMG/N formulated policies and programs to discourage cultivation in marginal land encouraging people at the same time, in converting such land into forest and grazing fields. Besides the policy formulation and implementation, Nepal has a long tradition of natural resource management, and this indigenous practice has been promoted for community participation through policy and legal measures. In a nutshell, the strategic thrust is to alleviate poverty, ensure sustainable use of natural resources, and minimize pressure on land and water system with people's participation, and enhance involvement of NGOs, CBOs, women and youth.

Institutional and Legal Measures

National Coordinating Body

In the process of integrating environmental aspects into development programs, HMG/N established the Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) in September 1995 which acts as the National Coordinating Body (NCB) for environmental matters and Conventions. The Ministry functions as a monitorer, facilitator and coordinator and is also responsible for, *inter alia*, the formulation and implementation of policies, plans, programs and legislation. It also acts as the national and international focal point in the domain of environment. Furthermore, the Ministry is responsible for the institutionalization of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) system, maintenance of environment conservation areas, and operation of an Environment Protection Fund (EPF) as per the Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1996 and the Environment Protection Rules (EPR), 1997. MOPE is also the Focal Point for UNCCD and implements other environment-related Conventions as well. As NCB, the Ministry has the legal personality and it operates within the budgetary provisions approved by the government. It has also authority to implement different policies and programmes. MOPE has interdisciplinary staff, and it carries out environmental activities by following annual work plans and timetables. It follows the established mechanism for supervision, control and evaluation.

On the other hand, HMG/N has constituted the Environment Protection Council (EPC) under the chairmanship of the Right Hon'ble Prime Minister to provide policy guidance and advise the government on environmental matters. The Council comprises a mix of policy- and decision-makers, professionals, academicians, entrepreneurs, representatives of political parties and local bodies, and government nominated experts. MOPE functions as the Secretariat of the Council

MOPE has a satellite-based MERCURE system and is planning to host a website for sharing information on land degradation and desertification. This has provided access to the Internet and websites. Under the MERCURE system, internal networking has been maintained and inter-agency networking has been planned. Other organizations dealing with forests, soil conservation, and agriculture including NARC and ICIMOD also have the databases which will be very useful for the NAP process.

Institutional Framework for Coherent and Functional Desertification Control

MOPE is in the process of establishing a Steering Committee (SC) for the fulfillment of obligations of Nepal as a Party to environment-related Conventions. This SC will strengthen linkages between the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD and implement activities through a coordinated approach. Furthermore, HMG/N has continued its efforts to strengthen NGOs and CBOs, particularly the legally recognized Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs), and Water Users Associations (WUAs), including Community Soil Conservation User Groups (CSCUGs), and Buffer Zone Management Users Groups (BZMUGs) to implement natural resource management activities all over the country. HMG/N has also planned to provide soil and water conservation services all over the country by the year 2002 and to continue the process of handing over the State-managed forest to community forestry user groups for its conservation and sustainable use. Institutional strengthening of the local NGOs and CBOs is a key to enhance their absorbing capacity over the local funds operated to implement natural resources management programs.

NAP as Part of the National Economic and Social Development Plan

Although rehabilitation of degraded land has been an integral part of the national development plan, desert-like areas are expanding due to accelerated land degradation, soil erosion, landslide, alkalinity and salinity in the agricultural land. This issue has been raised at the national level which has contributed in identifying priority programs for the National Action Programme (NAP) process. The issues are periodically reviewed, and the reviews indicate that existing plans and policies emphasize the need for empowering the local people in natural resource management. The problems of land degradation and its social and economic consequences have been reflected in development plans and programs, and the NAP process will further mainstream the integration of land and water management aspects with national social and economic planning process.

Issues of land degradation have also been accommodated in the regional programs such as the SAARC Plan of Action on the environment and food reserve, SACEP's land-based pollution study, and ICIMOD's mountain resources conservation programs. The NAP process will be further linked with relevant sub-regional and regional action programs in the spirit of the Convention.

Coherent and Functional Legal and Regulatory Framework

A number of legislations have been implemented for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, particularly the forest, land and water. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990 emphasizes environment management and economic progress of the people by raising agricultural productivity, through *inter alia*, land reform programs. The EPA, 1996 and EPR, 1997 and other legal instruments such as *Muluki Ain*, *Aquatic Life Protection Act*, *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, *King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation Act*, *Water Resources Act*, *Forest Act*, and *Local Self Governance Act* also emphasize resource management, land use regulation and people's empowerment. The legislation also provides for certain percentage of income accrued from resource conservation for community development.

A review of existing legal regime also indicates that legislation in the field of forests, wildlife, water resources, environmental and local governance is forward looking as it opens avenues for public participation and people's empowerment in cost and benefit sharing. For example, the *Forest Act*, 1992 (amendment 1998) contains provisions to invest 25 per cent of the total earnings from community forests in forest management. The *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, 1973 (amendment 1993) empowers the government to allocate 30 to 50 per cent of the total revenue collected in the protected areas for community development. Similarly, the *Local Self Governance Act*, 1999 empowers the local bodies to manage and use natural resources, collect revenue and utilize in resource management. However, the existing legislation will be further reviewed extensively as a part of the NAP process to ensure a coherent and functional legal and regulatory framework for CCD implementation.

Participatory Process for Preparation and Implementation of the Action Program

Effective Participation of Actors Involved in Defining NAP Priorities

In the spirit of the Convention, the key actors and/or stakeholders have been identified. They comprise government organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations (CBOs), the private sector, academia, media, youth and women. Some organizations such as SchEMS, IUCN and NEFEJ have affiliated with MOPE for the implementation of environmental programs. A number of public awareness programs have been launched by governmental and non-governmental organizations through radio and television, and publication and distribution of State of the Environment Report, posters, pamphlets, news clips etc. to cater to information needs of the local people have taken place. Environment courses have also been included in the formal education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Public awareness has been enhanced by organizing meetings with the press, launching programs for parliamentarians and trainer's training in environment management, and by celebrating World Days on environment, desertification and biodiversity including forest and soil conservation days at the local level. With regard to desertification, MOPE organized a national seminar in 1997 which recommended, *inter alia*, various actions for the NAP process including the identification and assessment of hot spots, promotion of community forests and livestock stall-feeding, rehabilitation of degraded land, strengthening of institutional capacity, and mobilization of NGOs, CBOs, and mass media.

Policies and strategies have also been formulated to involve women and youth in the mainstream of national development through the user group mobilization approach. Similar policies exist to avoid or minimize gender imbalance, and enhance women empowerment through increased access to training, income generating (IG) activities, credit and resources. Women, NGOs and CBOs are equally involved in the consultation process during program identification, design and implementation at various levels. The public awareness program has increased uptake at both the local and national levels, and this is reflected in policies and legislation, particularly in empowering the community groups in resource management.

NAP Consultative Process and Partnership Arrangement

Nepal has received some funding from developed countries such as Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, USA, and Switzerland. Various international agencies such as UNDP, UNEP, EU and IFAD are also providing support for the implementation of forestry, agriculture, and soil and watershed management activities, and rehabilitation of degraded lands. Nepal has yet to receive assistance for the preparation and implementation of the NAP. MOPE has formed an Environment Coordination Group (ECG) to discuss the environment-related matters with the donor community. It is hoped that informal consultation and exchange of information will enhance cooperation and partnership to implement the spirit of the Convention.

Measures Taken or Planned for NAP

Adequate Diagnosis of Past Experience

Land degradation problems have been continuously identified while formulating sectoral plans and programs. Experiences gained in soil and water conservation, soil fertility improvement and forest management emphasize further launching of land improvement programs with people's participation and empowerment.

MOPE has also conducted a study to develop a broad-based program with regard to the implementation of the UNCCD. The study identified priorities for a national plan of action and recommended to formulate a national policy-cum-management system, and establish a National Committee. The study also recommended to launch programs for awareness raising, training and capacity building, communication and participatory processes, emergency preparedness etc. to implement the provisions of the Convention. The study has further recommended to upgrade knowledge and information base, launch soil and water conservation and afforestation activities intensively, develop and promote agro-pastoral system, develop comprehensive anti-desertification program integrated with national environment and development plans, develop drought preparedness and drought relief and self-help schemes. A study is on-going to draft the national policy and program of action to combat desertification and drought, and it will be completed by July 2000. Other studies have also been carried out to analyze problems, causes and consequences of land degradation. The study findings will be a basis for NAP formulation.

Established Technical Programs and Functional Projects to Combat Desertification

On-going projects and programs in relation to CCD priorities have been reviewed to derive a set of activities to facilitate the NAP process. They indicate possibilities to tie up with soil and water conservation activities. Land degradation issues have also been integrated into development projects including road and hydro-electricity development projects through the EIA system. People's empowerment has been enhanced through skills enhancement training and capacity building activities at different levels.

Action Program Implemented in Compliance with Priority Fields set out in the Convention

Soil and water conservation activities are implemented in different parts of the country. Priority areas have been identified through consultative processes and studies. On-going actions on the establishment of functional network of district level organizations for the implementation of forestry and agriculture related activities will further mainstream the NAP process at the field level. However, there is a shortage of financial resources to mobilize the local level institutions and improve their efficiency.

Although land degradation and forest depletion issues are in the forefront of public awareness programs, there is still a need for wider coverage at the local level and to enhance their capacity in

monitoring and evaluation programs. At present, soil and watershed demonstration and research plots have been used to monitor soil erosion and the process of land degradation at different ecological zones.

As resource conservation program takes time to have economic benefits, income generating activities have been introduced as incentives for people's involvement. Also, benefit sharing mechanism has been institutionalized to enhance the participation of community user groups in forest and park management, and irrigation water management.

Linkage Achieved with Sub-regional and Regional Action Programs

Nepal has been a part of the SAARC Regional Action Plan on Environment and Watershed Management in Asia and Asian WATMANET. The latter project is designed for human resource development in participatory watershed management, particularly for the sustainable use and management of forests, soil, water and other natural resources. Some research and scientific organizations are involved in developing programs for regional studies, particularly on medicinal herb, biodiversity and people and resources dynamics.

Effectiveness of Measures in Local Capacity Building

The introduction of community and leasehold forestry programs, buffer zone management and water conservation through users mobilization has been instrumental in local capacity building in managing forests, soil and water. This has achieved a greater degree of responsibility among users. This has also enhanced the mobilization of women and youth to group work in resource management. In the forestry sector, about 0.650 million ha of forest have been managed by over 9,000 legally recognized user groups. This has benefited about 1 million people. Through this process, a feeling of ownership has been developed, and it will have a long-term impact on resource conservation.

Public participation has been promoted also through environmental legislation as the proponent has to issue a public notice for 15 days before the preparation of the Scoping Report, and conduct a public hearing before the finalization of the EIA report. MOPE has also to issue a public notice for 30 days before the approval of the EIA report of any prescribed proposal. Furthermore, these activities are monitored and evaluated by the concerned agencies. The present practice of empowering the community groups has emphasized self-monitoring and evaluation. In EPF-funded activities, local governments and educational institutions have been involved in supervision and monitoring activities.

Partnership Agreements Applied

In Nepal, partnership agreements between the government and CBOs have been ensured in forests and soil conservation activities and irrigation water management. Efforts are also made to establish a partnership in mobilizing EPF and other funding sources to implement selected activities by NGOs and CBOs. This partnership will be further strengthened during the NAP process. This partnership will also streamline the implementation of the relevant conventions such as UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD through coordinated efforts.

So far, Nepal has mobilized about US\$ 13,000.00 to collect background information for the implementation of the Convention.

Financial Allocations

Adopted Financial Mechanism

Nepal is continuously spending a reasonable amount of money for the implementation of soil and forest management activities, and soil fertility improvement programs through both national and international funding. NGOs and CBOs have access to EPF and other sources of funding. Local actors are informed about the availability of funding. However, these sources have limited funds and are unable to finance the services as required. In addition, community user groups have also access to government funds up to about 50 per cent of the estimated budget for the implementation of on-farm conservation activities, 30 to 50 per cent of the total revenue generated in the protected areas and at least 5 per cent in irrigation development. However, Nepal has yet to access local/private sector funds for the NAP process. HMG/N is reviewing its administrative procedures and organizational set-up to develop a new set of rules for the administration of EPF.

NAP Financing

Nepal is collecting necessary information for NAP formulation and a strategy has yet to be developed for accessing the national and international funding sources, including GM. So far, UNCCD Secretariat has provided a total of US\$ 13,000.00 to organize a national seminar in 1997 and to prepare this report. An NGO, SAP Nepal, has also received seed money from UNEP to prepare a case study for the UNEP Asia specific study on land tenure, environmental degradation and desertification in the dry lands of Asia.

Technical Cooperation Developed

Nepal has yet to request technical cooperation. In the beginning, Nepal requires technical and financial assistance for public awareness, capacity building and information exchange system, preparation of inventories of traditional knowledge, know-how, practices and technologies, identification of hot spots, partnership building and private sector involvement as part of the NAP process. Technical assistance is also required to strengthen the process of community empowerment in resource management. In order to implement these activities in the spirit of the Convention, an estimated amount of US\$ 0.915 million is expected from the donor community.

Benchmarks and Indicators

Operational Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluation

In Nepal, environmental monitoring and evaluation has been an integral part of program monitoring as per the EPA, 1996 and EPR, 1997. Environmental auditing is also in process. The line agencies have established a monitoring and evaluation unit to monitor the project performance and its impact on the environment. In general, project specific indicators are developed, monitored and evaluated through in-built systems. In addition, sectoral agencies have started monitoring soil loss in representative ecological zones. Five demonstration centres and several research sites have been established so far for this purpose. Monitoring and evaluation information is used to strengthen data bank on the status and trend of natural resources.

Information relevant to desertification control and resource management and utilization is published in SOE, and national seminar proceedings. A number of publications of governmental and non-governmental organizations also contain information on the status and trend of land degradation in Nepal, and they are disseminated through print and electronic media.

As per the *Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal*, 1990, every citizen has the constitutional right to information and has an access to avail information. In order to expedite information sharing, informatory reports are regularly published to meet the demand of the users.

In a nutshell, Nepal is collecting necessary information for the NAP process. Nepal expects technical and financial assistance from the developed country Parties and multilateral donor agencies to prepare the NAP through extensive consultations. It will be implemented with people's participation. Existing environmental policies and programs are geared to alleviate poverty which is one of the major thrusts of the Convention.

Chapter One

Background Information

1.1 The Process

An Inter-Agency Steering Committee having eight members was formed under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Ministry of Population and Environment to guide in the preparation of the national report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The Committee includes representatives from central governmental and non-governmental organizations. Two working groups were also formed to discuss the draft national report (Annex 1).

The Ministry of Population and Environment organized a national seminar on the draft report to seek opinions and suggestions from different stakeholders. The seminar was attended by over 60 representatives of the central government, non-governmental organizations, federations of community-based organizations, the private sector, journalists and donor community (Annex 2). The draft report was presented in detail and was commented by eminent experts and participating organizations (Annex 3). The outcome of the seminar was used to refine this national report.

1.2 Country Background

Roughly rectangular in shape with non-uniform width of about 193km from north to south, and 885 km from east to west, Nepal lies between the fertile Gangetic Plain of India and the arid plateau of Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. The altitude ranges from 60 m to 8,848 m (Mount Everest) with primarily steep topography. Nepal has a total area of 147,181 sq. km with an estimated population of 22.367 million in 1999 growing at the rate of 2.37 per cent. The livestock population was nearly 34 million in 1998. About 15 per cent of the total population live in urban areas, the municipalities. The human and livestock population is unevenly distributed in different ecological regions. About 90 per cent of the total population depend on subsistence agriculture, and almost all the rural people depend on forest firewood as a source of energy for cooking and heating purposes. Forests contribute to about 42 per cent of the total digestible nutrients of the livestock.

Administratively, Nepal is divided into five development regions, 14 zones, 75 districts, 58 municipalities and 3912 village development committees. While physiographically, it is divided into the Terai, Siwaliks, Middle Mountain, High Mountain and High Himal with 14, 13, 30, 20 and 23 per cent of the total area respectively. The Terai is the fertile alluvial plain and the Siwalik zone is geologically fragile and prone to landslide and mass wasting. The Middle Mountain is extensively cultivated, and the man-land ratio is high. The High Mountain has steep slopes and narrow valleys with inaccessible areas for human habitation. The High Himalayan Zone is rocky with ice-covered massifs, rolling uplands, and snow-fields with insignificant number of people. In a broader perspective, the mountain area covers one-third of the total area (35 per cent) with only 2 per cent of the total land suitable for cultivation. This area is sparsely populated with only about 7 per cent of the total population according to the 1991 census. The Hill region accounts for 42 per cent of the total land where about 46 per cent of the total population reside. The Terai (plain) area comprises 23 per cent of the total area with about 47 per cent of the total population. Furthermore, about 59 per cent of the total land is steep to very steep (Siwaliks and Middle Mountain Zone), and 22 per cent has moderate to steep slopes. Soil type also differs in the physiographic zones ranging from alluvial and usually fine textured to poorly developed erosion-prone soil.

Nepal lies within the subtropical monsoon climatic division. About 80 per cent of the total precipitation occurs during June to September. The precipitation varies from place to place and ranges from nearly 250 mm to over 5,200 mm per annum. For example, Lumle area in West Nepal near Pokhara receives about 5,000 mm whereas Mustang, Dolpa and Manang - the intra Himalayan high basins - and Jumla (far west Nepal) receive less than 500 mm of precipitation a year. Some inner valleys in the Middle Mountain also receive low amount of rainfall. The ratio of annual rainfall and potential evaporation transpiration ranges from 0.02 to 1.07 in selected areas and 2.99 in high rainfall zone, the Pokhara Valley. The eastern part of the country receives more precipitation as compared to the western part. The transhimalayan zone receives a low amount of rainfall and experience a rain-shadow effect indicating cold desert. The temperature starts declining as one proceeds from the southern to northern part of the country. Some areas experience over 40°C with high evapo-transpiration rate. Some areas also experience seasonal drought due to uneven precipitation during

the monsoon season. Drought, i.e. below average level of precipitation, causes heavy loss in agricultural production. For example, drought affected 35 districts (about 47 per cent of the total administrative districts of Nepal) in 1994 with significant decline in agricultural production.

The climatic and physiographic variations and fragile geology (because Nepalese Himalaya lies in the tectonically active zone) are major factors for soil erosion, landslide, and flood. Loss of nutrient rich topsoil in the uplands is common, and it has severely affected downstream ecosystems and farmlands, indicating a close link between uplands and lowlands. Land degradation is also accelerated by forest depletion, shifting cultivation and farming system in unterraced land in the hills and mountains.

1.3 Causes and Consequences of Land Degradation

Land degradation is a major concern in Nepal, and it has a direct bearing on food production. Soil erosion, landslide and mass wasting are common in the mountainous regions whereas sedimentation and flood are major problems in the plains. About half of the total soil erosion is natural in origin, and the remaining is being accelerated by human activities such as cultivation in the marginal land, removal of ground cover, overgrazing, and infrastructure development. The annual population growth of 2.37 per cent, compounded by a situation of absolute poverty which stands at about 42 percent of the total population, farming system, over-grazing, shifting cultivation and high dependence on productive land resources for settlements, and establishment of social service facilities constitute the major driving force for land degradation.

About 10,000 ha of land in Dolpa and Mustang - highlands in West Nepal - feature a process of desertification, particularly in the form of cold deserts. The cold desert has been spreading along with human intervention in the marginal lands in the trans-himalayan areas. In view of the fragile condition, even the Siwalik range of about 13 per cent of the total area can be converted into a desert within a year in absence of forest cover. If so, this will have a long-term implication on the Terai areas.

Nepal Himalaya is geologically young and fragile, and a small disturbance results in mass wasting. The top soil loss from the mountain is raising the riverbeds in the Terai at an estimated annual rate of 15 - 30 cm which has increased the incidence of floods, damaged and reduced the utility of fertile lands, irrigation canals, dams and hydropower projects and so on. Many farmlands in the plain areas are being affected by silt load. Accumulation of silt load has reached over 1.45 m over the last 45 years in some areas in the Terai. Soil loss from well managed forest area is estimated at about 10 t/ha/yr and exceeds in some geologically fragile areas 30 t/ha/yr. Soil erosion reaches 100 ton/ha in the poorly managed slopping terraces and 200 ton/ha in the degraded rangeland. Soil erosion in cultivated lowland (*khet* land) is comparatively lower in comparison to rainfed terraces (*bari* land). Based on soil erosion and landslide information, about 0.4 per cent, 1.5 per cent and 11.7 per cent of the total watersheds are reported to be in very poor, poor and fair conditions respectively. Furthermore, about 1.8 million tons of plant nutrients (N, P₂O₅, K₂O and Ca) are removed by crop harvesting (0.5 million tons) and soil erosion process (1.3 million tons) each year. Out of this, only 0.3 million tons/yr (16 per cent) are replenished by organic and mineral fertilisers. Because of poor watershed condition and high loss of nutrient rich soil, land productivity has declined. The problem is further compounded by alkalinity, salinity and indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals in selected areas, and increment of marginal land. Inadequate conservation measures in such land will lead to desert-like condition in a few years of time.

Landslides and floods have affected the land productivity and the lives of the people as well. Death due to these factors was reported to be only 363 in 1984. It has tripled to 1336 in 1993 with the financial loss from flood at the range of 1.9 million US\$ to 99.1 million US \$ in the same year. In 1996, Nepal experienced devastating natural events, particularly landslides and floods. About 940 people and over 2800 domestic cattle died, and about 6,800 ha of land was severely affected. The overall financial loss was estimated at US\$ 178 million. Natural and human-induced disasters have greatly affected the country's infrastructure facilities, particularly roads. For example:

- 700 cubic meters of landslides per km per year occur in hill roads which during road construction reaches 9,000 cubic meters; and
- 25 per cent of hill roads following river valleys are completely washed out every four to five years.

In Nepal, agriculture land is increasing at the cost of forest and pasture land. The quality of forest area has declined, and about 5 per cent of the total area has been converted into shrub land. A recent study concludes that only 39.6 percent (4.2 million ha) of the total area is covered by forests (29 per cent and 10.6 per cent shrub land) as against 45 percent (6.6 million ha) in mid-1960s and 6.3 million ha in 1979. The per capita forest area also declined from 0.442 ha in 1979 to about 0.198 ha in 1998. In the last 20 years, the annual deforestation rate has been estimated at 1.7 percent. Furthermore, per capita land has declined from 1.2 ha to 0.64 ha during the last two decades (mid-1970s to late 1990s). For cultivated land, this has further declined from 0.7 ha to 0.164 ha during the same period.

Agricultural area is experiencing severe land degradation, and the per unit production of major food crops such as paddy, maize and wheat has not increased to the desired level in spite of increasing agri-inputs. For example, the use of improved seed has doubled in the last two decades (1975 - '95), annual consumption of nutrients and chemical fertiliser has increased from 10,000 to 90,000 tons and irrigation facility has increased from 0.1 million to over 1 million ha during the same period. However, the yield rate of paddy and wheat has only slightly increased from 2 to 2.5 mt/ha/yr and 1.2 to 1.6 mt/ha/yr respectively. While the yield rates of maize, barley and millet have remained static at about 1.8, 1.0 and 1.1 mt/ha/yr respectively.

The negative trend of paddy yield ranges from 100 kg/ha/decade in the inner Terai regions to over 500 kg/ha/decade in the Far Western hilly regions of Nepal. The yield of maize also shows negative trend in the mountainous and hilly regions, and its decreasing trend is more than 300 kg/ha/decade. This indicates pronounced land degradation in most of the parts of the mountains and hills of Nepal. All these have contributed to desert-like conditions.

In order to address these concerns, a number of policies have been formulated and implemented with the long-term objectives of promoting sustainable use of resources to alleviate poverty and bring different stakeholders into the mainstream of sustainable development. The national development policy and strategy is clearly directed to increase the participation of the private sector, particularly in the development of water resources, and promotion of tourism. The strategy also emphasises the integration of the agriculture and forestry sector, and acceleration of industrialisation process based on comparative and competitive advantages of agriculture, water resources, industry, tourism and transport sectors. Furthermore, the strategic approach is to attain high economic growth, promote poverty alleviation-oriented development process, ensure equitable sharing of benefits and further promote environmentally sound and sustainable development.

1.4 The Convention and the UNCCD

Nepal has joined the international environmental movement as a Party to sixteen Conventions including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. These three Conventions have a clear inter-linkage. They focus on natural resource management as steady change in climatic behavior will have multi-fold impacts on biodiversity and land resources.

Nepal is experiencing climate change in some areas. The temperature rise will affect the mountain farming system, biodiversity and other categories of land. It will also accelerate land degradation process, and this will probably increase the desert-like areas. In view of existing land degradation process, climate change phenomenon, pressure on natural resources and biodiversity, it is likely that Nepal will be greatly influenced by the desertification process.

Nepal participated in the preparation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and signed this Convention on 12 October 1995 after its adoption in June 1994. Based on the decision of the House of Representatives to be a Party to this Convention on 10 September 1996, Nepal deposited its instrument of ratification in October 1996, and this Convention has entered into force in Nepal since 13 January 1997. The provisions of this Convention have become part of the national law as Section 9 of the *Nepal Treaty Act, 1990* provides that the provisions of the treaties ratified, accessed, accepted or approved by the parliament shall be treated as the prevailing law. Furthermore, the Act also provides that the purpose of the treatise, in case, any provision as mentioned in the prevailing laws is inconsistent with the provision of the treaty, it shall, *ipso facto*, be void to the extent of such inconsistencies, and the provisions of the treaty shall prevail.

Nepal has recognized the problems of land degradation and desertification process since the early 1970s, and various activities relevant to this Convention have been implemented by different agencies. After the establishment of the Ministry of Population and Environment in 1995, it has been coordinating the process of Convention implementation.

1.5 The National Report

This national report has been prepared in accordance with decision 11 of the First Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP1) to UNCCD. The format of the report follows the procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation of the Convention as per the decision of the COP1 and the UNCCD National Reports Help Guide [ICCD/COP(3)Info. 3].

Chapter one describes the physical conditions, problems, causes and consequences of land degradation in Nepal. Chapter two highlights strategies and priorities as included in the sustainable development plans and policies. The institutional and legal measures are briefly described in chapter three and participatory process for NAP preparation in chapter four. Likewise, chapter five documents the consultative process in support for the preparation of NAP. Chapter six illustrates the measures taken by Nepal in implementing the Convention. Financial allocation has been described in chapter seven, and review of benchmarks and indicators is presented in chapter eight.

Chapter Two

Sustainable Development Plans and Priorities

Nepal has a long-term vision of involving stakeholders and partners in natural resource management to alleviate poverty, in the spirit of the Convention, by integrating relevant sectors at the implementation level.

2.1 National Development Plans

In Nepal, development planning exercise began in mid-fifties with the launching of the First Five Year Plan in 1956. The national plans focused, among others, on the utilization of natural resources and conservation of biological species in protected areas until the mid-1970s. The Fifth Plan (1975-'80) included land use policy by emphasizing livestock development in the Mountains, horticulture in the Hills, and agriculture and forestry in the Terai. In the early 1970s, Nepal recognized the problem of land degradation and enunciated policies related to land and water conservation. In mid-1980s, Nepal further stressed the need for halting the expansion of desert-like conditions in the mountains and launched massive afforestation program and soil and watershed management activities to convert the marginal land into forest areas with people's participation. Since then, the concept of land management, sustainable resource use and integration of environmental assessment studies in major infrastructure projects was internalized in development planning and implementation process. This was further emphasized while formulating the plans after the reinstatement of democracy in Nepal in 1990. The Eighth Plan (1992-'97) re-emphasized the need for launching separate programs for the conservation of the Siwalik zone - a geologically fragile and ecologically most sensitive part of the country. Although, His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) planned to provide soil conservation services in 39 districts (out of 75 districts) of Nepal, 55 districts received this service within the plan period. The concept of sustainable development and need for its integration of relevant sectors was mooted in the early 1990s.

The current Ninth Plan (1997-2002) has the single objective of poverty alleviation which also recognizes the importance of soil and water conservation. The Plan, as a whole, has prioritized five areas. They are: agriculture and forestry; water resources; human resources and social development; industrialization, tourism development and international trade; and infrastructure development. The Plan has re-emphasized environment and natural resource management, land management, and forest development with a view to achieve sustainability in resource conservation and utilization.

The Plan recognizes poverty and unmet needs of the people as a challenge for environmental management and sustainable development (Annex 4). The Plan also recognizes the need for the establishment of a data and information bank. It focuses, *inter alia*, on:

- enhancing community participation for resource management and partnership building;
- continuing public awareness and environmental education programs to encourage participation of disadvantaged people and women;
- promoting participatory environmental assessment system, and environmental management in the remote areas;
- effectively mobilizing environment protection fund;
- reviewing legal and procedural arrangement for the implementation of conventions ratified or accessed;
- formulating and implementing land use plan through institutional strengthening;
- promoting agroforestry activities in sloppy areas, erosion-prone and environmentally sensitive marginal land;
- regulating dual land ownership and promoting land productivity; and
- expanding community forestry and leasehold forestry programs, promote income generation activities in protected areas, establishing and operating the national forestry fund and providing soil and water conservation services throughout the country.

Sectoral policies also focus on the management of environmental components such as raising perennial crops in slopes and environmentally sensitive areas; assisting local bodies for the

conservation and sustainable use of natural resources; and involving private sector to utilize wastes as a resource.

The current plan (1997-2002) emphasizes poverty alleviation in order to bring it down the ratio of people living below poverty line from 42 to 32 per cent by introducing income generating activities in related programs. Policies, strategies and programs have been designed to meet this target. The Plan has accorded high priority to the agriculture and forestry sectors. The Plan calls for implementing soil and water conservation programs at a massive scale, and protect the Churiya range, the ecologically vulnerable area of the country, through participatory integrated approach, and ecosystem-based management.

2.1.1 National Conservation Strategy

Nepal prepared and started the implementation of the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) in 1988. The NCS provides guidelines for the rational use, protection, preservation and restoration of land, forest and water to ensure productivity on a sustainable basis, and maintenance of the quality of essential ecological and life support systems. The NCS has proposed vanguard programs for mountain, hills, inner Terai and the Terai ecological regions by focusing on forest management, watershed conservation, agricultural development, integrated livestock and pasture management, water source protection, horticulture development, agroforestry promotion, community biogas development, riverbank stabilization and by launching of conservation education at a massive scale. The NCS has further emphasized pasture management through preferred fodder tree and grass plantation. Further, it recognizes the role of women in natural resource management.

Several policies and programs have been elaborated to implement NCS priority programs. Environmental planning and impact assessment guidelines have been developed and implemented, and a biodiversity database has been created. Environmental education packages have been developed and HMG/N has launched environmental education as a separate course up to secondary level of formal education and has integrated it with selected areas of non-formal education programs such as tourism training, training of government officials and women training programs.

2.1.2 Master Plan for the Forestry Sector

Nepal prepared the Master Plan for Forestry Sector (MPFS) in 1988 with the assistance of the government of Finland and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The MPFS is under implementation to meet the objectives of basic needs of the people for forest products and food production through establishing an inter-relationship between forestry and farming system. The Master Plan aims to protect land against degradation by soil erosion, floods, landslides, desertification and other effects of ecological imbalance, conserve ecosystems and genetic resources, promote sustainable use of non-timber forest products, and contribute to the growth of local and national economies by managing forest, developing forest-based industries and creating opportunities for income generation and employment.

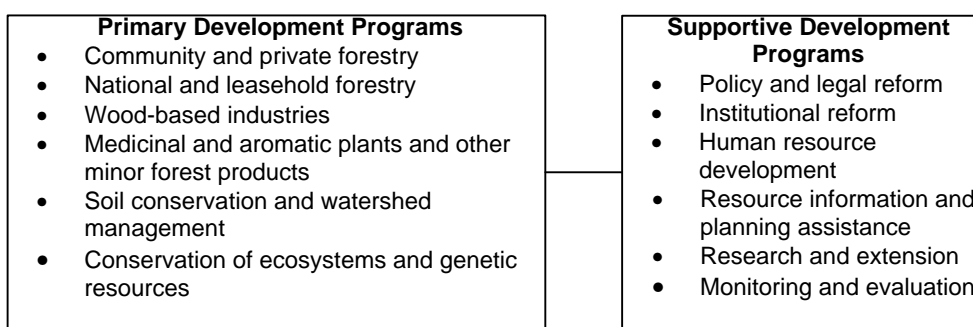
The Plan (21 years) has clearly identified six primary development programs and six supportive development programs. Soil conservation and watershed management is one of the major components of the Plan. The Plan also emphasizes to halt further degradation of the land system and desertification process. In the process of implementing the Master Plan, HMG/N reformed the forestry institution in 1993 and 1997, promulgated the *Forest Act, 1992* and *Forest Rules, 1995* to empower the community users for forest management. HMG/N also amended the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973* in 1993 by incorporating the provisions of buffer zone management, and allocating 30 to 50 per cent of the total revenue generated in the protected areas for community development. Soil conservation and watershed management services have been extended to over

Policy Target

According to the Ninth Plan, it is expected that the soil and water conservation facilities will be provided by the year 2002, to all over the country; community integrated watershed management plan will be prepared and implemented in 100 sub-watersheds. It is also planned to institutionalize productivity maintenance, land use, extension, education and demonstration programs in 75 sub-watersheds. Each district will be treated as a unit of integrated watershed management. It is also aimed at increasing land productivity to alleviate poverty at the sub-watershed level, and in transferring appropriate technologies at local level. In addition, afforestation activity will be launched to cover 30,000 ha and over 7,500 forestry user groups will be formed to hand over State-managed forests to such groups within 2002. A Participatory Watershed Management Training Centre has also been planned to establish for strengthening participatory approaches and developing human resources at the local level.

two-thirds of the administrative districts to effectively implement preventive and rehabilitative soil conservation measures. The Plan has emphasized on-farm conservation, forest development and management, shrubland and grassland management and settlement site services such as community water source protection, greenbelt development etc. as primary preventive measures for minimizing land degradation problems. Equal emphasis has been accorded to landslide treatment, degraded land management, roadside stabilization, trail improvement etc. as rehabilitative measures. In this context, conservation education and extension programs have been an integral part of program implementation with a view to creating public awareness and bringing the local people into the mainstream of natural resource management.

MPFS Programs



2.1.3 Environmental Policy and Action Plan

Nepal has also prepared Environmental Policy and Action Plan (NEPAP) in 1993 with the objectives of managing effectively and sustainably natural and physical resources, balancing development efforts and environment conservation to fulfill the basic needs of the people, mitigating adverse environmental impacts of development projects, and integrating environment and development through appropriate institutions, adequate legislation and economic incentives. NEPAP outlines a number of activities to improve soil fertility by increasing supplies of farmyard manure and reducing the stock density of livestock on arable land. It calls for improving forest management by continuing community forestry schemes, improving rangelands, and implementing efficient and cost-effective structural techniques for watershed protection with a view to reduce soil erosion and downstream sedimentation. The plan also provides a basis for expanding alternative energy use to reduce dependence on biomass sources.

2.1.4 Agricultural Perspective Plan

The Agricultural Perspective Plan (APP) was prepared in 1995, and its implementation started in 1997. The APP is designed to accelerate agricultural growth rate from about 3 per cent to 5 per cent per annum and achieve a six-fold increase in the growth of agricultural output per capita from the current insignificant growth rate of 0.5 per cent to a rapid 3 per cent. The APP calls for reverting the ecologically fragile land to forestry and other forms of tree cover such as fruit trees and fodder crops and thereby increase the green cover. It also calls for land tenure reform, and enactment and enforcement of the land reform legislation.

APP has projected that the rural poor will decline by 5.5 million, and its proportion will be only one-quarter of the present during the twenty-year period of the Plan. The Plan also places due emphasis on soil fertility, the role of inorganic fertilizer, integrated pest management, integrated plant nutrient and farming systems for sustainable development of agriculture and associated sectors.

2.1.5 National Agenda 21

In 1999, Nepal drafted a National Agenda 21 in order to mainstream environmental aspects in the development process. The Agenda 21 emphasizes the need for integrating poverty alleviation issues in the mainstream of social and economic development process by generating employment opportunities, enhancing human resource development, reforming land tenure system, and accelerating forest and soil conservation and infrastructure development programs. It further emphasizes the need for making the poverty alleviation fund effective and institutionalizing a geographical information system for data generation and planning.

The Agenda 21 recognizes the problems of desert-like conditions, particularly due to land degradation process, and calls for adopting and/or strengthening information sharing, launching afforestation and soil conservation activities, and expanding conservation areas (protected areas) in the representative ecological zones. It also calls for implementing integrated resource management programs in the ecologically sensitive areas, integrating desertification combating policies in the national development plans, developing an early warning system, expanding watershed conservation activities with people's participation and continuing forest management through community users' participation. The program of action also proposes to minimize gender imbalances right from planning to implementation and monitoring of land improvement and desertification control activities. Similarly, the National Agenda 21 highlights the importance of conserving biodiversity and mountain ecosystem, introducing biotechnologies, regulating the disposal of hazardous wastes in the land and water system, and strengthening the roles of women, youth, indigenous people, NGOs and CBOs and individual farmers in natural resource management.

2.1.6 Other Plans and Policies

Nepal also prepared a five-year National Plan of Action (1996-2000) for UN Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II). The Plan identifies issues, defines objectives and outlines a number of activities on shelter, urban poverty and job creation, urban planning and development, urban environmental management, disaster management, local governance and participation, and conservation of cultural heritage. The Plan, *inter alia*, emphasizes the need for increasing agricultural productivity to improve hill economy by maintaining and/or improving soil fertility, cultivating high value crops, and promoting environment-friendly off-farm activities through adequate incentives to the private sector. It further emphasizes the need for promoting intensive farming, increasing the coverage of credit programs, and launching land development programs by providing necessary services with a view to improve the urban environmental quality. The Plan further emphasizes the need for regulating the conversion of prime farmland to other purposes, building public-private partnership, institutional strengthening, and human resource development for land management in the urban areas. The plan of action is under implementation through coordinated efforts.

In 1992, Nepal prepared the national report for UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) with the emphasis on adopting strategies for population control, land use management, biodiversity conservation, energy development, and pollution control. It was realized that the strategic thrust in environment management in Nepal must aim at poverty alleviation while promoting economic development activities. This strategy has been integrated in the natural resource management and economic development processes.

After the reinstatement of democracy in 1990, various sectors have formulated and implemented long-term sectoral policies which are likely to affect and improve the environment quality.

The *Forestry Sector Policy, 1991* emphasizes the need for empowering local people in the management and sustainable use of forest resources. It also emphasizes multiple utilization of land through integrated farming and soil conservation measures. The *Hydropower Development Policy, 1992* emphasizes the use of electricity to minimize fuelwood consumption, and minimize adverse environmental impacts during hydroelectricity development. The *Irrigation Policy* in 1993 (amendment 1997) promotes sustainable irrigation system by integrating environmental aspects in the design and implementation of irrigation projects and programs based on the recommendations of the EIA studies and mobilization of Water Users Associations. The *Industrial Policy, 1992* also reiterates the mitigation of adverse environmental impacts during the establishment, expansion and diversification of industries and regulate waste disposal in land and water system. The *Tourism Policy, 1995* also

reiterates the implementation of environment conservation programs in an effective and integrated manner for sustainable tourism development.

In order to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), HMG/N has drafted the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) with the objectives of framing a systematic and strategic approach to biodiversity protection, identifying needs and priority actions and constraints upon recognizing existing initiatives and responsibilities for biodiversity conservation. In order to meet these objectives, a number of priority programs have been proposed in the areas of agriculture, community forests, livestock genetics, rangeland, wetland, non-timber forest products, protected areas and special areas including programs for the conservation of unprotected forest having high biodiversity. The Plan has equally addressed the intellectual property rights, natural resource accounting and economic evaluation of biodiversity under the special areas. NBAP further proposes programs to address cross-sectoral issues on biodiversity. It is hoped that the implementation of the proposed programs through stakeholder participation will ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the spirit of the Biodiversity Convention, and it will also have positive impacts on soil and water conservation and poverty alleviation.

The Energy Perspective Plan has established a linkage between the process of land degradation and energy consumption pattern, particularly the biomass fuel. This plan emphasizes the need for switching over the use of biomass fuel to clean energy which is likely to contribute to increase the green cover and minimize the loss of nutrient rich soil.

Since 1960s, Nepal has recognised the problems of soil erosion, landslides and fertility decline in the mountains, and sedimentation and flood in plain areas. The policy focus are on proper landuse, rehabilitation of degraded areas and improvement of water yield. Policies are also formulated to maintain a link and network related sectors such as forestry, agriculture, livestock, water and land resources to combat the problems of land degradation and increase agricultural production. Recently, policy directives have also been issued to enact legislation, and develop procedures for the implementation of the Conventions to which Nepal is a Party, including the UNCCD.

These plans and policies have been formulated through extensive consultation among stakeholders at different levels. Several consultation meetings were carried out in different ecological zones and administrative districts during the preparation of the National Conservation Strategy, the Master Plan for Forestry Sector and the Agricultural Perspective Plan. Consultation is also ensured during the preparation of the five years national development plan which is finally discussed in the National Development Committee that comprises people's representatives, social workers, NGO representatives, and government bodies.

2.2 Strategies and Priorities

Although Nepal has yet to develop a separate policy and program for the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in a comprehensive manner, some policies which relate to soil and water conservation and forest emphasize public awareness and facilitate people's participation, including that of women and youth to minimize the land degradation process. In order to halt further degradation of the land and water system, the following strategies have been formulated giving high priority to enhance land improvement and water conservation activities. They are:

- Increase investment in irrigation, roads and power, technology, and fertilizer;
- Formulate and implement public policy to relocate public resources for private sector and reorient public institutions to complement private sector investment;
- Consolidate highly fragmented land holdings in the Terai and reform land tenure;
- Update appraisal of soil erosion and land degradation situation and prioritize watershed management on the basis of severity of their situations and socio-economic conditions, and launch integrated natural resource management programs at sub-watersheds (15 to 25 km² area);
- Involve people, NGOs and CBOs in soil and water management, and environmental programs, and transfer technologies and expertise through an effective program of education, extension, communication and demonstration;
- Set-up a system of regular monitoring and evaluation of development activities;
- Assess the impact of physical development programs on the environment;

- Enhance hand-over of State-managed forests to community forestry user groups, and promote leasehold forestry programs for the low income group of people;
- Integrate soil conservation and watershed management programs in large scale hydro-electricity and irrigation projects, and infrastructure development programs;
- Protect the Siwaliks by implementing soil conservation and watershed management activities; and promote agroforestry, soil and water conservation in the hills with people's participation;
- Launch income and employment generation programs in areas facing economic and social disparity through infrastructure development, human resource development and public awareness program for resource management and sustainable use; and
- Provide credit facility to disadvantaged group of people, and empower women through training and subsidy for self-employment.

Within the framework of these strategies, programs have been developed and implemented through consultation with the local people at different levels. For example, the Village Development Committees which comprise elected representatives discuss, in the village assembly, the priority programs. The identified programs are further discussed in the District Assembly with the representatives of local bodies and district level government organizations. The programs are further discussed at the central level and finally at the National Planning Commission to link it with national development plan and the Ministry of Finance for budget allocation. The government-approved programs are presented in the Parliament for approval before implementation. The implementing agency further discusses with the target people for program elaboration during the implementation stage.

Most of the strategies have continued for the last two decades. Since last five years, the land and water conservation strategies have had a problem-solving nature, and they have been implemented with people's participation. People have been the integral part of program planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. These plans and policies are multi-sectoral in nature and they open avenues for improving land productivity through soil and water conservation, forest management, and poverty alleviation programs.

Although Nepal has yet to develop a separate National Action Program (NAP) in the spirit of the Convention, the existing policies and programs include contents of the NAP aimed for resource management and poverty alleviation. Implementation of these policies and programs clearly indicate that people-centred activities are successful and emphasis has to be given to enhance people's participation in all sectors of community development and natural resource management.

2.3 Pre-UNCCD Programs on Desertification

Nepal realized the problems of land degradation in different landforms in the late 1960s and integrated policies and programs for the reclamation of degraded lands. In 1985, there was a specific mention on the problems of desertification and desert-like conditions in selected areas. In order to halt the process of desertification, HMG/N formulated a policy to discourage the cultivation of marginal land and encourage people in agro- and forest-based industries and convert the marginal land into forest and grazing fields. Equal priority was accorded to afforest steep slopes, adopt scientific techniques to protect soil from cultivation on the slopes exceeding 30 per cent gradient and encourage commercial crops which do not disturb the soil condition. Furthermore, Nepal has designated about 16 per cent of the total area under protected area system in order to ensure biodiversity and landscape conservation.

In 1992, HMG/N further elaborated the policies and enlisted activities to identify desert areas and experiencing desert-like conditions through survey and formulated and implemented plans and programs to rehabilitate such land.

Conservation of forest, soil and water has been part of the Nepalese culture. Local people are involved, traditionally, in managing resources and sharing benefits. Community leaders engage themselves in uniting the local people to educate them on the importance of natural resources, and in taking the lead role in its management. Local people themselves decide on implementing activities and developing ways and means for resource allocation and benefit sharing. This system has now been expanded through out the country and across different sectors through the concept of community users' groups.

Chapter Three Institutional and Legal Measures

3.1 National Coordinating Body

The Ministry of Population and Environment is the National Coordinating Body (NCB) and acts as the national and international focal point on environment matters. The Ministry implements environmental activities, including the Conventions and promotes the integration of environmental aspects in the development plans and programs. The Ministry is also a monitorer, facilitator and coordinator at the national level in the field of environment. The Ministry is responsible for:

1. Formulation and implementation of policies, plans and programs;
2. Preparation of Acts, Regulations and Guidelines;
3. Conducting surveys, studies and research;
4. Dissemination of information and launching publicity programs,
5. Carrying out of monitoring and evaluation programs;
6. Development of human resources; and
7. Acting as the national and international focal point in the domain of environment.

The Ministry has been the implementing agency for the Environment Protection Act, 1996 and the Environment Protection Rules, 1997 since June 1997. The legislation gives a number of environmental responsibilities to MOPE. The legislation has, *inter alia*, authorized and obliged MOPE to be responsible for :

1. Institutionalization of the EIA system in development projects and programs;
2. Mitigation and control of pollution including provisions for providing additional incentives;
3. Conservation of national heritage (natural and cultural heritage);
4. Maintenance of environment conservation areas; and
5. Operation of an Environment Protection Fund.

MOPE is also the Focal Point for the implementation of the UNCCD, and it coordinates activities related to combating desertification in Nepal. Furthermore, HMG/N has constituted the Environment Protection Council (EPC) under the chairmanship of the Right Hon'ble Prime Minister in 1992. This Council was re-constituted in 1998 in accordance with the provision of the Environment Protection Act, 1996. EPC represents different line agencies and independent experts. The Council provides policy guidance and advice to the government and oversees activities and actions on environmental matters. MOPE functions as the Secretariat of the Council.

Several organizations are involved in program implementation related to land and natural resource management. For example, the Ministry of Land Reform and Management is required to prepare and implement policies and plans for land reform and management, and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation for forest management and sustainable use, and promotion and conservation of forests and watersheds. HMG/N has given due consideration to implement the Convention by strengthening existing institutions. HMG/N has also established functional relationship with NGOs and CBOs as partners for the implementation of natural resource management programs in the spirit of the Convention.

3.1.1 Legal Status

MOPE was established in September 1995 through a cabinet decision. It has legal authority and also enforces EPA, 1996 and EPR, 1997. MOPE has its legal personality and it operates within the budgetary provisions approved by the government. On the other hand, EPC has also the legal backup since 1998 as an advisory body.

3.1.2 Intersectoral and Multidisciplinary Characteristics

MOPE has a mutli-disciplinary staff with background in the field of engineering, forestry, chemistry, agriculture, legislation and management. The Ministry is strengthening its capacity to deal with environmental aspects. Currently, the Ministry has slightly over 40 officials trained in different

disciplines, including natural resource sector. The Ministry is legally mandated to form committees to deal with specific issues of environment, and some technical committees have also been formed. For example, MOPE has established the EIA Report Suggestion Committee to seek comments and opinions on technical matters of the EIA report.

On the other hand, the Environment Protection Council represents ministries and other government agencies from different sectors. Professional institutions and government nominated experts are also represented in the Council. The nominees, although independent, represent NGOs, CBOs, academic and professional organizations.

3.1.3 Composition and Mode of Operation

MOPE implements environmental activities by following an annual work plan and timetable. The activities are approved by the government on annual basis with allocation of necessary budget for each activity. It has the in-house mechanism for supervision, control and evaluation for each work. As mentioned earlier, it also forms committees to ensure intersectoral consultation as and when necessary.

As described earlier, EPC comprises Cabinet Ministers of relevant sectors, high level representatives of different institutions and experts. At present, nine independent experts are nominated, and they represent the field of microbiology, ornithology, environment, environmental journalism, law, zoology, and botany. The national level political parties are also represented in the Council. The private sector is represented by the chairperson of the Federation of the Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), and academic institutions by the Vice - Chancellors of universities. The local bodies are represented by the chairpersons of their federations (Annex 5).

The Council meets as and when necessary. Each decision is minuted and its Secretariat, MOPE, implements them in collaboration with line agencies, NGOs and CBOs, and the private sector.

3.1.4 Status of Information and Data

MOPE has established the satellite-based MERCURE system for information sharing with the assistance of UNEP-EAP and ICIMOD. This has provided access to the Internet and websites. Under the MERCURE system, internal networking has been maintained and inter-agency networking has been planned for information sharing. MOPE has also realized the need for a creating database, and it has yet to host a website for sharing information at the local, national, sub-regional, regional and international level on land degradation and desertification. Although database creation and website developments are recent activities in Nepal, MOPE is planning to design a website to ensure information flow.

The Departments of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, Forests, and Agriculture have generated information relevant to the Convention. The Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) have also generated a lot of information relevant for the preparation of the National Action Program under the Convention. ICIMOD has developed a website on mountain ecosystem.

3.2 Institutional Framework for Coherent and Functional Desertification Control

3.2.1 Measures adopted to adjust or strengthen the institutional framework

In view of the existing environmental problems, functions and responsibilities and its capacity, multi-sectoral nature of the environment, national and international obligations on environmental matters, difficulty in organizing meetings of the Environment Protection Council frequently, MOPE is in the process of establishing a Steering Committee (SC) to look after the environment-related Conventions to which Nepal is a Party. This SC will be chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Population and Environment with representation from different line agencies, NGO and private organizations relevant to the Conventions. The SC will strengthen linkages for CCD implementation process. The SC will further strengthen the implementation of the Conventions, particularly the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD through a coordinated approach.

On the other hand, HMG/N has continued its efforts to strengthen NGOs and CBOs in the field of natural resource management. The Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs), Community Soil Conservation User Groups (CSCUGs), Buffer Zone Management User Groups (BZMUGs) and Water Users Associations (WUAs) have been encouraged to discuss the issues of land degradation in rural areas and implement forest management, soil and water conservation programs and natural resource management all over the country, including buffer zone areas. In addition, the Federations of the Community Forestry Users and Water Users Associations would provide extension services in the NAP process to let the people know about the importance of land improvement at the community level. The former federation has so far branch offices in over 60 districts of Nepal.

3.2.2 Measures adopted to strengthen existing institutions at local and national levels

At the national level, the Ministry of Population and Environment is coordinating the activities related to the Convention, and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, and the Ministry of Agriculture are actively involved in implementing land-based natural resource management programs. Existing organizations perform the tasks of encouraging the local level institutions to work on land improvement programs and the government organizations play catalytic roles.

The district offices of soil conservation, forest and agriculture are the primary organizations for providing technical assistance to NGOs and CBOs and other local level institutions. The District Soil Conservation Offices implement soil conservation and watershed management activities. With regard to forest management, the District Forest Offices have been very active all over the country to manage the State-owned forest and hand-over parts of the national forests to the community forestry user groups. In selected protected areas, BZMUGs have been formed under the Park and People Project implemented since 1994 with the assistance of UNDP. The Department of Agriculture is providing technical and extension services to increase agricultural production. Similarly, the Department of Irrigation is providing training to WUAs for the operation and maintenance of the irrigation schemes. These institutions are continuously playing an active role to impart information and provide technical services to local people in undertaking natural resource management, including land and water system relevant to the Convention.

The community users groups, and non-governmental organizations will be continuously strengthened in due course of time to meet the objectives of the Convention through policy and legal measures. In addition, local NGOs and CBOs which may use the Environment Protection Fund, administered by MOPE and the fund disbursed by the Social Welfare Council can be instrumental in making the people aware of the importance of conservation of land and water systems, and in implementing natural resources management programs. Efforts are underway to optimize the use of these funding mechanisms to strengthen local partners for resource management.

3.3 NAP as Part of the National Economic and Social Development Plan

3.3.1 Making the NAP coherent with other environmental strategic and planning frameworks

Land degradation issues have repeatedly been discussed in national and local fora, and extensive consultations have been made during the preparation of the national development plans including MPFS and NCS in the mid-1980s. Implementation of these plans is on-going at the field level. In view of the fact that natural resource conservation programs do not provide immediate return, income generation activities have been integrated as an integral part of the soil conservation activities. Various aspects of land degradation, desert-like conditions and land improvement were also discussed during the national seminar organized in 1997 with the financial assistance of the UNCCD Secretariat and MOPE/SACEP seminar on Environment Law and Policy in 1999. These have contributed a lot to identify priority programs for the NAP.

The principle of UNCCD, particularly the participation, bottom-up approach and partnership arrangement has been duly considered in the recent undertakings during the formulation of environmental policies and strategies in Nepal. Process development in empowering the user groups can be considered as an entry point for consultation and partnership arrangement for natural resource management. Full appreciation of the traditional resource users and acknowledgment of their effective participation is also the backbone of new policies and programs designed for natural resource management in Nepal.

MOPE is currently reviewing and analyzing the existing environment-related plans and policies to identify the coverage of land degradation and land management issues in the existing plans and policies. The preliminary assessment indicates that existing plans and policies related to soil conservation, watershed and forest management and poverty alleviation contain several policies and strategies to empower the local people in resource management. This assessment will help to make the NAP process coherent with existing environmental policies, strategies and plans.

3.3.2 Linkages of NAP with national, intra-regional and local approaches

Problems of land degradation and its social and economic consequences have been reflected in the national plans and programs which are developed for every 5 years. There is an established practice of linking natural resource management issues in program formulation, approval and implementation of sectors relevant to the Convention.

The NAP formulation process will further open avenues to integrate further the land and water conservation issues into national social and economic planning processes. This will also open avenues to integrate the NAP priorities with local level programs with a view to enhance natural resources management in the country.

3.3.3 Linkages of NAP with Sub-Regional and Regional Action Programs

The Plan of Action developed by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), South Asia Cooperative Environment Program (SACEP) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) to which Nepal is an active member are also geared towards addressing the sub-regional land degradation issues. SAARC has developed its Vision Beyond the Year 2000 which emphasizes the need for regular meetings at high political and technical levels to generate necessary political commitment and to accelerate mobilization of resources for addressing environmental problems. It further emphasizes the need for enhancing environmental awareness across the region and mainstreaming environmental concerns in policy-making processes. The SAARC Environment Ministers meet annually to discuss regional environmental issues and make necessary decisions for the conservation of environment individually and/or jointly. The SAARC Plan of Action focuses on the assessment of environmental problems, development of national plans and programs and their incorporation into regional level, legal efforts to sustain the efforts at protection and preservation of the environment. Also the State of the Environment (SOE) Report prepared as a part of SAARC initiatives includes issues of land degradation and desertification and efforts made to address these concerns. Furthermore, Nepal has joined the SAARC Food Security Reserve established to store wheat or rice or a combination thereof, for utilization in the event of an emergency.

SACEP has recently conducted a study on land-based pollution, and ICIMOD is actively involved in identifying environmental problems and encouraging the member countries to implement environment-friendly and land improvement activities in the mountainous regions. As a member of these sub-regional organizations, Nepal has conveyed the land degradation issue to the sub-regional level, and this issue will be raised in future meetings as well.

Once the NAP is developed, attempts will be made to link it with relevant sub-regional action programs, if any, and Asian Regional Action Program (RAP) in the spirit of the Convention. As a Member of the Asian Thematic Program Networks (TPNs), information sharing will be a key in linking Nepal's efforts on land improvement and water conservation activities in the region. It is hoped that the TPN concept will further strengthen information sharing, technology transfer and human resources development to combat the process of desertification in the mountains as well.

3.3.4 Government's Agreement

The priority issues for NAP have been identified, and NAP formulation process has started in view of the need for mainstreaming land management activities in the development planning and administration and in meeting the obligations as a Party to the Convention. As the review process is on-going, it is expected that NAP will be finalized and adopted in near future. Although HMG has allocated funds for the collection of necessary information for the NAP, its resources will limit extensive consultation in the NAP process.

3.4 Coherent and Functional Legal and Regulatory Framework

3.4.1 Assessment of the analysis of the legislation on environment and related fields

Since the early 1960s, HMG/N has enacted and enforced several legislation for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, particularly the forest, land and water. Legal issues pertaining to the implementation of the CCD are contained in sectoral legislation. Most of the Acts enacted or amended after the reinstatement of democracy in 1990 include provisions on environmental management and people's empowerment for natural resource conservation which are directly or indirectly related to CCD. However, some legislation is yet to be amended in the spirit of the Convention, and this will be given due consideration during the amendment of the existing legislation and enactment of the new ones.

The **Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990** clearly mentions the need for conserving the environment. The Directive Principle states that "*The State shall give priority to the protection of the environment of the country and also prevent damage due to physical development activities by making people conscious of the environmental cleanliness, and by making special arrangements for the protection of rare animal species, forest and vegetation*". Almost all Acts enacted or amended after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 include provisions to frame and implement rules and guidelines on the environment.

In a process for internalizing the integration of environmental aspects in development proposals, HMG/N has enforced the Environment Protection Act (EPA) 1996 and the Environment Protection Rules (EPR) 1997 since June 1997. The Act clearly provides a basis for maintaining and improving environmental quality in the country. There are also other legislations which relate to the conservation of natural resources, including land use regulation and people's empowerment.

HMG/N has also implemented the National EIA Guideline since July 1993 and separate EIA Guidelines for Forestry and Industry Sectors since 1995 to integrate environmental aspects in development planning and administration. The line agencies are implementing these legal measures and guidelines to identify likely impacts of development projects and programs and to halt further degradation of and minimize pollution load in the land and water systems.

3.4.2 Measures to adapt current legislation or introduce new legislation

Several legislations have been reviewed with regard to the adequacy of legal provisions for the implementation of the Convention and status of enforcement in recent years. Gaps in legal measures have been identified through interaction and consultative processes. Most of the legislation such as forest, wildlife conservation and environment conservation are forward looking and open avenues for public participation and people's empowerment in natural resource management and its sustainable utilization. These legal provisions have been enforced extensively to seek the participation of the local people. This effort will help in identifying the gaps and process for amendment or enact a separate legislation to handle issues related to land management and water conservation.

Important Legislation on Environmental Management

- 1 The *Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990* focuses on the conservation of environment and biodiversity and emphasizes economic progress of the people by raising agricultural productivity, *inter alia*, land reform programs.
- 2 The Muluki Ain (Act) empowers people to construct irrigation system from any area, cultivated or barren land, with a view to irrigate land.
- 3 The *Aquatic Life Protection Act, 1961* regulates effects on aquatic life.
- 4 The *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973* provides opportunities for expanding wildlife conservation activities in designated protected areas (PAs), allocate 30 to 50 per cent of the total revenue generated in PAs for community development, and opens avenues for people's participation in biodiversity conservation.
- 5 The *Tourism Act, 1978* prohibits waste disposal in the trekking and mountaineering routes.
- 6 The *King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) Act, 1982* empowers a national NGO, the KMTNC, to implement nature conservation activities in designated areas.
- 7 The *Soil and Watershed Conservation Act, 1982* empowers HMG/N to regulate land use in designated watershed areas.
- 8 The *Solid Waste (Management and Resource Mobilization) Act, 1987* contains several provisions to regulate waste disposal in land and water bodies.
- 9 The *Pesticide Act, 1991* regulates the use of pesticides in farmland.
- 10 The *Industrial Enterprises Act, 1992* discourages the disposal of solid wastes and discharge of untreated industrial effluents in water bodies and land system.
- 11 The *Water Resources Act, 1992* stipulates that the use of water resources should be made without adversely affecting the environment from soil erosion, landslide, flood or other means.
- 12 The *Electricity Act, 1992* contains provisions to avoid and/or minimize adverse impacts upon the environment from soil erosion, landslide and flood or other means while producing, transmitting and distributing the electricity.
- 13 The *Forest Act, 1992* empowers HMG/N to hand over parts of State-managed forest to community user groups, private sector and develop leasehold forests. It obliges the community forestry users to invest 25 per cent of their income on forest management.
- 14 The *Environment Protection Act, 1996* contains several provisions to institutionalize environmental assessment system in development projects and programs, control pollution, maintain environment conservation area, administer environment protection fund, establish Environment Protection Council etc. The EPR obliges the proponent to make public notice before the preparation of the Scoping Report as a part of EIA process and MOPE should make the EIA report public before approval which provides opportunities for public review.
- 14 The *Local Self Governance Act, 1999* empowers the local bodies to integrate soil conservation and land improvement programs as part of development initiatives in the rural areas.

While amending the existing legislation, efforts are made to include provisions for the conservation of soil and water with people's participation and benefit sharing concept. For example, the Forest Act, 1992 (amendment 1998) contains provisions to invest 25 per cent of the total earnings from community forests in forest management. About 30 to 50 per cent of the total revenue collected in the protected areas network should be allocated for community development in accordance with the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973 (amendment 1993). The irrigation policy encourages WUAs to share the project cost at least 10 per cent in the Terai and 5 per cent in the Hill irrigation projects which shall be developed, operated and maintained by the community users. The Buffer Zone Management Rules, 1996 and the Conservation Area Management Rules, 1996, in particular, encourage local people in managing and utilizing natural resources sustainably. However, the user groups can decide on the utilization of the ratio of the fund for different activities.

The Local Self Governance Act, 1999 empowers the local bodies (District Development Committees, Municipalities and Village Development Committees) to manage and use natural resources, collect revenue, generate fund and utilize them in resource management within their working areas. The Act has been enacted to institutionalize the local bodies for the mobilization of local resources, equitable sharing of benefits among all sectors of the society, enhance people's participation, develop their capacity in project formulation and implementation and institutionalize a system of local governance for sustainable development. According to the Act, the local bodies have a clear mandate to develop and implement projects and programs in the sectors of agriculture, rural drinking water, irrigation, soil

erosion and river training, forestry and environment. The Act obliges the local bodies to maintain coordination between the governmental and non-governmental organizations and donor agencies. This legal provision has further opened avenues for community involvement in natural resource management and for sharing benefits.

In course of preparing the NAP, existing legislation will be further reviewed, and gaps and the enforcement status will be identified. This review will recommend measures to ensure coherent and functional legal and regulatory framework which will engender the development of natural resource management capacity and CCD implementation.

Chapter Four

Participatory Process for Preparation and Implementation of the Action Program

4.1 Effective Participation of Actors involved in Defining NAP Priorities

The UNCCD calls for effective participation of key actors in its implementation. In the NAP process, the key actors and/or stakeholders have been identified and comprise government organizations (ministries, departments, central, regional and district level sectoral organizations etc.), NGOs working in the field of soil conservation, forestry, federation of NGOs and CBOs, private sector representatives particularly the land owners, academia, media, youth and women. Efforts are made to involve them in information sharing and consultative process in UNCCD related activities to the extent possible.

4.1.1 Methods of participation of various actors

A number of public awareness programs have been launched through governmental and non-governmental organizations. Information is collected, processed and disseminated through the media or through official channel. An approximately one hour program is aired once a week through national radio on State-managed forests and community forests, and environment management. A 15 minute agriculture program is also aired daily to provide information on soil fertility, farming technologies and other agriculture practices. Besides, occasional programs are launched on television to telecast episodes, news and spots to create public awareness on natural resource and environmental management. Ministries of Agriculture, Forests and Soil Conservation, and Population and Environment have launched these programs. MOPE has started the publication of the State of the Environment each year. About 24,000 copies of *Kalpabrikshya* (forestry related newsletter), about 30,000 copies of Tuki (population and environment related newsletter) are distributed annually which contain valuable information on natural resource management and environment conservation. These organizations also publish posters, pamphlets, news clips etc. to cater for a number of illiterates.

HMG/N has included environment course in the formal education in primary, lower secondary and secondary education throughout the country. The environment and science courses include some information on problems of land degradation and corrective measures. Universities have begun to teach Environmental Science as a separate faculty. The Institute of Forestry and the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science is involved in developing human resources to deal with the issues of natural resource management. Furthermore, the School of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development, affiliated with the Pokhara University, has been established in January 1999 with the objective of developing skilled human resources base on integrated environmental management and sustainable development through academic courses, training and research. Some organizations such as SchEMS, IUCN and NEFEJ have affiliated with MOPE for the implementation of environmental programs. It has been considered that these initiatives will likely produce knowledge-based and skill manpower on environment management in near future.

NGOs are equally involved in launching public awareness activities at the grass root level for natural resource management. Some NGOs are launching programs on environment, gender and community forestry separately every week for 15 minutes. The Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalist (NEFEJ) has also been launching a fortnightly video magazine named "Ankhihyal" since last five years to impart environment conservation messages to TV watchers. Land degradation and environmental issues are continuously telecast through documentary films. Various organizations are also airing environmental information through FM radio, based in Kathmandu. Furthermore, about 10,000 copies of wall newspaper on environment is published monthly and distributed in the rural parts of Nepal. Besides, a number of NGOs also publish and distribute newsletters and journals to let the people know about their activities on resource management. Community radio stations also broadcast information, covering issues related to land degradation and initiatives taken by the people and other organizations with the aim of improving the environmental conditions. The information reaches only some parts of the country due to limited coverage of radio and television. Although electronic media services are not accessible in all parts of the country, importance of e-mail facility has been increasingly realized to transmit the information as a fast and cost effective means.

These organizations frequently organize meetings with the press and other concerned agencies in order

to identify the modes of communication and issues to be covered. In recent years, awareness programs have also been launched to seek the opinions of the parliamentarians. Trainers training courses have also been organized occasionally in environment management and natural resource conservation.

In the process of CCD implementation, MOPE organized a two-day national seminar on *desertification and land improvement* in 1997 in collaboration with the UNCCD Secretariat. The seminar was attended by over 65 participants representing governmental, educational and research institutions, local bodies, specialized NGOs and CBOs, journalists and donor agencies. The main issues discussed in the national seminar include the identification of problems encountered in land and water resource management, development of a framework for NAP and for improving productivity of different land uses, and recognition of the roles of different stakeholders for the preparation and implementation of NAP. This seminar was instrumental in exchanging information and experiences on land degradation and desertification and effectiveness of existing policies and programs, in raising public awareness on the importance of land improvement and its contribution to food production and natural resource management, and in deriving a set of priority program areas for NAP. The seminar recommended, *inter alia*, various actions for the NAP process which are related to the identification and assessment of hot spots, implementation of farm forestry research, promotion of community forests and alternative energy and also livestock stall feeding, strengthening of integrated pest management and rehabilitation of degraded land. This seminar also recommended to formulate policies and land use legislation, strengthen institutional capacity, develop human resources, mobilize NGOs and CBOs, use mass media and strengthen information networking for public awareness raising, collect additional data etc.

Stakeholder participation is also ensured during the celebration of World Days such as environment, desertification and biodiversity as per the themes. Various actors participate in celebrating these days through public awareness programs, attending meetings, workshops and seminars. The Convention text has been translated in the national language, and environmental communication takes place in the national language.

4.1.2 Gender balance of actors involved in defining NAP priorities

The Nepalese agriculture is getting feminized, and women contribute to 55 to 82 per cent of labour in agricultural production. Realising it, women involvement has been institutionalized in natural resource management through user group mobilization approach. HMG/N has enunciated policies to empower women and other sections of the society to enhance their participation in all types of national development activities including resource management. In order to enhance their access to economic activities, saving and credit programs have been launched in selected areas and/or integrated as an integral part of community development programs. Policies have been formulated to avoid or minimize gender imbalance, and enhance women empowerment.

In recent years, women have also been encouraged to manage forests and implement soil conservation activities through women community user groups. HMG/N is furthering this process by providing additional incentives. However, gender imbalance has been noticed in land ownership, and women participation has been limited due to low level of education, traditions, practices and cultural barriers. Although women are encouraged to participate in seminars, workshops and interaction meetings, there is still a tendency among the organizations to send male participants. Efforts are underway to increase the participation of women, and some NGOs are also working to increase women participation in community development activities. The organizations where women are working will further be encouraged to organize public awareness programs and participate in the Convention matters.

4.1.3 Representation of various actors in the national priorities identification processes

In Nepal, consultation process has been started at different levels to identify issues and priorities for public awareness. Need assessments through consultants, consultation on discussion papers and collection of suggestions in issues of topical interest have been integrated into the planning process. In some cases, NGOs are also very active in raising issues for public debate and in providing suggestions for natural resource management. The draft national policies are made available for public review. This process has approached to seek the participation of various actors in national environment related policies and programs. The district level organizations involved in natural resource management and the local bodies also conduct a series of consultations with stakeholder and this process has enhanced the understanding that public consultation will lead to the successful participation of activities designed for natural resource management with people's participation. Hence, various actors and/or stakeholders participate and provide suggestions and comments on priority issues and public participation process is on-going.

4.1.4 Nature and scope of information, education and communication actions

Governmental and non-governmental organizations, research and academic institutions are involved in collecting and disseminating various types of information related to natural resources management. Soil conservation and watershed management information, particularly on the implication of soil erosion and landslides, off-farm techniques, bio-engineering aspects etc. are communicated through the mass media and official publications. Consultative workshops and seminars are frequently organized by the governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote information exchange at the national and local levels.

The national and regional workshops are organized, as and when necessary, for program selection. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, and the Ministry of Agriculture regularly organize the planning workshop to seek additional inputs from the local level organizations. Although they are not directly related to CCD implementation, the programs identified in annual planning workshops at the district and regional levels contribute to land improvement and resource management.

As indicated earlier, Nepal also celebrates World Environment Day, Desertification Day, Earth Day and Biodiversity Day including other international events to raise public awareness on the theme of each Day. At national level, the forest and soil conservation days are also celebrated to enhance public awareness. In such events, adequate attention has been given on land degradation issues with a view to mainstreaming forest and soil conservation, and soil fertility improvement in local level programs. Information is also made available through media or publication and dissemination process.

4.1.5 Extent of uptake of local concerns at the national level, and of results of national consultation at the local level

The consultation process at various levels has narrowed down the gaps in understanding the local issues, and various actors raise the issues for reflecting them in the formulation of policies and programs. In view of the nature of the problems of land degradation and natural resource depletion, the actors are effective enough to influence the decision-making process and convince policy-makers and legislative bodies for consideration. For example, introduction and understanding of the benefits of community forestry programs in the late 1970s led to expansion of the provision of empowering the community users in the early 1990s by reflecting them in the national development plan [The Eighth Plan (1992-'97) and the Ninth Plan (1997-2002)] and the Forest Act, 1992, National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973 (amendment 1993) and the Water Resources Act, 1992. Similar reflection has also been noticed in the Environment Protection Act, 1996 and its Rules, 1997. It indicates the uptake of local concerns at the national level.

On the other side of the coin, the local people when made aware of the specific problems accept to increase the use of information and technologies suitable to local condition. For example, public awareness programs on soil conservation and fertility maintenance have encouraged the local people to adopt and benefit from proven technologies of soil conservation. Hence, the problem is how to establish a functional linkage through bottom-up approach to share the information from the grassroots to policy making body and vice versa. This also relates to the NAP formulation process.

Hence, there is a felt need for expanding public awareness and consultative process in order to make the policy makers and the grassroots people aware in the field of desertification control in the spirit of the Convention. Nepal is approaching to bridge this gap through the mobilization of existing organizations.

Chapter Five

NAP Consultative Process and Partnership Arrangement

5.1 Effective support from international partners for cooperation

5.1.1 Degree of participation of international parties

Nepal has received some funding from developed country Parties to UNCCD for the implementation of forestry, soil and watershed management and agricultural development activities. The governments of Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, USA, and Switzerland are providing assistance in the fields of forests, soil conservation and watershed management, and agricultural development. The assistance of the UNDP, UNEP, EU and IFAD is also significant in these sectors. Similar assistance has continuously been received for the rehabilitation of degraded lands and water management. Activities implemented under the aid projects and programs support to improve land conditions and minimize the effects of land degradation.

Sometimes an aid package is also subject to conditionalities which are mostly related to structural adjustments, good governance, devolution of powers and responsibility, transparency, clear priority settings in the national development programming and need for resource allocation, accountability, sustainability, eradication of corruption, and efficiency in the use of limited resources. Also the requirement of expatriate consultants minimizes the opportunities for mobilizing local experts. In general, technical assistance is provided and implementation cost for the plan of action is limited. Although land improvement programs are included in the national agenda, integration of the NAP process in the national agenda for donor assistance is yet to be in place.

Participation of donor communities has been instrumental in natural resource management and in the process for poverty alleviation. Various actors participate in government launched programs by attending the working groups, workshops and seminars or by providing necessary fund.

5.1.2 Effective support from international partners for cooperation

The Ministry of Population and Environment has formed an Environment Coordination Group (ECG) to discuss environment-related matters with the donor communities. Few Committee meetings were convened in the past which highlighted the need for mainstreaming natural resources management issues in the economic development programs. However, this Committee has yet to be revitalized to develop it as a forum for informal consultation on land degradation and desertification issues.

HMG/N has realized the importance of cooperation and partnership building through informal consultation and exchange of information. During the national seminar in 1997, UN agencies and donor partners were invited to participate in the seminar. The meeting was participated by UNDP, FAO, ICIMOD, US Embassy, and international INGOs such as CARE Nepal, IUCN and WWF and provided valuable inputs for the content of NAP. However, in case of environment sector, various donors have participated and provided input in specific areas of concerns for both parties.

Since some donors have assisted Nepal in implementing environment-related, forestry and soil conservation and/or land improvement programs at the field level, it is hoped that they would also likely assist in the consultative process for NAP formulation.

With regard to the implementation of the Convention, the extent of responsibilities of the developed and developing country Parties, although clear in the Convention, is not clear in practice and sometimes, the desertification control activities receive low priority in view of its delay but long-term impacts on natural resource management. As Nepal is in the preliminary stage of NAP formulation, it will be too early to document on the participation of the donor community in this process. Efforts will be made to invite the donor community and increase its participation to mainstream the local needs with donors' priorities. Hence, the roles of different partners have yet to be identified.

Chapter Six

Measures Taken or Planned for NAP

6.1 Adequate Diagnosis of Past Experiences

6.1.1 *Synthesis and evaluation of activities undertaken in the field of combating desertification and mitigating drought*

Issues of land degradation, particularly soil erosion and watershed, and soil fertility conditions, were identified during the preparation of the Master Plan for Forestry Sector in 1988. Since then, studies have been conducted and information updated as part of the planning process. However, no specific study has been carried out at the national level to identify the problems of land degradation in the recent years in the spirit of the Convention. Experiences gained in soil and water conservation, and forest management and conservation of agricultural land, demand for launching land improvement programs with people's participation. There is also a need for empowering the local people for community development works.

In June 1999, the Ministry of Population and Environment conducted a study through a local consulting firm to collect information and develop broad-based programs with regard to the implementation of the UNCCD. This study was funded through regular national budget. The study report outlines the state of desertification and drought problems in Nepal, elaborates efforts on sustainable natural resource management and identifies priorities for national plan of action. It has recommended to formulate a national policy-cum-management system, and establish a National Committee under the chairmanship of the Minister for Population and Environment. It has also recommended to specify the national action program planning element and implementation and operational elements including awareness raising, training and capacity building, communication and participatory processes, emergency preparedness etc. in order to implement the Convention. It has further recommended six priority areas for consideration in the action programs. They are:

- Strengthening the knowledge and information base;
- Launching of intensive soil and water conservation and afforestation activities;
- Development and promotion of agro-pastoral system and sustainable alternative livelihood;
- Development of comprehensive anti-desertification program integrated with national environment and development plans;
- Development of drought preparedness and drought relief and self-help schemes; and
- Conducting awareness raising and promotion of popular participation programs.

In the process for implementing these recommendations, MOPE through national funding has awarded a local consulting firm to draft the national policy and program of action to combat desertification and drought in Nepal. This study will also document the status and achievements of the desertification minimization programs launched in the country. This report will be completed by July 2000, and this will help in furthering the NAP process. In addition, the South Asia Partnership Nepal, a national NGO, has prepared a case study as a part of UNEP Asia specific study on the status of land tenure, environment degradation and desertification in 1998. This study analyses the problems, causes and consequences of land degradation and urges for involving women in natural resource management.

Nepal also organized a national seminar on desertification and land improvement in November 1997 with the assistance of the UNCCD Secretariat. The seminar was conducted to create public awareness on the causes and consequences of land degradation and emergence of desert-like condition, and seek inputs for the preparation of NAP. Six working papers (Status of land degradation in Nepal, Policy and program responses for combating desertification, climatic conditions in different ecological zones and early warning system, national obligations and initiatives in implementing the UNCCD, the priority areas of land and water resources management: the role of NGOs, and international perspectives on the preparation of NAP) were presented in the seminar. They were commented by scholars and planners, and its proceeding was published in 1997 and disseminated widely.

Recently, HMG/N has also drafted the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) under the Biodiversity Conservation Project implemented through GEF funding. Biodiversity issues in different land forms have been identified and several programs proposed for implementation. Similarly, Nepal is implementing a UNEP-assisted project on national communication under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Information generated under these initiatives, studies and proceedings has been a basis for expanding public awareness programs and NAP formulation.

6.2 Established Technical Programs and Functional Projects to Combat Desertification

6.2.1 Inventory, adaptation and integration of projects underway within the NAP process

On-going projects and programs in relation to CCD priorities have been reviewed to derive a set of activities to integrate in NAP process. The review indicates that consultation in the NAP process could be integrated in soil and water conservation and forest management projects in broader perspectives. The Bagmati Watershed Project under implementation with the assistance of European Economic Commission (EEC) in five administrative districts (one-fifteenth of the total districts of Nepal) can play an instrumental role in generating public awareness and rehabilitate the degraded lands. A total of ECU 15 million has been allocated for the project which will be completed by the year 2003. The Environment and Forestry Enterprise Activity (EFEA) has been implemented in another five administrative districts in West Nepal with the financial assistance of about 8.84 million US\$ from USAID and will be completed by the year 2002. This project is likely to empower the local people in managing natural resources. The Natural Resource Management Sector Assistance Program has been implemented with the objective of increasing production and enhancing productivity of natural resources in 20 districts with the assistance of DANIDA and will be completed by the year 2003. A five year Nepal-Australia Community Resource Management Project under implementation with AusAID in two districts will be completed by the next year. The Churiya Soil and Water Conservation Program under GTZ funded Churiya Forest Development Project and the JICA funded Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project have been completed last year. CARE has also implemented Upper Andhikhola Watershed Project to conserve soil and water.

These field-based projects and programs focus on soil and water conservation and forest management with people's participation. The farmers are the target beneficiaries of these projects which continue assisting the local people in increasing the agricultural production and natural resource management through public awareness, and technology modification and transfer. Although these projects are not directly related to CCD implementation, the successful implementation of the components included in these projects will contribute to land and water conservation and empower CBOs. The experience gained in implementing these projects will also be a cornerstone to build up NAP.

6.2.2 Identification of new actions and planned measures

Nepal has continued its effort to encourage the project proponent to include the issue of land degradation and least damage soil and water resources during project implementation, particularly in road and hydro-electricity projects. This has been made possible through the integration of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) system which should be carried out legally as per the environmental legislation.

During the approval of the EIA report of development projects and programs, MOPE is making every effort to include mitigation measures and environmental monitoring priorities for the management of natural resources. The EPR, 1997 obliges MOPE to conduct environmental auditing after 2 years of project completion. As few projects are under implementation after the approval of EIA reports, it is expected to start environmental auditing in the near future in order to document the effectiveness of the mitigation measures adopted for soil and water conservation. In a broader sense, land and water conservation issues have been integrated and will be continuously integrated in development projects through the EIA system.

6.2.3 Specific actions to strengthen national capacity to combat desertification, in particular at the local level

Skills enhancement trainings are organized by governmental and non-governmental organization for the conservation of soil and forests. Quite a few trainers' training programs are being organized on natural resource management. The Ministries of Forest and Soil Conservation, Local Development, and Agriculture frequently organize local level training and public awareness programs to strengthen local capacity in resource management and community development, develop skills and enhance knowledge and know-how.

During the NAP process, the sectoral organizations which have the networks of local organizations will be encouraged to organize training and capacity building programs at the grass-root level. MOPE is also encouraging the local NGOs and CBOs to launch programs for capacity building by providing seed money through the Environment Protection Fund.

6.3 Action Program Implemented in Compliance with Priority Fields set out in the Convention

6.3.1 Measures for natural resource conservation

The priority areas for actions identified during the national seminar and on-going studies will provide a basis for furthering the step of identifying the action programs. The State of the Environment Report published in 1998 and planned for publication in June 2000 and also the draft National Biodiversity Action Plan aim at enhancing public awareness. A number of activities have been implemented to conserve natural resources, particularly the forests and soil, to improve land conditions, maintain soil fertility and increase farm production. Inter-relationship between forestry and the farming system has been maintained to the extent possible.

6.3.2 Measures to improve the institutional organization

HMG/N has established a functional network of district level organizations for the implementation of forestry and agriculture related activities. In addition, the federation of the NGOs and CBOs and other NGOs are also strengthening their institutions to ensure information sharing and to raise public awareness at the local level, and to implement activities that conserve natural resources. It is also planned to develop and increase the number of knowledge-based human resources in the existing institutions to provide technical assistance to NGOs, CBOs and the local people. These institutions will be involved in the NAP process at the field level. However, there is a shortage of financial resources to mobilize the local level institutions and improve efficiency.

6.3.3 Measures to increase the knowledge of desertification as a phenomenon

Local level organizations are involved in sharing information and experiences and documenting traditional knowledge for soil and water conservation and forest management. Although they are not directly related to the desertification process, it is envisaged that this will provide a basis for halting further degradation of the land and forest resources.

Land degradation and forest depletion issues are in the forefront of public awareness programs. Information sharing has been started through national and the local radio, print media and other electronic media. A number of newsletters, posters and pamphlets also carry the message of land degradation. Each organization is encouraged to impart and share information related to land degradation and desertification at the national and local levels. This information will be useful for the NAP process.

6.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation measures for the effects of desertification

Nepal has included monitoring and evaluation programs as in-built mechanisms for monitoring in project implementation. The environmental auditing which shall be carried out as per the EPR, 1997 will provide a basis for the identification of impacts of the development projects and its contribution to improve the conditions of land and water systems. Information generated through this process will also provide a basis for developing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to know the effects of desert-like condition in the selected areas. At present, soil conservation and watershed demonstration

and research plots have been used to monitor the process of land degradation on regional basis. Some such demonstration plots are also established and monitoring is on-going to generate information on nutrient loss in selected ecological regions.

6.3.5 Measures to improve the economic environment

Income generating activities have recently been introduced in natural resource management programs in view of the fact that the conservation programs take time to pay back and local people below the poverty line face difficulty in getting involved in natural resource management programs. At present, the community forestry user groups involved in forest management are legally entitled to manage and use the forest resources at a sustainable basis. The government, through the Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed, is providing half of the total investment for on-farm conservation measures for private lands. The WUAs are entitled to collect the water use fee and utilize for canal operation and maintenance. Local bodies are also empowered to collect revenue and generate fund. These measures are expected to improve the economic conditions of the local people. The government is also expanding the integration of income generating activities as an integral part of natural resource management to ensure sustainability and this issue will be analyzed in greater depth during the NAP process.

6.4 Linkage Achieved with Sub-regional and Regional Action Programs

6.4.1 Development, at the national level, of programs of a sub-regional or regional character

Nepal is drafting an action program to implement the SAARC Regional Action Plan on Environment. This action plan outlines activities related to strengthening institutions and further halting of natural resource degradation processes through the integration of resource management into development projects and programs. Nepal also participated in the SAARC initiatives on programs to control the process of land degradation. Nepal has also joined the Asia Pacific Network (APN) on climate change which focuses the study of climate change and forest degradation issues in the sub-region. However, specific projects of sub-regional character have yet to be developed and implemented for the Convention matters. In future, there are possibilities to develop and implement plans and programs of regional character while implementing the Asian Thematic Network programs.

Nepal had joined the regional project, the Watershed Management in Tropics and Upper Himalayas (WMTUH)/Farm centred Agriculture Resource Management Program (FARM) and Participatory Watershed Management Training in Asia (PWMTA) implemented by the UNDP/FAO/NET. The PWMTA Program was designed for human resource development in participatory watershed management, particularly for the sustainable use and management of forest, soil, water and other natural resources by enhancing skills and national capabilities to plan, implement, evaluate and monitor participatory watershed rehabilitation programs. The Asian WATMANET (PWMTA and FARM program) facilitates farmers' organizations for watershed management at small watersheds, promotes exchange of experiences at farmers to policy maker level and exchanges information among the participating countries (Afganistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) for sustainable natural resource management in the fragile watersheds in Asia. The experiences gained through this project will also be equally useful for the NAP process.

6.4.2 Strengthening the scientific networks

The concerned research and scientific organizations are involved in developing programs for regional studies particularly on medicinal herbs and biodiversity. For example, the Nepal Agricultural Research Council has collaboration with ICIMOD, International Bureau of Soil Resources and Management (IBSRAM) and International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), FAO and UNDP. The Departments of Forests, and Soil Conservation and Watershed Management are collaborating in ICIMOD's Regional Research for Development Project called People and Resource Dynamics Project which will run till 2000.

Nepal is also involved in technical committees of SAARC on environment and establishment of SAARC forestry centre. However, there is still a need for establishing a linkage with the scientific community in the sub-region and the region itself to implement the Convention.

6.5 Effectiveness of Measures in Local Capacity Building

6.5.1 Degree of responsibility in natural resource management on local communities

Introduction of community forestry programs in the late 1970s has been instrumental in developing the capacity of local people in the management of community forests. Introduction of the leasehold forestry has also been effective to bring the poor farmers and disadvantaged groups of people into the mainstream of forest conservation and income generation. Nepal's effort to empower the local people in managing natural resources, the soil, forest and water through the users group concept has increased the degree of responsibility among the people. This responsibility has been achieved as a number of community users groups have been very active in natural resource management.

Local capacity building and utilization of indigenous technologies have further been enhanced through the involvement of NGOs and CBOs in managing the natural resources in rural areas. This process has also enhanced the mobilization of local women to work in groups in areas of saving and credit, soil and forest management. These activities have promoted local communities to assume their responsibilities for management and introduce best method for a sustainable use of resources. A feeling of ownership over the natural resources has also been developed which will have long-term effects on its management.

6.5.2 Degree of decentralization or deconcentration achieved

Nepal's legal regime on forestry and water resources has empowered the local people to manage forests, land and water system, construct and operate the irrigation schemes through users associations. The *Forest Act, 1992* obliges the government to hand over a part of the national forest to community user groups if they are interested to do so prior to using the forest for other purposes. By this process, over 9,000 forestry user groups have been legally recognized as of March 2000 and they have received about 0.650 million ha of forest for management and sustainable utilization. By this process, about 1 million people directly benefit as members of such users groups. The *Water Resources Act, 1992* also obliges the government to empower local water users associations.

The *Environment Protection Act, 1996* has a mandatory provision to inform the people three times during the preparation and finalization of EIA reports of the prescribed projects and programs. The proponent is obliged to issue a public notice for 15 days before the preparation of the Scoping Report, and conduct a public hearing before the finalization of the EIA report. MOPE is also obliged to issue a public notice for 30 days before the approval of EIA report of any prescribed proposal. This legal provision ensures full participation in the EIA system. The environmental legislation also focuses on the mobilization of local level NGOs and CBOs through Environment Protection Fund. The new *Local Self Governance Act, 1999* decentralizes the powers and functions to the local bodies for the conservation and management of natural resources. Hence, a number of efforts are underway to decentralize the functions and powers and make the people owner of common property management and sustainable utilization. The process of decentralization has been further promoted through the effective role played by NGOs and CBOs in convincing the local people to participate in resource management and bridging the gaps on understanding between the local people and the implementing agencies.

6.5.3 Involvement of actors in monitoring and evaluation process

Monitoring and evaluation has been a crucial part in the development projects and programs. Programs and activities implemented by the governmental organizations are monitored and evaluated by the concerned agencies. A practice has been introduced for independent monitoring and evaluation of the donor assisted programs. NGO activities are also monitored by funding agencies. The present practice of empowering the community groups has emphasized self-monitoring and evaluation. In case of funding provided by MOPE from Environment Protection Fund, the monitoring and evaluation is done by MOPE itself and the local bodies. It is also planned to involve NGOs and CBOs in monitoring the activities funded by MOPE. This mechanism will further strengthen local governments and organizations for monitoring NAP programs. It has also been realized to form monitoring and evaluation committee having representation from different stakeholders in the process of implementing the Convention.

6.6 Partnership Agreements Applied

6.6.1 Functioning of internal partnership agreements

The Convention emphasizes partnership arrangements for the implementation of land improvement and desertification control programs. This process would help in building the local capacity for combating desertification and make the program sustainable. This will also avoid or minimize duplication of works and ensure best use of limited technical and financial resources.

Handing over of the State-managed forests to community users group, cost sharing for irrigation development and on-farm conservation have been made through formal partnership arrangement.. The Environment Protection Fund is also mobilized through partnership arrangement, as MOPE provides funding to selected activities, and the recipient NGOs implement the activity. Some NGOs are also implementing natural resource conservation programs through partnership arrangements. For example, the FINNIDA supported micro-funding is designed to support the local NGOs and CBOs to implement environment and natural resource conservation programs through a kind of partnership agreement between the host NGO and the local NGOs and CBOs.

6.6.2 Consultation and coordination process

Almost all policies and programs related to natural resource management emphasize public consultation during program design and implementation. This consultation process has been ensured in collecting relevant information for NAP. Once background information is collected, the consultation process will be started to accommodate the concerns and opportunities of the people, NGOs, CBOs and the donor community. Furthermore, efforts are underway to develop coordination mechanism by constituting a Coordination Committee for the relevant Conventions such as UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD to furthering consultation process.

6.6.3 Resource made available for NAP implementation

Nepal has allocated seed money for the collection of background information for the implementation of the Convention. About US\$ 13,000 has been invested so far to generate information on desertification problems for studies and national seminars.

6.6.4 Number of international partners involved (multilateral and bilateral)

Nepal has received technical and financial assistance in a number of natural resource management programs through multilateral and bilateral funding. International partners have yet to be contacted for the NAP process under the Convention.

Chapter Seven

Financial Allocations

7.1 Adopted Financial Mechanism

Nepal has continuously allocated national budgets and has also received donor assistance for halting further the land degradation process since the early 1970s. Such assistance has been received in soil conservation and watershed management activities, forest management, and soil fertility improvement programs. The MPFS, APP and NCS, including other resource conservation programs are under implementation through national funding and donor assistance.

7.1.1 Measures to facilitate the access of local actors to existing sources of funding

Most of the activities relevant to the Convention are implemented by the government through national budgets. In order to increase access of NGOs and CBOs, HMG/N has established the Environment Protection Fund and the Social Service Council for channeling the financial resources. The NGOs and CBOs should submit technical and financial proposal to secure funding from these sources, and the Steering Committee selects the proposal and allocates funds. Nepal is also implementing a micro-funding on environmental activities with the assistance of FINNIDA. The micro-funding is administered by a national NGO. A number of NGOs also collect fund and implement programs directly in the field. Although the EPF is a legal funding mechanism, it depends on national budgets. It has limited fund, and this all is available to the local actors.

Local actors are informed about the availability of funding and called for the submission of proposals within the given time. However, these sources have limited funds and are unable to meet the demand of NGOs and CBOs.

Besides, as mentioned earlier, local actors receive some funding through the government program for joint implementation and management. In this context, it is notable that the local actors have access to the national fund. These sources are designed for environmental and resource management which contributes to combating desertification process.

Nepal has yet to access local/private sector funds for the NAP process. This is an area to explore, and Nepal welcomes technical assistance to begin the process.

7.1.2 Working out new, adapted methods to mobilize internal and external resources

The Environment Protection Fund would be an appropriate funding mechanism to land improvement and desertification control programs in Nepal. This Fund is appropriated legally, and it can be increased through the contribution of HMG/N, donor agencies and other sources. So far, HMG/N has contributed to this fund on an annual basis. With the DANIDA supported Institutional Strengthening of MOPE under the Environment Sector Program Support, MOPE will review, in the near future, the administrative procedures and organizational set-up of the Environment Protection Fund, and will develop new sets of rules for the administration of the EPF. This study will also explore possibilities and ways and means for fund raising through internal and external sources. Nepal welcomes any offer to strengthen this Fund as a financial mechanism for desertification control and natural resource management programs.

7.2 NAP Financing

7.2.1 Mobilization of national resources

As Nepal is collecting necessary information for NAP formulation, a strategy has yet to be developed for accessing the national resources. By the middle of 2000, Nepal will start the NAP process and explore possibilities for mobilizing the national resources.

7.2.2 Mobilization of external resources

Once the background information is prepared based on the on-going studies as a part of the NAP process, efforts will be made to explore possibilities for external resources. Nepal expects that developed country Parties will provide necessary funding for the preparation and implementation of NAP.

7.2.3 Contribution from Global Mechanism

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) which is administering the Global Mechanism (GM) has not been contacted so far. However, Nepal expects the role to be played by GM in supporting the least-developed country Parties in the NAP process including public awareness programs.

7.2.4 Number of partners providing financial support

The UNCCD Secretariat assisted Nepal in organizing a national seminar in 1997, and it has also provided seed funding to prepare this report. Nepal is in the process to invite the donor community to participate in the process of NAP formulation and its implementation.

7.2.5 Amount of financial resources available

Nepal has received a total of US\$ 13,000/ to organize a national seminar on desertification and the preparation of this report. The SAP Nepal, an NGO, also received seed money from UNEP through RIOD to prepare a case study for the UNEP Asia Specific Study in relation to Land Tenure, Environmental Degradation and Desertification in the Drylands of Asia. Besides, about US\$ 5,000/ has been allocated through national funding to collect necessary information for the implementation of the Convention.

7.3 Technical Cooperation Developed

7.3.1 Mobilization of technical cooperation

Nepal has yet to request technical cooperation, and this will be done once the preliminary information is collected and the NAP process has gained momentum.

7.3.2 Identification of priority needs in technical assistance

Nepal understands the obligations and responsibilities of the country Parties and has initiated information collection for NAP formulation and implementation. As a least developed country, Nepal has accorded high priority to poverty alleviation, and budget allocation from national funding is low for the implementation of the UNCCD. In the beginning, Nepal requires technical and financial assistance in the formulation of NAP, public awareness, capacity building and information exchange. Similarly, technical assistance would be required to prepare inventories of traditional knowledge, know-how, practices and technologies. Partnership building and private sector involvement represents other priorities for technical cooperation. Technical assistance is also required to strengthen the process of community empowerment in the field of forestry, soil conservation and watershed management. In order to implement these activities in the spirit of the Convention, an estimated amount of US\$ 0.915 million is expected from the donor community. This will also help in providing technical and financial assistance to strengthen community groups, regulate unsustainable use of natural resources, and also strengthen traditional practices of resource management.

Indicative List of Activities for Donor Assistance in the NAP Process

SN	Activity		Estimated Budget (US\$)
1	Public awareness and strengthening of information exchange system	Publication, homepage management	50,000/
2	Consultation meetings at the national, regional and local level	75 consultative meetings	187,500/
3	Support to community initiatives in the NAP process	For about 100 NGOs and CBOs	350,000/
4	Capacity building of the National Coordinating body, NGOs and CBOs in planning and coordination	20 NGOs and CBOs	70,000/
5	Gender sensitization programs	5 regional workshops	55,000/
6	Studies on traditional knowledge, know how, practices and technologies		50,000/
7	Study on cold desert and its expansion process and identification of hot spots	Intra-Himalayan region	60,000/
8	Programs for parliamentarians, planners and decision-makers	Seminars and materials publication	20,000/
9	Elaboration of sectoral and cross-sectoral programs		22,500/
10	NAP translation, publication, and distribution		50,000/
Total			915,000/

Chapter Eight

Benchmarks and Indicators

8.1 Operational Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1.1 Establishment and/or strengthening of national environmental monitoring and observation capacities

Nepal has recently introduced environmental monitoring as an integral part of program monitoring. As per the EPA, 1996 and the EPR, 1997, the concerned line ministries are responsible for monitoring impacts on project activities on the environment. However, MOPE is made legally responsible for environmental impact auditing. The line agencies have established a monitoring and evaluation division or unit to monitor the project performance and its impact on the environment. The monitoring depends on indicators listed in the EIA report and the project document. In general, project specific indicators are developed, monitored and evaluated through an in-built system in the concerned project.

The DSCWM has started monitoring soil loss in representative ecological zones through different land uses. Five demonstration centres and several research sites have been established, and it indicates that mountain agricultural land is prone to high erosion. The DOA and NARC are also involved in monitoring nutrient loss from agricultural land.

Sectoral agencies have developed information system to disseminate knowledge and experiences. Nepal is also in the process of establishing a national environmental information data bank and this would be developed by the year 2002. This data bank will also include information on the status and trend of natural resources.

8.1.2 Information system on desertification at the national level

The State of the Environment (SOE) Report published in 1998 contains information on the status and trend on natural resources, their utilization and land degradation process including desertification conditions in Nepal. The SOE report to be published in June 2000 will also contain elaborated information on these subjects at the national level. The proceedings of the national seminar also contain a good amount of information in this area. A number of publications of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Agricultural Research Council and some NGOs also contain information on the status and trend of land degradation in Nepal. Some information is disseminated through print media. It is planned to share the environmental information including the desertification process through electronic media.

8.1.3 Main actors' access to available information

As per the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, every citizen has the constitutional right to be informed and has access to public information. Furthermore, the information flow should be transparent, and people seeking information should get it at the earliest possible. Hence, there is no barrier to available information. Organizations are also involved in developing websites to share information and experiences with other actors.

8.1.4 Mechanism for consultation concerning the analysis of results

In general, various organizations hire the consultants to conduct studies. The reports prepared by consultants and consulting firms are generally discussed in the seminars and workshops which shall represent sectoral organizations and NGOs. Once the report is finalized, it is published and disseminated. In case of the EIA report, Nepal has initiated to open the report for public review for one month before approval. Such reports are available at the Ministry of Population and Environment, project office (at the central and project site), concerned ministry, and central libraries.

During the preparation of NAP, it is planned to consult different stakeholders through workshops, seminars and local level interaction meetings in order to provide the people an opportunity to give their opinions and suggestions.

8.1.5 Regular production of reports

Nepal has so far produced a proceeding of the national seminar on "Desertification and Land Improvement" organized in November 1997. Other studies conducted so far on desertification issues have yet to be updated, refined and published. Research findings are generally published in technical journals and newsletters. Regular publication of the desertification information has yet to be institutionalized. However, environmental journals, newsletters, posters and pamphlets are regularly published and distributed to create public awareness.

8.1.6 Participation of scientific and technical institutions in monitoring and evaluation

At the national level, the academic, scientific and technical institutions participate in the seminar, workshops and interaction meetings. Research institutions such as the Department of Forest Survey and Research, Department of Plant Resources, NARC etc. are particularly involved in scientific studies and monitoring of natural resources. Some institutions are also involved in macro-level monitoring by using satellite imageries. At the project level, academic and research institutions are sometimes involved in monitoring and evaluation activities.

8.1.7 Feedback on evaluation for program management

After the preparation and implementation of the NAP and other activities under the Convention, the monitoring and evaluation of the activities will provide a basis for refining the activities and programs with people's participation. Monitoring and evaluation information is provided to concerned agencies through regular channels. At present, there are no established functional mechanisms for feedback on program management under the Convention.

In a nutshell, Nepal is collecting necessary information for NAP preparation. During the NAP process, Nepal expects technical and financial assistance from the developed country Parties and multilateral donor agencies to prepare NAP through extensive consultation, and also to implement it with people's participation. Existing environmental policies and programs are geared to alleviate poverty which is one of the major thrusts of the Convention.

Composition of the National Report Preparation Committees

SN	Institution	
A. Inter-Agency Steering Committee		
1	Secretary	Ministry of Population and Environment
2	Joint-Secretary	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
3	Joint-Secretary	Ministry of Agriculture
4	Joint-Secretary	Ministry of Land Reform and Management
5	Joint-Secretary	Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning
6	Executive Director	South Asia Partnership Nepal, NGO
7	Chairman	Federation of Community Forestry Users, CBO
8	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Population and Environment, Environment Division
		Chairman
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member Secretary
B. Working Group I		
1	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Population and Environment
2	Under Secretary	National Planning Commission Secretariat
3	Under Secretary	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
4	Under Secretary	Ministry of Agriculture
5	Under Secretary	Ministry of Law and Justice
6	Representative	NGO Federation
7	Representative	SEARCH Nepal, NGO
		Coordinator
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member
C. Working Group II		
1	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Population and Environment
2	Under Secretary	Ministry of Finance
3	Under Secretary	Ministry of Water Resources
4	Representative	Nepal Agricultural Research Council
5	Representative	Nepal Forestry Association
6	Representative	Nepal Agriculture Association
		Coordinator
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member
		Member

Annex 2

List of Participants at the National Seminar on the Finalization of Country Report on the Implementation of the UNCCD

SN	Name	Designation	Institution and Address
1	Ananta Parajuli	Deputy Director General	Department of Forest Research and Survey, Babarmahal
2	Ananta R. Pandey	Joint Secretary	Administration Division, MOPE
3	Anil Baral	Director	Centre for Environmental Technology and Economic Development (CETED), P.O. Box 2356, Kathmandu
4	Ashok Duwadi	Geologist	Department of Mines and Geology, Lainchour
5	Ashok Kumar Sarraf	S.D. Engineer	Environment Policy Section, MOPE
6	Bikram R. Tuladhar	Planning Officer	Department of Forests, Babarmahal
7	Binod Dhungel	Associate Editor	The Samachar Daily, Basantapur
8	C. Karmacharya	HRD & Monitoring Officer	GTZ, Neer Bhawan, Sanepa
9	Charles Pradhan	Environmental Advisor	Canadian Cooperation Office, Lazimpat
10	Dal Bahadur Adhikari	Section Officer	Ministry of Law and Justice, Singhdurbar
11	Devi P. Shrestha	Under Secretary	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Singhdurbar
12	Dil Raj Khanal	Staff	Federation of Community Forestry User Groups, New Baneshwor
13	Dr. D. P. Manandhar	Special Secretary	Ministry of Health, Ramshah Path
14	Dr. G. R. Bhatta	Secretary	Ministry of Population and Environment, Singhdurbar
15	Dr. H.D. Liekhak	Associate Professor	Central Department of Botany, Tribhuvan University
16	Dr. Kishore Sherchand	Senior Scientist	Nepal Agricultural Research Council, Khumaltar
17	Dr. M. K. Adhikari	Senior Research Officer	Department of Plant Resources, Thapathali
18	Dr. P. K. Thapa	Horticulture Development Officer	Ministry of Agriculture, Singhdurbar
19	Dr. S. Acharya	Forest Specialist	USAID, Rabi Bhawan
20	Dr. Shiva Hari Achet	President	Soil and Water Conservation Society, (SOWCOS), Nepal, P.O. Box 4719
21	Durga N. Sharma	Under Secretary	Ministry of Finance, Singhdurbar
22	Frank Van Sdwsulrocd	Bio-diversity Coordinator	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV), Sanepa
23	Gobinda Neupane	Project Manager	CARE Nepal, Krishna Galli, Pulchowk
24	Govind Pd. Pandey	Chief, CDD	Department of Agriculture, Harihar Bhawan
25	Hara Bhattarai	Under Secretary	Administration Section, MOPE
26	Hari Dutta Pandey	Under Secretary	Planning Section, MOPE
27	Hem Raj Kharel	Statistician	Agricultural Project Services Centre, Ramshah Path
28	Hiranya P. Shrestha	Under Secretary	Ministry of Information and Communication, Singhdurbar
29	Janak Raj Joshi	Joint Secretary	Environment Division, MOPE
30	Jhabindra Aryal	Section Officer	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sital Niwas
31	Jishnu Subedi	Co-Chairman	Nepal Engineers Association, Jamal

SN	Name	Designation	Institution and Address
32	K. P. Khanal	Under Secretary	Ministry of Education, Kesharmahal
33	Laxmi Bilas Koirala	Under Secretary	Information, Production and Training Section, MOPE
34	Madhu P. Regmi	Under Secretary	Law and Convention Section, MOPE
35	Mikael Malinovsky	TA	MOPE Institutional Strengthening Project, Singdurbar
36	Ms. Hemlata Rai	Reporter	The Rising Nepal Daily, Bhugol Park, New Road
37	Ms. Nirmala Acharya	Reporter	National News Agency, Prithivi Path
38	Narendra P. Pokhrel	S.D. Chemist	Environmental Standard Section, MOPE
39	Prachanda Shrestha	Under Secretary	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Singhdurbar
40	Prakash Mathema	Research Officer	Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, Babarmahal
41	Pratap Man Shrestha	Programme Officer	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Building, Pulchowk
42	Prem Sagar Chapagai	Lecturer	Central Department of Geography, Tribhuvan University
43	Prof. Dr. Kiran Bhattarai	Director	School of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development (SchEMS), Lazimpat
44	Purushottam Kunwar	Under Secretary	Environmental Impact Assessment Section, MOPE
45	Puspa Hari Campa Rai	Reporter	Nepal Television, Singhdurbar
46	Raj Kumar Niraula	Section Officer	Ministry of Home Affairs, Singhdurbar
47	Rajendra Kafle	Joint Secretary	Nepal Foresters' Association, Babarmahal
48	Ramesh R. Pant	Assistant Professor	Central Department of Geography, Kathmandu University
49	Shyam S. Shrestha	General Member	Nepal Soil Conservation Association, Babarmahal
50	Upendra P. Adhikari	Under Secretary	Population Policy and Research Section, Population Division, MOPE
Support Staff			
51	Kiran Kumar Karki	Section Officer	Policy Section, MOPE
52	Naresh Sharma	Agri-Economist	Policy Section, MOPE
53	Rajendra Bhattarai	Accounts Officer	Account Section, MOPE
54	Batu Krishna Uprety	Ecologist	EIA Section, MOPE

National Seminar on Finalization of Country Report on the Implementation of UNCCD

Venue : Conference Hall
Time : 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Date : 19 April 2000, Wednesday

Seminar Programme

- 09:45 - 10:00 Arrival of the Participants
- 10:00 - 10:30 Chairman
 Dr. G. R. Bhatta, Secretary, Ministry of Population and Environment
 Welcome and Introduction to the Seminar
 Introduction of the Participants
- 10:30 - 11:30 Presentation of the Draft National Report
 Mr. Janak Raj Joshi, Joint-Secretary, Environment Division
- 11:30 - 12:30 Comment on the National Report
- 11:30 - 11:50 Dr. Madhav P. Ghimire, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs
- 11:50 - 12:10 Dr. Binayak Bhadra, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD
- 12:10 - 12:50 General Discussion
- 12:50 - 13:00 Chairman's Remark
- 13:00 - 14:00 **Lunch**
- 14:00 - 15:30 Moderator
 Mr. Janak Raj Joshi, Joint-Secretary, MOPE
 Specific/Institutional Comments and Suggestions from Participants
- 15:30 - 16:00 Identification of Issues for report refinement
 Closing Remark

Outline of the Environment-related Policies in the Ninth Plan (1997-2002)

Objective : Poverty alleviation

Priorities : Agriculture and forestry; Water resources; Human resources and social development; Industrialization, tourism development and international trade; and Physical infrastructure.

Sectors	Relevant Policies
Human Settlement and Urban Development	Study environmental conditions of the medium towns; Create public awareness on environmentally safe building construction.
Environment and Natural Resource Management	Prioritize and formulate activities with community participation for the benefit of women and disadvantaged group including participation of NGOs and local government in environmental management; Introduce and strengthen participatory EIA system; Conserve and promote environment of the backward areas through launching special programs; Emphasize on biodiversity conservation and environmental awareness;; Introduce environmental and resources conservation aspects in formal and non-formal education; Arrange for legal and procedural aspects to implement conventions; Identify and manage forests, wetlands, agro-diversity, livestock genetic resources in major areas; Prepare tax and investment policy environment-friendly; Update and ensure flow of environmental information etc.
Landuse and Management Forests	Formulate and implement landuse plan with focus on environment conservation; and increase land productivity Promote community forestry and commercial forest management; Protect Siwaliks (ecologically vulnerable areas); Introduce mechanism for utilizing the income generated from, and to protected areas management; Conduct research on appropriate technologies for the conservation of endangered medicinal plants; Focus on participatory ecosystem-based management, sustainable development and poverty alleviation etc.
Agriculture	Encourage the establishment of a fertilizer factory at private sector; expand integrated pest management and compost use and bio-engineering etc.
Industry	Promote cleaner production technologies by minimizing adverse impacts of industrialization on the environment
Tourism & Civil Aviation	Promote environment-friendly transportation facilities in tourist areas; Prepare landuse plan for tourist areas with local governments' participation; Promote eco-tourism and tourism activities in protected areas after environmental assessment studies; Ensure environment conservation etc.
Hydro-electricity	Emphasize and implement water resources and watershed management activities simultaneously to minimize environmental impacts
Transport	Continue human resources development to make the hill road environment-friendly and implement bio-engineering measures at massive scale
Science and Technology	Minimize adverse impacts while increasing the supply of traditional energy (forests and agri-based biomass)
Drinking Water and Sanitation	Create public awareness on environmental sanitation; carry out environmental assessment of drinking water projects as per environmental legislation; adopt a system to make the water clean and safe for human health by maintaining water quality standards.

Composition of the Environment Protection Council

1	Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister	Chairman
2	Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister	Co-Chairman
3	Hon'ble Minister for Population and Environment	Vice Chairman
4	Hon'ble Minister for Finance	Member
5	Hon'ble Minister for Housing and Physical Planning	Member
6	Hon'ble Minister for Industry	Member
7	Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture	Member
8	Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs	Member
9	Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources	Member
10	Hon'ble Minister for Works and Transport	Member
11	Hon'ble Minister for Foreign Affairs	Member
12	Hon'ble Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation	Member
13	Hon'ble Minister for Land Reform and Management	Member
14	Hon'ble Minister for Education	Member
15	Hon'ble Minister for Local Development	Member
16	Hon'ble Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation	Member
17	Hon'ble Minister for Science and Technology	Member
18	Hon'ble Minister for Women and Social Welfare	Member
19	Hon'ble Minister for Health	Member
20	Hon'ble Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources and Environment Conservation, House of Representatives	Member
21	Hon'ble Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission	Member
22	Hon'ble Member (Environment), National Planning Commission	Member
23	Vice Chancellor, Royal Nepal Academy for Science and Technology	Member
24	Chief Secretary, Council of Ministers	Member
25	Vice Chancellor, Tribhuvan University	Member
26	Vice Chancellor, Kathmandu University	Member
27	Representative, Nepal Communist Party (UML)	Member
28	Representative, Rastriya Prajatantra Party	Member
29	Representative, Nepali Congress	Member
30	Representative, Nepal Sadvawana Party	Member
31	Chairman, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry	Member
32	Chairman, Federation of the District Development Committees	Member
33	Chairman, Federation of the Village Development Committees	Member
34	HMG/N nominated experts (nine)	Members
35	Secretary, Ministry of Population and Environment	Member Secretary