

# **Report on Norwegian support to the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**

**Report from Noragric**

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## List of abbreviations

ANRS	Afar National Regional State
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
DCG	Drylands Coordination Group
eniD	European networking initiative on Desertification
FAO	UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation
GM	Global Mechanism
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
IDDP	Drylands Development Programme (of the UNDP)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NAP	National Action Programmes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SSE	Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia Programme
UD	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNCED	United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

## *Summary*

This report presents Norwegian support to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification during the past two years (2002-2003). Three pillars in the Norwegian support are identified as important: multilateral support, bilateral support to National Action Programmes (NAPs) and support through Non-Governmental Organisations. The main focus of the Norwegian direct support to the implementation of the convention in affected countries is on multilateral channels of the UN system. Some challenges for the future support are also identified. There seems to be a need: 1) to put a higher focus on civil society, particularly by moving national focal points of the convention up to local and regional levels; 2) for an increased following up of NAPs in the dialogue with cooperating countries; 3) for a strengthening of research and research networks in drylands areas. Research in drylands areas is identified as a field where Norwegian expertise can contribute with more than 20 years of research experience.

## **1. Introduction**

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was ratified in 1994 and entered into force in 1996. Norway was one of the signatory countries that committed themselves to the convention with the objective of “combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought in drought-affected countries, particularly in Africa”<sup>1</sup>. After the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 Norwegian policy documents have followed up the convention as an important tool in developing improved management practices of the environment in developing countries<sup>2</sup>.

This report presents the Norwegian policy approach to the UNCCD and investigates how the policy has been followed up in practice, particularly during the previous two years (2002-2003). The purpose of this report is to summarise Norwegian support to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The report revises Norwegian policy documents relevant to the UNCCD and how these have been followed up in practice, and it has a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. Three pillars in the Norwegian support to the convention are identified: multilateral support through UN Organisations, bilateral support to National Action Programmes (NAPs) for the UNCCD, and support through Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The report is divided into two parts: the first part revises central policy documents related to the UNCCD; the second part explores the following-up of the policy in practice.

## **2. Data collection and scope of the report**

The report is based on studies of policy documents, statistics and other relevant reports and project documents. In addition interviews and consultancies were made with representatives from the The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD), NGOs and other involved parties.

It presents both activities that are directly UNCCD relevant and activities that share common objectives with the convention. The information presented represents the findings of the author and does not claim to be exhaustive on Norwegian support to drought affected drylands areas and to UNCCD-relevant activities.

The report is mainly based on Norwegian development support during the past two years (2002 and 2003). However information on past activities is integrated where relevant,

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<sup>1</sup> UNCCD: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. Published by the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

<sup>2</sup> St meld nr 19 (1995-96): En verden i endring – Hovedtrekk i norsk politikk overfor utviklingslandene.

particularly where historic events and trends are discussed. The report is the Norwegian contribution to the CRIC 3 review from developed country Parties, which relates specifically to efforts and measures undertaken to further the implementation in the African region. The main focus of this report is therefore on Norwegian support to the promotion of the UNCCD-objectives in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the report first presents a brief overview of the history of Norwegian support to drylands areas exemplified by the SSE Programme.

### **3. History of Norwegian involvement in drylands – the SSE Programme**

During the past 20-30 years Norway has been involved in supporting drylands areas in coping with the effects of droughts on food security, sustainable management of natural resources and environmental rehabilitation. As a response to the international efforts to combat famine in different parts of Africa in the 70s and 80s, Norway launched in 1985 the Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia Programme (SSE). For more than 10 years this programme developed into what later became Norway's support to the UNCCD. The SSE came as a direct response to the 1984/85 drought in the Sahel. The thematic focus of the SSE was food security, ecological rehabilitation and women's situation. The programme consisted of three components: development aid through projects run by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), development research and support to projects run by multilateral organisations. The main geographical focus was on Ethiopia, Mali and Sudan.

The guiding principles of the SSE were<sup>3</sup>:

- Minimising dependency
- Recipient orientation
- Specific targeting of women
- Poverty alleviation

In the early days of working with drylands issues Norway was relatively progressive on the international arena.<sup>4</sup> The SSE can be said to be the foundation for how Norwegian support to drylands areas and the UNCCD has developed over the years, which is the main focus of this report.

### **4. Norwegian policy approach to the UNCCD**

Many see the UNCCD as the 'convention for the poor'. This is well illustrated in the Norwegian White Paper from 1995-96 where the rationale for ratification of the convention was explained as "an expression of solidarity with developing countries in general and Africa in particular".<sup>5</sup> In this document it is also emphasised that there are no formal Norwegian financial commitments to the convention, and that support to the convention will go through the Norwegian budget for development support and existing bilateral and multilateral channels. Furthermore it was expressed that Norway will contribute with financial resources and other support in order to effectively support the affected countries in developing and implementing their own long-term plans and strategies to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

In the same document national, sub-regional and regional action programmes are considered as central tools in the convention. In this early phase of the ratification it was

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<sup>3</sup> Proceeding from an international workshop of researchers evaluating the SSE: *10 years with SSE, Past Experiences-Future Challenges*.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Per Mogstad, Norsk Utenriksdepartement, 26.04.2004.

<sup>5</sup> St prp nr 46 (1995-96): Om samtykke til ratifikasjon av en konvensjon om bekjempelse av forørkning i land som er rammet av alvorlig tørke og/eller forørkning særlig i Afrika, av 17. juni 1994.

claimed that the development of action programmes reflects the Norwegian emphasis on the importance of a well-developed interplay between governments and civil society in planning and in carrying out of programmes and projects. Civil society in the form of community based organisation and NGOs are therefore considered as important tools in the implementation of the convention. This is also in line with the UNCCD, which emphasises effective participation of NGOs and local populations as a precondition for effective implementations of NAPs.<sup>6</sup>

The UNCCD must also be seen in relation to current Norwegian aid policy in general. The UN Millennium goals are today the framework for the Norwegian action plan to support sustainable development in developing countries, and these are therefore the foundation for dialogue with cooperating developing countries.<sup>7</sup> Norway has an expressed interest in working for international cooperation to fight poverty and secure sustainable development, and considers the UN-system as a focal point in meeting the global challenges.<sup>8</sup> The UN conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification have therefore been (and will continue to be) important in the support for a sustainable development in the South.<sup>9</sup>

The overall objective of the UNCCD is to contribute to achieve sustainable development in affected drylands areas by adopting an integrated approach. The spring 2002 Norwegian Action Plan to combat poverty in the South also emphasizes the importance of developing an integrated development policy that sees poverty reduction as the number one challenge in order to achieve sustainable development. The most important implication of this change has been that Norwegian development cooperation has become focussed on the recipient countries' own strategy plans to reduce poverty (PRSPs). In addition the number of receiving countries has decreased to encompass a limited number of main cooperating countries. In Africa today Norway has a major cooperation with Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Malawi. In addition to the main cooperating countries Norway gives sectoral support to another group of countries including Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria and South Africa. This report will not be limited to the main cooperating countries but includes also sectoral countries and countries within the Sahel that previously received major funding from Norway, such as Sudan and Niger.

The point of departure for Norwegian support to the UNCCD is existing *multi-* and *bilateral* channels. From the revision of policy documents three pillars for Norwegian development cooperation supporting the UNCCD can be identified:

- 1) Multilateral channels within the UN-system
- 2) Support through civil society (NGOs and CBOs)
- 3) National Action Programmes (NAPs)

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<sup>6</sup> UNCCD: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. Published by the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification. (p.14)

<sup>7</sup> Handlingsplan 2002: *Kamp mot fattigdom! Regjeringens handlingsplan for bekjempelse av fattigdom i sør mot 2015*. Utenriksdepartementet.

<sup>8</sup> St prp nr 1 (2002-2003): For Budsjetterminen 2003.

<sup>9</sup> St meld 19 (1995-96): En verden i endring – Hovedtrekk i norsk politikk overfor utviklingslandene.

## 5. Norwegian support to the UNCCD

The following presents Norwegian support to the UNCCD through these channels. The first part encompasses support through four multilateral channels. The second support through NGOs in general and the NGO-network Drylands Coordination Group (DCG) in particular. In addition it discusses Norwegian support to NAPs and how these are followed up in poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs).

### 5.1 Multilateral channels

Cooperation with other countries is expressed to be important for Norway in order to influence international goals and priorities (White Paper nr 1 – 2002-2003). It is also stated that the multilateral units in the UN- and WB-system manage a bulk of competence and networks on environment and development in developing countries (St meld 19: 1995-1996). This also addresses the UNCCD; the White Paper no. 46 (1995-96) suggests that the UNCCD can be followed up through multilateral channels such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank. In 2003 Norway granted approximately 9.1 mill NOK<sup>10</sup> to the UNCCD through the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the Global Mechanism (GM) and the UNCCD Secretariat. Table 1 summarises Norwegian support to the convention through multilateral channels in 2002-2003. As the table shows, the aggregate support through multilateral channels has decreased in the period. It should be noted that this short period of time does not allow us to draw any conclusions on longer-term trends in the multilateral support to the convention.

Institution	2002	2003
UNDP (UNSO)	6.50	-
UNEP	-	3.00
GM	2.35	3.00
UNCCD Secretariat	3.00	3.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.85</b>	<b>9.10</b>

**Table 1:** Norwegian support to the UNCCD through multilateral channels in 2002/2003 (mill NOK).

#### 5.1.1 UNDP

In 2002 the Integrated Drylands Development Programme (IDDP) by the UNDP Drylands Development Centre received 6.5 mill NOK.<sup>11</sup> The IDDP is established to support the national implementation of the UNCCD. The programme encompasses three main components: 1) integration of drylands issues in overarching PRSPs and UNDP's and UN's land programmes; 2) initiatives to reduce the countries' vulnerabilities; and 3) local governance and management of natural resources.

UD considers these components as important measures to develop the framework for active participation of central interest groups, in addition to developing management systems that secure a sustainable use of land resources. The Norwegian funding was in 2002 earmarked for a supporting programme particularly in Ethiopia, Mali and Niger. (The funding for the period 2003-2005 was recommended transferred to WEHAB for additional funding.)

<sup>10</sup> 1 USD equals 6,62 NOK, 07.05.04.

<sup>11</sup> Utenriksdepartementet 2002: Notat om Støtte i 2002 til UNDP drylands Development Centre's "Integrated drylands development programme".

### 5.1.2 UNEP

The UNEP approach “An Ecosystem approach to Restoring West African Drylands and improving Rural Livelihoods through Agroforestry-based Land Management Interventions” was in 2003 granted 13.0 mill NOK over a three years period between 2003-2005. In 2003 3.0 mill NOK were granted to this initiative.<sup>12</sup>

The overall goal with the initiative is to restore degraded parkland ecosystems in West Africa and improve the living conditions for people living in rural drylands areas. The UNEP-ecosystem approach to drylands areas is based on the following components:

- Rehabilitation and maintenance of resilience and productivity of ecosystems is necessary for a sustainable use of drylands areas.
- Adapted and flexible ecosystem-based management strategies are necessary to maintain resilience in drylands areas.
- In order to obtain a sustainable development in drylands areas it will be necessary to strengthen people’s capacities to carry through an ecosystem based management on all levels, ranging from local users to policy level.

The programme will be carried through within the framework of the environment initiative in NEPAD and the regional strategy for the following-up of the UNCCD, particularly the Agroforestry Thematic Network in Africa.

UD considers this initiative to promote the national accomplishment of the convention. The ecosystem-approach is considered as a new and exciting approach to achieve protection and sustainable use at the same time. Norwegian support to this initiative is seen as an opportunity to support the implementation of the convention.

### 5.1.3 The Global Mechanism

The Global Mechanism (GM) is a financial mechanism for the UNCCD.<sup>13</sup> Norway has as an objective to contribute to increase the share of permanent funding to the GM. The GM was in 2003 supported with 3.0 mill NOK.<sup>14</sup> The support to the GM has been important in the process of increasing the financial resources and international interest to the convention. The main goal is however that future Norwegian support to the UNCCD rather will go through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Utenriksdepartementet 2003: Notat om Søknad til støtte til ”An Ecosystem approach to Restoring West African Drylands and improving Rural Livelihoods through Agroforestry-based Land Management Interventions”.

<sup>13</sup> The GM is by many seen as a compromise for neither establishing a fund nor including the UNCCD in the GEF; the main task of the GM was to increase the effectiveness of existing resources and mobilise new financial resources and transfer new technology.

<sup>14</sup> Utenriksdepartementet 2003: Notat om Støtte til Den globale mekanismen for Forørkningskonvensjonen.

<sup>15</sup> The GEF is intended to help developing countries fund projects and programs that protect the global environment. GEF grants support projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants. As a response to the the decision by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August-September 2002, which, *inter alia*, recognized the complementary roles of the GEF and the Global Mechanism of the Convention in providing and mobilizing resources, the Conference of the Parties 6 of the UNCCD in Havana August-September 2003 welcomed a future collaboration between the UNCCD and the GEF.



#### *5.1.4 UNCCD Secretariat*

In 2003 Norway supported the UNCCD Secretariat with 3.1 mill NOK.<sup>16</sup> The money were earmarked for three initiatives:

- 1) Participation of developing country Parties in the 6<sup>th</sup> COP in Havana, 25 August – 5 September 2003. This encompassed both support to NGOs and government representatives. 1.3 mill NOK were earmarked for this.
- 2) Support to Regional Meetings, with the main goal of exchanging experiences, results and challenges in the process of carrying through the convention. 1.0 mill NOK were earmarked for this.
- 3) Support to Regional Seminars in Africa and Asia about agroforestry and land protection. This support is given within the regional action plans to combat drought and desertification. 800,000 NOK were earmarked for this.

### ***5.2. NGOs and the Drylands Coordination Group (DCG)***

#### *5.2.1. Support through NGOs*

Several Norwegian NGOs have projects or support partner activities in drylands areas of sub-Saharan Africa, and there is an on-going dialogue between the NGOs and Norwegian authorities on how to best support the implementation of the UNCCD in affected partners' country. Besides from what is being channelled through the DCG, Norwegian NGOs also support the implementation process as individual organisations. Support is usually channelled through civil society or government institutions in affected countries. The bulk of Norwegian NGO support to the UNCCD is not directly related to the NAPs.

Table 2 presents Norwegian funded projects channelled through Norwegian-based NGOs. Not all of the projects presented are directly linked to the UNCCD, but share common goals of combating land degradation, facilitating sustainable management of natural resources and reducing poverty. It should be noted that the table is not exhaustive on NGO-based support to the UNCCD; it has a focus on selected DCG-member NGOs, and their activities in drylands areas in Sub-Sahara Africa.

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<sup>16</sup> Utenriksdepartementet 2003: Notat om Støtte til Sekretariatet for Forørkningskonvensjonen (UNCCD) 2003.

**Table 2:** List of NGO-based drylands projects

NGO	Country	Project	Objectives/Activities	Local partners	Budget (mill NOK)
<b>Norwegian People's Aid</b>	Eritrea	Gash Barka	Support to micro-cooperatives, teaching and capacity building amongst farmers, institutional development and capacity building, soil- and water conservation	Ministry of Agriculture, Gash Barka Region and the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW)	4.0
	Ethiopia	Tigray	Improved economic diversification and food security for rural household	Relief Society of Tigray (REST)	5.0
	Sudan	Food security, land and resource rights, South Sudan.	Teaching on farming and forestry, guidance and extension activities, strengthening of local institutions	SPLM Secretariat for Agriculture and Animal Resources	5.0
<b>ADRA Norway</b>	Sudan	Um Jawasir	Food security, capacity building and rehabilitation of natural resources/ Construction of wells, innovative agriculture, teaching and capacity building amongst women and men, strengthening of local institutions, fund raising, collection of social and environmental data	ADRA Sudan	1.8
<b>The Development Fund</b>	Ethiopia	Drylands Program - Tigray and Afar	Improve food security for the rural households in the most drought prone and environmentally degraded areas/water harvesting, soil- and water conservation, capacity building and strengthening of civil society, income-generating activities for women and improvement of pastoral production	Relief Society of Tigray (REST), Mekelle University (MU), Afar Pastoral Development Association (APDA)	17.0
	Eritrea	Drylands Program - Gash Barka Region	Improve food security and living standard/water harvesting, soil- and water conservation, capacity building and strengthening of civil society, income-generating activities for women and improvement of pastoral production	Ministry of Agriculture, Gash Barka Region and the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW)	2.4
<b>Care Norge (Norway)</b>	Mali	Communal development and strengthening of local Timbouctou, Koro/Bankas.	Construction of irrigation systems and wells, saving and credit schemes for women, organisational capacity building, and establishment of social funds	CARE Mali Regional and communal authorities, local NGOs.	16.0
		Livelihood security in Segou	Participatory project on Integrated Plant Nutrient		

Management

	Ethiopia	Integrated Conservation and Development in and around Awash national park.	Improvement of water sources and human and animal health services. Improved food security, collaboration and management of natural resources in Awash national park	Care Ethiopia, Awash Park authorities, Ethiopian Wildlife and Conservation Organization, Afa and Oromo planning and development offices, regional, zonal and woreda authorities.	4.0
	Niger	Gender Equity and household livelihood security in Maradi.	Improved life conditions for 7,000 most vulnerable households in Maradi. Improved access, control and distribution of resources to women	Care Niger Local NGOs Women's groups, Ministry of Social Affairs	10.0
		Mata Masu Dubara, Women's Development.	Strengthening of women's economic, social and political position in Niger. Capacity building, resource mobilisation and management, savings and loans, cereal banks, networking		
	Tanzania	Livelihood security in Magu and Misungwi Districts	Improved agricultural techniques and inputs, on and off-farm economic activities, savings schemes	CARE Tanzania District councils Ukiruguru Agricultural research and training institute	5.0
<b>Norwegian Church Aid</b>	Eritrea	Sheba Demas Development Programme	Community Development including agriculture sector development, health, education and water	Ministry of Agriculture	1,8
	Eritrea	Water and food security	Strengthen the capacity of vulnerable households to cope with drought and food insecurity	ERREC	5,0
	Eritrea	Water development in Keren	Access to water for vulnerable households	ECE	0,2
	Ethiopia	Water Development Programme	Access to water for vulnerable households		2,5
	Ethiopia	Meda Volabu Community development Programme	Integrated rural development programme focussing on the agriculture, tree nurseries, re-forestation, training livestock and income generation	EECMY	1,0
	Ethiopia	Integrated Rural Development Merssanu	Soil and water conservation, reforestation and agricultural extension	REST	0,9

Ethiopia	Integrated Rural Development, Wag Dahana	Soil and water conservation, reforestation and agricultural extension	EOC/DICAC	0,8
Ethiopia	Lay Armacho integrated rural development	Soil and water conservation, reforestation and agricultural extension, Education and health infrastructure	EECMY	0,8
Ethiopia	Rama Rural Development	Soil and water conservation, reforestation and agricultural extension, Education and health infrastructure	EECMY	0,7
Ethiopia	Konso rehabilitation	Soil and water conservation, reforestation and agricultural extension	EECMY	6,0
Sudan	Nuba Mountains Integrated Development project (SPLM & GoS controlled areas)	Soil and water conservation, reforestation and agricultural extension, Education and health infrastructure	NRRADO, SCC	10,2
Sudan	Bar el Ghazal emergency	Soil and water conservation, agriculture inputs, reforestation and agricultural extension, Education and health infrastructure		2,1
Sudan	Wau rehabilitation	Soil and water conservation, agriculture inputs, reforestation and agricultural extension, Education and health infrastructure	SCC	0,8
Sudan	EP-lafon rehabilitation	Soil and water conservation, agriculture inputs, reforestation and agricultural extension, Education and health infrastructure		1,0
Somalia	Water sector development in Gabraherre	Development of water infrastructure for human and animal consumption		0.1
Somalia	Gedo emergency relief towards self reliance in food security			1,0
Chad	District Development	Food security, agriculture extension, cooperatives development	EFLT	0,5
Mali	Development programme in Gao	Decentralisation processes, food security and IG	GRAIP	0,3
Mali	Gourma Development Programme	Rural development within sectors of agriculture, water, food	OADS	4,9

		security and capacity building		
Mali	Food Security in Kidal	Rural development within sectors of agriculture, water, food security and capacity building	ACF	1,2
Mali	Water Projects in PADDECK	Rural development within sectors of agriculture, water, food security and capacity building		0,3
Mali	Water development in Northern Mali	Food security and activities to control surface water		0,2
Mauritania	CNPSPS-Cooperatives for food security	Food security, non formal education, strengthening local cooperatives, micro projects	CNPSPSM	0,5
Mauritania	UCT food security	Food security, environment, micro credit, non-formal education	UCT	0,3
Mauritania	Integrated rural development	Food security, environmental rehabilitation, income generation activities	Lwf	1,7

### 5.2.2. The Drylands Coordination Group (DCG)

Norwegian NGO- and research efforts involved in combating desertification and drought have since the ratification and implementation of the UNCCD mostly been channelled through the Drylands Coordination Group (DCG). The DCG is an NGO driven forum for sharing of practical experiences between NGOs, government institutions and research- and policy-making institutions. Norwegian NGOs that are members of the DCG include ADRA Norway, Care Norway, the Development Fund, Norwegian Church Aid and Norwegian People's Aid. All are operating or funding projects in the drylands of Africa in the integrated fields of food security and natural resource management. In 2003 4.5 mill NOK were channelled through the DCG.

Norwegian NGOs involved in the SSE-programme established DCG in 1997, and has had a collaboration agreement with NORAD since 1998. Since its establishment, DCG has expanded to include national groups in Eritrea, Ethiopia (incl. Sudan) and Mali. Through the DCG network, national NGOs, research and government institutions are collaborating and jointly undertaking activities to enhance the capacity and quality of projects implemented, as well as contributing to a successful implementation of the UNCCD. Noragric (Centre for International Environment and Development Studies) at the Agricultural University of Norway hosts the DCG secretariat and plays a supporting technical advisory role for the DCG.

The DCG implements, through the funding from NORAD, various types of activities; technical support to individual projects, workshops and institutional support, research and analysis, information dissemination, networking activities and coordination. By carrying out studies, seminars, workshops and networking activities and hereby improve the quality and capacity of project implementation, DCG aims to contribute to improved food security of vulnerable households and sustainable natural resource management in the drylands of Africa. More specifically, DCG's objectives are to:

- Contribute to improving the capacities and quality of development interventions carried out by member and partner organisations.
- Act as a competence forum on food security and natural resource management in the drylands of Africa.
- Support partners in contributing to the follow-up of the NAPs/UNCCD in affected countries.

A main challenge in DCG's work with the UNCCD is to support partners and local communities in designing and implementing appropriate UNCCD related projects, and thus enhancing the linkages between operational projects and the actual implementation of the National Action Programmes to combat desertification. Another challenge is to link all DCG's activities and involvement in the UNCCD, the international processes, the European networking initiative on Desertification (eniD<sup>17</sup>) etc. to the countries DCG works in and the concrete implementation process.<sup>18</sup>

### ***5.3 Norwegian bilateral support to the implementation of NAPs***

Norway has substantial bilateral cooperation with several sub-Saharan African countries considered as affected. This applies particularly to Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Mali and South Africa. All of these countries have ratified the UNCCD.

The National Action Programmes (NAP) for the implementation of the UNCCD were at an early stage identified as important tools in the Norwegian following-up of the convention in cooperating countries. According to the obligations of the convention, all ratifying countries are obliged to develop and implement NAPs in order to identify the factors contributing to desertification and practical measures necessary to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.<sup>19</sup> The NAPs should furthermore be mainstreamed in all member countries' PRSPs.

Since most of the Norwegian bilateral support to cooperating countries is supposed to be managed and distributed by the recipient countries themselves, it has been difficult to trace bilateral Norwegian aid that goes to the development and implementation of NAPs. But as far as this study has been able to reveal, in the dialogue with the cooperating countries Norway has to a limited degree linked relevant projects to the actual implementation of NAPs. It seems that NORAD and UD assume that NAPs are mainstreamed in the national PRSPs.

Whether Norway should take a *chef de file* role on the convention in Ethiopia was on the agenda in 2003. This consideration was based on a request from the Ethiopian government. Because of limited resources and strained capacities the staff at the Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa has expressed scepticism to have such a position in the development cooperation with Ethiopia.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The European networking initiative on Desertification (eniD) is a working group of six organisations and networks, which are operational in the field of sustainable development in drylands; it is dedicated to the implementation of the UNCCD in general and to the participatory approach of the convention in particular.

<sup>18</sup> Drylands Coordination Group Annual Report 2002. Drylands Coordination Group, Noragric, Ås.

<sup>19</sup> UNCCD: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. Published by the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

<sup>20</sup> E-mail from Mette Ravn, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ethiopia, 01.10.2003.

## 6. Other UNCCD related activities

In the process of identifying Norwegian support to the UNCCD, besides from what has been presented above it has been difficult to find activities that are directly linked to the convention. Still some activities can be said to share common objectives with the convention, without explicitly mentioning the UNCCD in project documents and reports. NORAD (and UD) representatives identified particularly one project in north-western Tanzania called Shinyanga Soil Conservation Program to be important. Furthermore support to the Afar Livestock Recovery Programme in Ethiopia by the FAO is presented as a project in drylands areas with Norwegian support.

### 6.1 The Shinyanga Soil and Conservation Program

The Shinyanga province in Tanzania is a semi-dry area with erratic rainfall. Increased pressure on resources during the past 50 years has led to deforestation, overgrazing and erosion, which in turn have caused lowered standards of living over the years. The Shinyanga Soil and Conservation Program has been supported by Norway for 20 years, and was in 2002 granted 2.98 mill NOK.

The programme is a response to a recognised need for decentralised approaches to *increase productivity in a sustainable manner*. The overall goal of the project is to reverse land degradation in a manner that is ecologically sustainable, financially attractive and culturally acceptable. Today the project approach is on communication, extension and a combination of traditional natural resource management and science-based agro forestry. Research institutions (ICRAF) have been integrated into the project. The research focus is on challenges identified by the local population living in the local environment using local based knowledge.

The project has led to increased access to a number of products (fodder, firewood, traditional medicine, building materials, fruit, milk, etc.), increased biodiversity, improved local management and organisation, improved nutrition, local control over resources and better utilisation, higher production and income, establishment of farmer-to-farmer training groups, and local awareness raising about the environment. The project won an award at WSSD in Johannesburg.

There are challenges ahead that have been identified. The project needs to strengthen links to local administration to ensure long-term sustainability. In addition the project should not become too independent, and land tenure issues must be clarified.<sup>21</sup>

### 6.2 FAO Afar Livestock Recovery Programme in Ethiopia

The main goal of this project is to improve food security and enhance livelihoods of Afar pastoralists in Zone 3 of the Afar National Regional State (ANRS)<sup>22</sup>, with the objectives:

- 1) To enhance access of pastoralists to improved animal health services.
- 2) To establish sustainable feed supply systems and maintain productivity of livestock.
- 3) To strengthen coping mechanisms of pastoralists in Zone 3 of ANRS.

The activities include amongst others: capacity building and training of different groups, data collection and analysis, development of animal disease prevention plans and campaigns, review workshops on animal health delivery systems, establishment of animal health workers associations, establishing drug shops, land preparation and canal maintenance, support of initial cultivation of Napier grass, supply of drought tolerant grass seed and forage seed for

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<sup>21</sup> NORAD 2004: The Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): Why is it important for Norway? Presentation at the Conference about the UNCCD, Oslo 05.05.2004.

<sup>22</sup> Appropriation Document: GAP Ethiopia 2003/2004 – Afar Livestock Recovery Programme.

small scale irrigation, establishment of early warning steering committee, development of appropriate indicators, monitoring and reporting systems, reviewing existing warning systems, promote timely destocking and efficient livestock marketing.

This programme was in 2003/2004 granted 7.77 mill NOK through the UD.

## 7. Concluding remarks and lessons learned

From what has been presented, some conclusions and lessons learned can be drawn:

- Together with support through Norwegian-based NGOs, the majority of Norwegian support linked to the UNCCD is multilateral focussed. This has also been expressed in policy documents to be an important channel for Norwegian support to the UNCCD. UNDP, UNEP, GM and the UNCCD secretariat are the receiving parties working directly with the implementation of the convention and of NAPs. There seems to be a need for an increased focus on how to put the UNCCD on the agenda in bilateral negotiations with Norwegian partner countries.
- In early policy documents on Norwegian following up of the UNCCD, NAPs were expressed to be important tools. Today NAPs are assumed to be mainstreamed within each country's PRSP. It has not been possible within the framework of this study to make in-depth studies of country's PRSPs and Norwegian following-up in these. Still it is recommended that following-up of NAPs should be done in the dialogue with cooperating countries.
- There is a need for increased capacity on how to integrate projects and programmes related to agriculture, natural resource management and poverty alleviation into existing policies and action plans. Developing regional and local action plans is essential for an effective implementation of NAPs. The governmental focal points should be moved up to regional and local levels in order to increase the capacity of local partners to implement the convention.<sup>23</sup>
- The Drylands Coordination Group contributes directly in the implementation process by linking research, NGOs, governments and civil society in the follow-up of the NAPs/UNCCD in affected countries. DCG stimulates information sharing on drylands issues across borders and management levels, and links Norwegian expertise on drylands issues to NGOs and research institutions in partner countries. There are challenges ahead in linking all DCG's activities and involvement in the UNCCD, the international processes, eniD, etc. to the countries in which DCG works and the concrete implementation process.
- Through more than 20 years of work and involvement in drylands areas through, amongst others, the SSE Programme, NGOs' activities and the DCG, Norway has developed a substantial competence on drylands issues that contains a potential for the practical implementation of the UNCCD. Norwegian expertise on drylands issues seems to a very limited degree to be included and drawn upon in Norwegian development support to the convention. It is an expressed goal in the *Norwegian Plan of Action for Agricultural Development in Norwegian Development Co-operation* that research on drylands issues is one field where Norway has special competence<sup>24</sup>, and thus, the UNCCD should become a focal point in future Norwegian research efforts in the cooperation with affected partner countries.

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Gitte Motzfeldt, Program Advisor Drylands, The Development Fund.

<sup>24</sup> Utenriksdepartementet 2004: Landbruk mot fattigdom. Regjeringens handlingsplan for landbruksutvikling i utviklingspolitikken.