

## PORTUGAL - SUMMARY OF NATIONAL REPORT 2000

The National Action Programme to Combat Desertification was approved on 17 June 1998, and is the result of a widespread participation by agents involved and interested in the issue of desertification, mainly from the most affected regions, in a total of about 2200 people, in strict compliance with the spirit of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

We are now ready to begin the implementation of the NAP, as key requirements were already satisfied:

- Campaigns to raise public awareness on the issue of the desertification;
- Creation of conditions for a strong participation of public and private entities;
- Integrated interdepartmental and multi-disciplinary cooperation, from the drafting of policies up to the preparation of the implementation of specific actions;
- Creation of a National Committee to Coordinate the NAP and to monitor its implementation;
- Creation of a National Desertification Observatory, working closely with the National Committee, that will make possible the monitoring and the assessment of the programme's implementation.

A National Coordination Group was created in December 1996 to elaborate the NAP, presided by the Focal Point, including experts from eight ministries, several institutions of the civil service, some of the central departments and others from regional services, for a total of about 30 people. This Group was responsible for the preparation of a synthesis document on "Causes and consequences of desertification in Portugal", which was prepared to give to the public a scientific and technical background for discussion.

The public working sessions were held at the regional level with the participation of the media, universities, environmental NGO's, experts from official departments, teachers from several education levels and individuals concerned with the problem. A Scientific Council was also created to support the National Coordination Group. This Group was composed of 12 experts covering areas such as climate, soil, water, rural development, economy and sociology.