

**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES OF
RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**National Report
of the Russian Federation on implementation of the United
Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**

Moscow, 2006

Summary

Russian Federation has the biggest territory in the world (17 mln km²), which is situated as in Europe though in Asia, and is at the sixth place for population number (144 mln persons). Administratively the country is divided to 7 Federal Okrugs, which in their turn are subdivided into 89 subjects of Federation.

Russian Federation is big in agricultural production. At the same time the significantly grown industrial sector of economy in the last years makes the one third of GDP.

Ecological problems occupy an important place among many of global problems of modern time – poverty, terrorism, and spread of new diseases. The Government of the Russian Federation participates in programmes related to the environment and sustainable development, as well as it is ready to adopt new international instruments in the field of the environment protection.

Namely because of this the Russian Federation is the full member of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (hereinafter UN Convention to Combat Desertification or UNCCD) along with such international agreements of global character as the Framework Convention on Climate Change (hereinafter FCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (hereinafter CBD).

Russian delegation made a significant input to the negotiating process related to development of the text of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and its Annexes in period of 1993-1994. In spite of the fact that the Russian Federation did not sign the UNCCD in 1994 Russian specialists and scientists took an active part in the work of its bodies as the observers, promoting to implementation of UNCCD principles in areas subject to desertification, draught or land degradation at a broad territory of our state.

Russian Federation acceded to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (Regulation of the Government of Russian Federation of 27.05.2003 №303) on May 27 2003 and since that moment takes an active part in the process of practical implementation of the provisions of the Convention by the Russian side, including implementation of the decisions adopted at the recent sessions of the Conference of Parties.

Combating desertification, draught and land degradation in the Russian Federation is of current importance and has extremely important significant to the national economy.

Socio-economical relations in Russia in the last 70 years were developing in conditions of strict state centralized economy and management. Now the painful reconstruction of the systems of state administration, economy, social relations and people's psychology, changing of land property form is taking place what cause a number of ecological problems. Period of transition causes additional difficulties in addressing desertification problems too.

The specific of social conditions typical for Russia are as follows: higher density of rural population; comparably low heat supply (resource aspect); high-humid soils (resource aspect); low profitability of farming (regional problem); reduce of economic value of territory due to complexity of soil cover; ploughing up of shallow soils; ploughing up soda solonchaks; abolishment of valuable plant associations; degradation of soils and territories resulting from hostilities; low culture of construction and exploitation of irrigation systems; soils induration within use of heavy agricultural machinery; socio-politically stipulated actions, as the result of which the almost full loss of agricultural lands took place (for example ploughing up of shallow soils during the period of virgin lands development campaign).

Natural conditions typical for sub-humid zone of Russia in general are as follows: big share of non-sprinkled tillage as part of agricultural lands; characteristics of degradation of high-humid soils; presence of large masses of solonchak soils and alkalinization of soils; natural rise of ground

waters level on dry tillage massifs; soda geochemistry; soil draught of Siberian chernozems; slithezation of soils; suffosion; thermokarst; strong gullyness; presence of vast low-drained territories; underflooding caused by the Caspian Sea level rise. Specific character is that Russia is one of few arid regions in the world with negative winter temperatures and short vegetation period.

Territories, which are subject to desertification, draught and land degradation in a different degree, covers area of over 1 mln sq. km in Russia, approximately 70 mln ha are subject to land erosion and deflation, at 73 mln ha the level of acidity is raised, over 40 mln ha are at different stages of salinization, 26 mln ha are swamped and over 100 mln ha are subject to desertification.

Draught, semi-draught and dry semi-humid areas cover the significant part of the Russian territory. According to existing estimates the area of dry and draught areas is over 610 ths km² here.

Even more territory is covered with lands subject to draught effect. Areas with draught probability over 25% besides dry and draughty areas include a significant part of the south of Russia, and areas with draught probability less then 25% include even more north territories up to latitude of Saint-Petersburg in a European part of the region (60° n.l.), part of the south Siberia and even Central Yakutia. The forecast of change of CIS different regions aridity and their synchrony are of an extremely important practical significance.

Especially big practical danger present draughts within the limits of the steppe zone. Namely to the steppe zone the maximum production of phytomass, that reach 22 t/ha a year, belongs to. Presence of prolific soils historically predetermined the development of agriculture here. And just in these regions the grain belt of Russia is located.

A significant part of dry and draughty territories of Russia is subject to desertification.

The main plough lands and pastures (except deer pastures) are just situated in dry and draughty regions. Namely here the basic part of agricultural production is originated. The type of desertification prevalent in area extent in many parts of Russia is degradation of the green cover of pastures, merely in the limits of Kalmykia and Astrakhan oblast – to 60 th sq. km. As the result productivity of pastures is reduced to 40-60%.

Mostly all agricultural lands at the Northern Caucasus are eroded or erosion-hazardous. In Volga region, South Urals and in the Western Siberia no less than 25% of plough lands are subject to erosion. Reduction of soils fertility and erosion led to reduce of plough productivity to 30-40%.

As the specialists estimate only resulting from reinduration of soil by heavy agricultural machinery in the near years up to some 10-15% of plough lands and 5-10% pastures could be lost. Since 1970 in Russia areas with eroded, salinated and acid soils had increased approximately 2 times, with over-wetted and stony – 3 times, sandy-loam – in 8 times. Organic substances losses are recovered only for one third. In the last 30-40 years rich chernozems of the Russian plain had lost 10-15 sm. of fertile layer.

Due to high level of ground waters and lands salination some 741 ths ha of irrigated and 1080,5 ths ha of drained lands or 15 and 23 % of their total area respectively are in unsatisfactory condition.

Starting 1991 1476,8 ths ha of ameliorated lands were removed to dry lands, including in the following regions: Voronezh – 48,1, Volgograd – 77,1, Kurgan – 46,1, Rostov – 90,7 and Saratov – 200,9 ths ha.

One of the sharpest problems is the use of natural waters in arid and sub-arid regions. It is aggravated by the fact that geographic spread of water resources is extremely irregular, and all biggest river basins are located on the territory of several states. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of water resources use in Russia is extremely low. Also the big problem with utilization of drainage flow, which is forming at irrigated massifs, exists.

It is necessary to clarify the dissemination of water between states considering variations of flow, seasonality and water quality, develop new technologies that provide reduce of water consumption, especially in irrigation, and also reduce water loss. A special task is introduction of economic mechanisms of water consumption regulating including fees for water.

The most important problem in dry and draughty areas is biodiversity conservation, as one could meet up to 1900 species of vascular plants, 300 species of birds and 70 species of mammals in one region. A rare species share of the total flora composition reaches 12,5%, and number of rare animal species included to the Red Books is varies from 30 to 130 in different areas.

The most important way of biodiversity conservation is establishment of protected territories. Russia established an enough good system of protected territories, but exactly their number is obviously not enough in regions subject to desertification and draught.

Desertification causes a number of adverse socio-economic circumstances. The population income and life level are falling, the number of work places is reducing, the social tension is rising and the forced human migration is taking place.

The difficulty of desertification problems and some objective circumstances did not provide stabilization of desertification and achieve recovery of the degraded environment. The agro-forest-amelioration fund (land that need agro-forest amelioration) in Russia is 154,6 mln ha.

Russian Federation has the significant experience in combating desertification. The maps of desertification for different regions of Russia and the whole country were made. The forecast of impact of climatic changes on desertification was made. The assessment of population migration caused by desertification had been carried out. The different methods of soil amelioration, forest recovery, as well as methods of space monitoring of desertification and draughts were developed. The big practical works on amelioration of salinated soils, addressing water and wind erosion, sand fixation, recovery of pastures and forest amelioration are taking place. The action plans on combating desertification for separate regions of the Russian Federation were elaborated with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In an institutional aspect the Association of the regions of Russia under desertification was established. An "Arid Ecosystems" magazine is issuing.

Some of actions on combating desertification are put into the Federal and regional state programmes.

Different aspects of addressing this problem are under the competence of more than 10 federal executive bodies, 200 institutions of the regional level. More than 300 scientific and scientific-production organizations are working in this sphere.

Utmost urgency and importance of addressing the problem of desertification and land degradation in the Russian Federation put it among general problems that constrain ecological, food and economic safety of Russia, and that create social tension in the southern regions of the country.

In this connection combating desertification and land degradation prevention could become one of the priority directions of the state policy of the Russian Federation, as in the sphere of the natural environment protection though in socio-economic field.

The unique programme of action, which would join all strategies and action plans as at the regional though at the federal level is necessary in order to resolve the problems connected with combating desertification in the Russian Federation, in the frameworks of which the integration and coordination of different ministries and agencies actions and plans, as well as concrete regional actions implemented at the level of the subjects of the Russian Federation will take place. Such a programme should become the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAP), which the Russian Federation being the Party to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) should develop as implementation of one of the main

liabilities under UNCCD.

Basic information

1. Focal point institution:

A) UNCCD National Focal Point in the Russian Federation	Mr. E.V. Gorshkov Head of Division Department of International Cooperation in the Field of Environment Protection and Nature Use MNR of Russia tel.: +(7-495) 252.0988, fax: +(7-495) 254.8283 4/6 B. Gruzinskaya street, Moscow 123995 gorshkov@mnr.gov.ru
B) Coordination Centre (at the stage of validation)	ANO "Centre for International Projects" Mr. S.E. Tikhonov Director tel.: +(7-495) 165-05-62, fax: +(7-495) 165-08-90 58b Pervomayskaya street, Moscow 105043 tse@eco-cip.ru
Country-specific websites relating to desertification	There is no specific site related to combating desertification in the Russian Federation now, but materials on this theme are presented at different thematic sites, e.g. http://www.biodiversity.ru (Steppe Bulletin) etc.

2. Status of the National Action Programme (NAP):

Date of validation -	Body/institution/Government level which validated the NAP -
NAP review	Date(s)
NAP has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy	No
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	No
NAP implementation has started with or without the conclusions of partnership agreements	No
Expected NAP validation	2007-2008
Final draft of a NAP exists	No
Formulation of a draft NAP is underway ¹	Yes
Basic guidelines for a NAP have been established	Yes
Process has only been initiated	Yes
Process has not yet started	No

The draft Guidelines, structure of National Action Programme on Combating Desertification and Land Degradation (NAP) are developed now.

¹ The draft general directions, NAP structure are developed at the present time.

3. Member of Subregional Action Programme / Regional Action Programme (SRAP/RAP) that input the most significantly:

Name of subregional and/or regional cooperation framework		Involvement specifically in topics such as water harvesting techniques, soil erosion etc.
1.	FTP "Ecology and Natural Resources of Russia" (2002-2010) ² , including: 1.1. "Renewal of the Volga" 1.2. "Regulating of the quality"	1.1. Regulating of the water drain system, reduce of pollution level, reduce of level of diversion flow for irrigation 1.2. Fixation of blown sands through afforestation, sowing of grass etc.
2.	FTP "Increase of fertility of soils of Russia for the period 2002-2005"	Sand fixation at lands of agricultural purpose in Kalmykia and Dagestan and other anti-erosion activity
3.	"Agro-forest amelioration and phyto amelioration on area of 21 th ha to recover pastures at the Black lands and Kizliar pastures for the period 2006-2010"	Carrying out of reclamation activities

4. Composition of NCB

Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation – is the National Coordination Bureau (NCB). Besides, according to interagency allocation of responsibilities on provision of the Russian Federation participation in international organizations of UNO system (Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of June 3 2003 №323, with revisions of November 17 2004) the following institutions are responsible bodies on the UN Convention on Combating Desertification:

Name of institution		Government (√)	NGO (√)	Male	Female
1.	Ministry of Natural Resources of RF	X		X	X
2.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RF	X		X	X
4.	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of RF	X		X	X
3.	Ministry of Agriculture of RF	X		X	X
5.	Ministry of Finances of RF	X		X	X

MNR of Russia closely cooperate on the problem of combating desertification with other ministries and agencies of the Russian Federation, namely with: Russian Academy of Science (RAS), Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences (RAAS), All-Russian Academic Agricultural Scientific-Research Laboratory (VASKhNIL-ARAASRL), Institute of Geography of RAS, All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Agro Forest Amelioration (VNIALMI - ARSRIAFA), etc.

5. Total number of NGOs accredited to the process: 2

1. Development and Environment Foundation (DEF/Russia)	ICCD/COP(6)/9/Add.1 A/AC.241/9/Add.14
2. Socio-Ecological Union	
Has an NGO National Coordinating Committee on desertification been established; if yes, how many NGOs or civil society organizations participate in it?	no

² Implementation of this FTP was completed in 2005 in line with the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of 17.11.2005 № 1952-p.

6. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD: more than 160

Name up to five most relevant acts and laws and/or regulations:

	Title of law	Date of adoption
1.	Federal Law №7-FL "On the environment protection"	10.01.2002
2.	Land Code of the Russian Federation № 136-FL	25.11.2001
3.	Water Code of the Russian Federation № 167-FL	16.11.1995
4.	Federal Law № 172-FL "On transition of lands from one category into another"	21.12.2004
5.	Federal Law №154-FL "On general principles of organization of local governments in the Russian Federation" ³	2.08.1995

7. The consultative process

Number of partnership agreements that have been concluded and/or are being initiated within the framework of the UNCCD:

	Official name of partnership	Donor(s), international organization(s), and/or agencies of the UN system involved	Date of (expected) conclusion
1.	"Combating desertification through land resources sustainable management"	GEF	?

List of consultative meetings on UNCCD implementation:

	Name of consultative meeting	Date/year	International organizations or agencies of the UN system involved
1.	Round table on desertification problems in Russia and on issues related to development of Annex V to UNCCD	1998	UNCCD Secretariat
2.	International conference on soils degradation and desertification	1999	UNEP

³ Federal Law of 06.10.2003 № 131-FZ "On general principles of organization of local governments in the Russian Federation" will enter into force in corpore since January 1 2009.

8. Name of up to 10 projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD

Name of project	Project implemented within the framework of the NAP/SRAP/RAP	Project implemented within the framework of...	Timeframe	Partners involved	Overall budget	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Agro-forest amelioration and land-reclamation activity (2002-2005)	no	FTP "Increase of fertility of soils of Russia for the period of 2002-2005"	2002 – present time	Ministry of Agriculture of RF, regions of RF	US\$ 23'362 mln.
2.	Agro-forest amelioration and phyto amelioration on area of 21 th ha to recover pastures at the Black lands and Kizliar pastures for the period 2006-2010	no	FTP "Conservation and reproduction of soils fertility of lands of agricultural purpose and agro-landscapes as the national patrimony of Russia for the period of 2006-2010"	2002 – 2010	Ministry of Agriculture of RF, Republic of Kalmykia	US\$ 7'96 mln.
3.	Biodiversity conservation in Altai-Sayany mountain eco-region	RAP	Energy and the environment	January 2006, 60 months, in implementation stage	UNDP, GEF Ministry of Natural Resources Regional Administrations, WWF Russian Office, local environmental NGOs and research institutes	US\$ 15'175'000
4.	RF educational system support – Capacity building of MSIIR (U) MFA of Russia	RAP	Activity direction – Addressing poverty	January 2000 – December 31 2006	UNDP MSIIR (U) MFA of Russia	US\$ 1'951'220
5.	Promotion to Russian Federation preparations to G8 presidency in 2006	RAP	Use of globalization advantages for poverty reduction	February 2005 – July 2006	UNDP Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation	US\$75 000
6.	Training educational programmes and professional retraining of state officials	RAP	Dissemination of gender approach	April 1 2003 - April 1 2006	UNDP Russian Academy of the State Service under the President of RF	US\$ 51,500

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					Ministry of Health and Social Development of RF; Carleton University	
7.	Strategy and Center of local economic development for Bryansk oblast, which suffered from Chernobyl accident	RAP	Development of sustainable development plans and strategies	March 2004, 3 months, in implementation stage	UNDP Administration of Bryansk Oblast Federal agencies, business representatives, NGOs	US\$ 80,000
8.	Integrated conservation of Biological Diversity of the Lower Volga Wetlands	RAP	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use	January 2006, 60 months in implementation stage	UNDP, GEF Ministry of Natural Resources Institutes of Astrakhan, Volgograd regions and Republic of Kalmykia, occupied with economy and environmental issues; local population	US\$ 15,805,920
9.	Environmental Management Project (EMP) Arkhangelsk oblast Volgograd oblast Vologda oblast Ivanovo oblast Irkutsk oblast Kostroma oblast Krasnoyarsky Krai Nizniy Novgorod oblast Rostov oblast Sverdlovsk oblast Yaroslavl oblast	RAP	World Bank	December 2007	Debtor: Government of the Russian Federation Organization-implementer: MEDT, MNR	IBRD loan: US\$ 110 mln Total project cost: US\$ 185 mln