

**REPORT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
NORTHERN IRELAND**

**ON MEASURES TAKEN TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (CCD)
IN AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES OF REGIONS OTHER THAN AFRICA**

April 2000

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1. SUMMARY

The UK is committed to the elimination of poverty through work in partnership with other governments, business, civil society, the research community and multilateral institutions.

The UK recognises that the issues of desertification, land degradation and poverty are closely related to issues of poverty. There are strong connections in the UK's work to combat poverty in countries affected by desertification and activities in support of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. We regard it as important that the objectives of the Convention are not pursued as stand-alone activities, but that the issues of desertification and land degradation are integrated into the development plans of developing countries affected.

The UK is seeking to enhance our support of implementation of the Convention. This includes by focusing on assisting in the implementation of national strategies for sustainable development and in our extensive sustainable rural livelihoods approach to tackling rural poverty.

The UK has not provided any direct support for the preparation of National Action Programmes in affected countries. We are willing to provide support if this is recognised as a priority during country strategy discussions with development partners. The UK will continue to address the need to promote National Action Programmes through national strategies for sustainable development. We will look for opportunities to rationalise and simplify links and complementarities between National Action Programmes and national strategies for sustainable development. We are engaged in this process in a number of countries affected by desertification and land degradation, including in Latin America and Asia.

The UK has not engaged in any partnership agreements with affected countries in the regions covered under this report. We will consider how we can best support national programmes based on priorities established by the countries themselves, including through partnership agreements, if requested by the country concerned.

The DFID bilateral programme to areas affected by desertification other than in Africa is administered by six geographical departments, based in London and in affected regions. These departments administered a budget in 1999/2000 of nearly \$450 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, about \$570 million in Asia and about \$135 million in Central and Eastern Europe.

The UK administers its activity in combating desertification as an integral component of other development activities and strategies. The monitoring and separate identification of all desertification-related activity is problematic.

DFID is engaged in desertification-related projects in a number of countries in **Latin America** with total commitments of over USD \$28 million. These projects address the livelihood needs of those who live in or near lands affected by drought and degradation. We are working in partnership with regional governments and institutions in an ongoing effort to manage land effectively.

Our work in **Bolivia** has a number of goals including strengthening capacity of resource-poor farmers as well as the establishment of more effective policies to support livelihoods. In **Brazil** our programme includes a project aimed at assisting different state and municipal institutions to collaborate in the production and implementation of a sustainable development plan. Other projects in **Chile**, **Colombia** and **Peru** concentrate on improving skills in agricultural technology development including in the monitoring of soil quality.

Although DFID is not funding any projects in the **Caribbean** directly related to implementation of the Convention, work in the region aims to increase the use of participatory natural resource management systems.

UK commitments to **Asia** in support of the Convention total over USD \$210 million. The UK is involved in a very substantial programme in **India** where we have committed over USD \$160 million to projects which go toward combating the effects of desertification in semi-arid and drought prone areas. The projects invoke a sustainable livelihoods approach to addressing rural poverty and vulnerability to drought. We also work in **Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Thailand** and the **West Bank and Gaza** on projects related to desertification.

Although the UK has a significant development assistance programme in **Central and Eastern Europe**, we have not provided any assistance directly related to desertification.

The UK recognises the work of **multilateral organisations** and works with them in seeking to achieve sustainable development in the world's poorest countries. We support a number of multilateral organisations that contribute to the development of the poorest countries affected by desertification and drought (including the EC, UNDP, UNEP, FAO and the World Bank). The UK has pledged over £215 million to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The UK continues to seek to ensure that the GEF provides significant support to desertification-related activities within the context of its operational strategy.

Future Planning

We will continue to work on the development of national strategies for sustainable development. This will include work with the governments of Bolivia, Nepal and Thailand to promote workable strategies which support the principles behind NAPs.

We will continue to work to mainstream environmental concerns into the programmes of DFID, the European Community and other development institutions, taking account of concerns addressed under the Convention.

We will continue to develop and apply the livelihoods approach to alleviate poverty in vulnerable rural areas.

We will also expect more requests from developing countries for assistance to address desertification, within the framework of National Action Programmes, as they are established.

2. INTRODUCTION

This is the second formal report to be presented by the United Kingdom in accordance with Article 26 of the Convention.

The report sets out the policy context in which the UK provides its development assistance. We then talk about the approach we take to tackling desertification. We then outline some of the activities we are undertaking in support of the Convention in Latin America and in Asia.

Note on tracking activities in support of implementation of the Convention

The UK operates a statistical system to identify its work on desertification, land, degradation and drought. This was set up specifically to monitor the response of the UK to the requirements of the Convention. A list of recent, relevant projects identified under this system is at Annex 2.

Because of the wide range of actions which can help address the problems of desertification and the fact that activities in support of the Convention are frequently incorporated in wider projects and programmes, the list cannot be taken as final and definitive. For example, the UK's programmes contain a number of sectoral and cross-sectoral programmes and projects which contribute to the principles and objectives of the Convention, but which may not be separately marked as desertification projects. We also undertake a number of projects in support of land degradation objectives which are not in arid, semi-arid or dry sub-humid areas and therefore not marked under the system. We are currently looking at ways to make our system for reporting activities under the Convention more comprehensive.

Invitation to comment

We would welcome comment on this report, on the approach of the United Kingdom to the problems of desertification in developing countries and on the future direction of our work. Please address any comments or views initially to the UK Contact Point in London (see Annex 3).

The report contains only a summary of the full range of relevant UK activity. If you require any further information on any of the UK's activities or approach, Annex 3 contains details of relevant contact points.

3. THE UK, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ELIMINATION

This section briefly sets the UK's approach to development assistance. This has a significant bearing on the way in which the UK approaches implementation of the Convention.

The UK is committed to the elimination of poverty through work in partnership with other governments, business, civil society, the research community and multilateral institutions. The Department for International Development is the British government department responsible for promoting sustainable development and the reduction of poverty in developing countries. UK commitments for development assistance are due to rise from approximately USD \$3.8 billion in 1999/2000 to approximately USD \$5.1 billion in 2001/02.

The UK recognises that the issues of desertification, land degradation and poverty are closely related to issues of poverty. There are strong connections in the UK's work to combat poverty in countries affected by desertification and activities in support of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. We regard it as important that the objectives of the Convention are not pursued as stand-alone activities, but that the issues of desertification and land degradation are integrated into the development plans of developing countries affected. We have not established dedicated programmes of support for Convention commitments per se. Instead, the design of our programmes depends on development priorities identified by developing countries themselves.

The UK's programmes of assistance are built around the country strategy process. In partnership with developing country governments and communities, DFID develops country strategies for each of its partners, which reflect partners' priorities and the UK's comparative advantages. All DFID activities in a country are undertaken within the framework of a country strategy. The extent to which DFID focuses on desertification activities will depend on the priorities identified by the developing country itself and will not be imposed from outside.

4. THE UK AND DESERTIFICATION

The UK believes that actions to address desertification are best taken in the wider context of strategies for sustainable development and the elimination of poverty. As this report shows, the UK continues to support a wide range of activities to address desertification, land degradation and drought.

We are also continuing to pursue two major initiatives with particular relevance to the Convention. First, through the livelihoods approach, we aim to improve the lives of poor people and strengthen the sustainability of their livelihoods through work to support education and information, their social environment, natural resource management, infrastructure, financial resources and institutions. Secondly, we are helping to lead an OECD/DAC process to promote national strategies for sustainable development (nssds) in developing countries. Nssds share many characteristics with NAP principles. For instance, they are participative and cross-sectoral and build on existing plans, institutions and local capacities. The UK continues to believe that our work to support the establishment of nssds in countries affected by desertification will help significantly to implement the Desertification Convention.

Further information on UK approaches to desertification can be obtained from the UK Contact Point in London (see Annex 3).

5. UK ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE CONVENTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Support for National Action Programmes and partnership agreements

The UK has not provided any direct support for the preparation of National Action Programmes in affected countries in the region. The UK is willing to provide support if this is recognised as a priority during country strategy discussions with development partners. We will also continue to address the need to promote National Action Programmes through national strategies for sustainable development and will look for opportunities to rationalise and simplify links and complementarities between NAPs and nssds. For example, Bolivia is one of the first developing countries to explore the potential for the application of an nssd within the framework of its existing National Dialogue.

Given the early stage of development of NAPs in many countries in the region, we have not yet provided support for activities specifically within such NAP frameworks, whether through partnership agreements or other channels. However, we would expect that NAP priorities will start to be articulated in strategic discussions with countries in the region during coming years.

Other activities related to implementation of the Convention

UK commitments to desertification-related activities in Latin America total over USD \$28 million. We are currently undertaking a total of 15 such projects in: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia and Peru. Many other activities undertaken by DFID in the region help to support the objectives of the Convention. The department responsible for delivering the UK's development programmes in Latin America is based in London. The Caribbean programme is based in Bridgetown, Barbados. Contact details for the departments are given at Annex 3.

The departments have significant delegated authority to develop, in full consultation with authorities and communities in the region, development assistance programmes which reflect the priorities of those stakeholders. Programme components and approaches may differ from region to region as a reflection of those priorities.

DFID works with civil society, different levels of government and research institutions on various issues in land management across the region. DFID supports projects that address the underlying causes of desertification, through, for example, the support of research and training in the management of natural resources.

The following project examples are intended to be illustrative of DFID activity in the region. They do not represent the full picture and do not necessarily capture the contribution provided by projects in other sectors, such as small enterprise development and infrastructure.

The poor in **Bolivia** are mostly concentrated in rural areas. The DFID funded Mink'a IV Agricultural Development Project is being implemented by UNDP Bolivia. A five year project that started in 1999, it seeks to reduce poverty by sustainably improving livelihoods, for both men and women, through raised agricultural incomes and increased participation by women in decision making. Central activities to achieving this goal include the production of infrastructure, notably irrigation systems, terraces and river parapets, training assistance in water and land management, as well as agriculture, livestock and forestry techniques.

DFID have funded a project in Bolivia which aims to better understand the links between sustainable agriculture policy and practice in the Andean Highlands. We are also supporting a programme to develop the capacity of the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) to develop and deliver land management technologies aimed at improving the livelihoods of resource-poor farmers. Other recently completed projects reinforce the emphasis under the Convention on participatory approaches to tackling desertification. Issues of participatory improvement of soil and water conservation practices in hillside production systems in the Andean Valleys was successfully undertaken. One project focused on research into soil and water conservation in semi-arid zones, where indigenous technologies were complemented with scientific experience, and both farmers and scientists were involved in a strong working relationship.

In **Brazil** we have committed over £3 million to projects in the North East of the country. One project seeks to foster the sustainable use of plant resources by local people. Another significant project has assisted both state and municipal institutions to collaborate with the state Environmental Agency in the production and implementation of a sustainable development plan for the Pirapama catchment area. The sustainable development plan uses a multidisciplinary approach incorporating a training programme and broad ranging technical inputs.

Although none of DFID's work in the **Caribbean** region is directly in support of implementation of the Convention, some work is consistent with the Convention's objectives. For example, a project being implemented by the Caribbean Natural Resource Institute (CANARI) aims to increase and support the use of participatory and collaborative natural resource management systems involving poor resource users in the Caribbean. The project aims of eliminating poverty amongst resource users, maintaining biodiversity and sustainably increasing natural resource productive capacity, will contribute to a more sustainable and equitable use of resources in the region.

6. UK ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE CONVENTION IN ASIA

Support for National Action Programmes and Partnership agreements

As in the Latin America and Caribbean region, the UK has not provided any direct support for the preparation of National Action Programmes in affected countries in the region. The UK is willing to provide support if this is recognised as a priority during country strategy discussions with development partners. We will also continue to address the need to promote National Action Programmes through national strategies for sustainable development and will look for opportunities to rationalise and simplify links and complementarities between NAPs and nssds. Thailand and Nepal are among the countries exploring the potential to apply nssd principles to their development plans.

Again, given the early stage of development of NAPs in many countries in the region, we have not yet provided support for activities specifically within such NAP frameworks, whether through partnership agreements or other channels. However, we would expect that NAP priorities will start to be articulated in strategic discussions with countries in the region during coming years.

Other activities related to desertification

The UK supports 11 projects to address desertification and land degradation in Asia. These represent commitments of over USD \$210 million. By far the largest proportion of these is in India.

DFID have a very substantial, long-term programme in **India** addressing the effects of desertification and drought. Commitments to these projects total over USD \$160 million.

The Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP) is operative in four districts which are amongst the poorest in India and which have suffered repeated drought. The project involves a start-up phase of 2 years, followed by an implementation phase of up to 8 years.

WORLP forms part of a wider DFID effort to help the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment improve the effectiveness of watershed work nationally. The rural livelihoods approach taken includes significant participatory planning to reflect the livelihood needs of the poorest. WORLP will work within the Government of India's Watershed guidelines with extra resources for activities including capacity building, minor irrigation and livelihood initiatives for the poorest. The project area, which has a population of some four million people (of whom 60 to 70% are below the official poverty line) has received little support from international donors. Erratic rainfall, limited irrigation, and restricted opportunities for non-land based activities are major factors contributing to poverty in the region. Capacity building for vulnerable groups in existing watershed projects will be facilitated by "livelihood support teams" (LSTs) in each project village. The LSTs will identify the needs of the most vulnerable and facilitate negotiation of resource rights within the watershed microplans. The focus on including marginal groups and developing the capacity for self-help will go toward achieving a reduced vulnerability to drought and greater food security for poorer families. The technical input involves elements of land rehabilitation, intensified farming and labour based strategies of employment.

The Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project (APRLP) provides over USD \$60 million in financial aid and over USD \$8 million of technical cooperation funds to support capacity-building and knowledge generation. APRLP is in five semi-arid and drought prone districts: Kurnool, Anantapur, Prakasam, Mahaboobnagar and Nalgonda. APRLP has analysed constraints and opportunities facing vulnerable groups and encourages grassroots organisations and participatory plans reflecting their livelihood needs. The Project is largely managed by district authorities with NGO's and Community Based Organisations having a substantial role. APRLP differs from WOLRP in that it focuses more on capacity building to meet the state's request and its efforts are concentrated more in the convergence of existing strategies.

The substantial scale of DFID support will facilitate the full coverage of the watershed programmes which are key towards the elimination of poverty. It also addresses the specific capacity shortfalls needed for implementation.

In **Pakistan** the UK has committed significant funding to several rural development projects. One of which, the Lachi Poverty Reduction Project, seeks to bring sustainable improvements in the livelihoods of over 100,000 people living in one of the most drought prone and poorest areas of the North West Frontier Province. The project is due to run to 2003. Agriculture dominates the economy in the area but only

8% of the land is cultivable. The project is co-financed by UNDP and builds on work already ongoing. The focus of the project is community mobilisation and addressing the problems of forced migration due to poor natural resources and lack of infrastructure by emphasising micro-finance and enter-prise development.

In Northern **Kazakhstan** the UK has been funding a Rural Advisory Services Support Project since 1998. The project will establish an Advisory Centre which will work as a transitional provider of technical and commercial advice on farm restructuring. The project will further increase the capacity of farm managers to undertake farm planning. Increasing the productivity levels of farms will be achieved through the provision of legal and business management advice, an integral part of a framework being established to improve rural livelihoods.

In **Thailand**, DFID are funding a permaculture project aimed at implementing a sustainable agriculture system addressing the problem of low productivity and reversing the trend of soil and environmental degradation. Although only comparatively small areas of Thailand are in dry sub-humid zones the problems of soil fertility are widespread and have a significant affect on agricultural yield.

7. OTHER ASSISTANCE

The UK recognises the work of **multilateral organisations** and works with them in seeking to achieve sustainable development in the world's poorest countries. In 1999/2000, DFID's total contributions through multilateral channels were approximately USD \$1.83 billion, 48% of the total development programme. It is not possible within this figure to give an exact breakdown of the UK funds that contribute through these organisations towards relevant desertification activities in the regions covered in this report.

We support a number of multilateral organisations that contribute to the development of the poorest countries affected by desertification and drought (including the EC, UNDP, UNEP, FAO and the World Bank). The UK has pledged over £215 million to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The UK continues to seek to ensure that the GEF provides significant support to desertification-related activities within the context of its operational strategy.

An important element of our work with multilateral organisations is the UK's work with the European Commission and the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD to promote national strategies for sustainable development (see above). We are also working with the World Bank to ensure that the Poverty Reduction Strategy Initiative takes adequate account of all the elements of sustainable development and so help to support the objectives of the Desertification Convention.

8. FUTURE PLANS

We will continue to look for ways in which to strengthen implementation of the Convention in the regions covered by this report, through our bilateral and multilateral development assistance partnerships. As examples of future developments:

- We will continue to work on the development of national strategies for sustainable development. This will include work with the governments of Bolivia, Nepal and

Thailand to promote workable strategies which support the principles behind NAPs.

- We will continue to work to mainstream environmental concerns into the programmes of DFID, the European Community and other development institutions.
- We will continue to develop and apply the livelihoods approach to alleviate poverty in vulnerable rural areas.
- We will expect more requests from developing countries for assistance to address desertification, within the framework of National Action Programmes, as they are established.

Annex 1

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
NAP	National Action Programme
Nssd	National Strategy for Sustainable Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRSP	Natural Resources Systems Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WORLP	Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project

Annex 2

COUNTRY	PROJECT TITLE	VALUE (US\$)
Bolivia	CIAT Strengthening Projects	3,213,6
Bolivia	Amboro Rural Development	4,675,3
Bolivia	Land Reclamation & Irrigation Project	781,7
Bolivia	Link Between Policy and Practice in the Andean Highlands	207,3
Bolivia	Mink'a Phase IV Agriculture Development	4,481,6
Bolivia	Participatory Improvement of Soil and Water Conservation Practices	93,8
Brazil	Tapajos National Forestry Management Project	1,392,0
Brazil	Ape Norte, Bahia State, Environmental Planning	1,632,0
Brazil	Plantos de Nordeste	3,124,8
Brazil	Pirapama Basin, Planning and Environmental Management	1,968,0
Chile	River Basin Management Project	1,560,0
Chile	Enhance Regional Environmental Management Capacity	1,760,9
Chile	Three Projects:Environmental Project Management	2,191,2
Columbia	Pronatta NGO Strengthening Project	1,153,6
Peru	Integrated Development Programme, Cordillera Negra	709,2
Thailand	Permaculture Project Thailand	352,0
Rep of Kazakhstan	Rural Advisory Services Support Project (New PHS)	840,0
Rep of Uzbekistan	Support for Bulungur Private Farmers Association	760,0
West Bank & Gaza	Sustainable Management of West Bank and Gaza Aquifers	1,340,1
India	Karnataka Watershed Development Project	24,384,0
India	Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project	53,200,0
India	Western India Rainfed Farming Project Phase 11	32,016,0
India	Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project	72,868,8
India	Development of two Watershed Manuals	233,7
India	AP Rural Livelihoods in Rainfed Areas Project	240,0
Pakistan	DFID/UNDP Rural Development Project	4,640,0
Pakistan	Agha Khan Rural Support Programme	25,792,0

TOTALS

Annex 3

CONTACT LIST

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