

**United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**

**Socialist Republic of Vietnam**

**VIETNAM NATIONAL REPORT  
ON THE UNCCD IMPLEMENTATION**

**Hanoi, April 2002**

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## ABBREVIATION

5MHRP	5 Million Hectare Reforestation Programme
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBD	Convention on Biodiversity
CCC	Convention on Climate Change
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COP	Conference of the Parties
DFD	Department for Forestry Development
DOSTE	Department of Science, Technology and Environment
DWMIS	Department of Water Management and Irrigation Systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPD	Forest Protection Department
FSSP	Forestry Sector Support Programme
GDHM	General Department of Hydro- Meteorology
GIS	Geographical Information System
GDLA	General Department of Land Administration
GOV	The Government of Vietnam
HEPREP	Hunger Eradication and poverty Reduction Programme
ICD	International Cooperation Department
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MEB	Monitoring and Evaluation Board
MET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoFi	Ministry of Finance
MOSTE	Ministry of Sciences, Technologies and Environment
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NAP	National Action Programme to Combat Desertification
NAPE	National Action Programme on Environment and Sustainable Development
NCB	National Coordination Body
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-government Organization
ODA	Overseas development assistance
PSC	Partnership Steering Committee
RAMSAR	Convention on Wetland of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat
RAP	Regional Action Programme
SFE	State Forest Enterprise
SRAP	Sub-regional Action Programme
TPN	Thematic Programme Network
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	The World Bank

## **1 . SUMMARY**

Desertification and land degradation are complex environmental and social happenings which occur in so many parts of the world, impeding socio-economic development and challenging human survival on earth. The impacts of the phenomena have become among the major concerns in the global environmental agenda, resulting in the birth of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1994. One of the most forcing arguments for the negotiation of the UNCCD was the recognition of the increasing dimension of losses caused by land degradation and drought. The Convention's membership which has expanded to over 170 parties and continues to grow manifests the Convention as an important and powerful instrument of the world community to put the problem under effective control.

In Vietnam, according to the latest inventory, there is more than 9 million ha of unused land and water surface, of which large degraded barren hill areas have completely lost their biological productivity. Among the 21 million ha of in-use agricultural and forest land a considerable part has low fertility, yielding minor crops, especially the forest land.

The main forms of desertification and land degradation in Vietnam include soil erosion, serious drought, sand moving along the coast, land salination in the Mekong delta, and land sliding. Accordingly there are four types of degraded land:

- a) seriously eroded barren land in North and Central Vietnam;
- b) areas affected by moving sand and land sliding along the narrow coast in Central Vietnam;
- c) waterlogged saline and acidulated land in Mekong Delta and Long Xuyen quadrangle; and
- d) permanent or seasonal arid areas in many regions.

Although in Vietnam there are only deserts at local level, some hundred-thousand-ha, but local deserts/degraded areas scatter-distributed over the whole country, mainly in mountainous regions. It is important to note that desertification in Vietnam occurs increasingly faster and at a bigger scale during the last decades, along with the intensification of agricultural and forestry production. The situation is laying heavily negative impacts upon different aspects of socio-economic circumstances, worsening rural poverty and undermining living environment, and therefore requesting Vietnam to have well-elaborated strategies and priorities for combating it. This will be a long struggle to address the two basic problems: 1) elimination of causes of desertification, and 2) rehabilitation and restoration of the production capacity of the deserted/degraded areas.

Realizing the importance of international cooperation in combating desertification Vietnam ratified the United Nation Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1998 and, as a matter of fact, has implemented many programmes/projects of desertification control and has achieved encouraging success. However, in order to ensure that the Convention comes down to the desertification-affected places a carefully elaborated National Action Programmes (NAP) for implementing the Convention will be among the most important prerequisites.

For Vietnam combating desertification is mainly to combat deforestation, land degradation, and drought, therefore implementation of the UNCCD must focus on a) implementing programmes/projects to prevent deforestation, soil erosion, moving sand dune, land salination/acidulation; b) reclaiming degraded land; c) sustainable land use and water resources use; and d) forecasting and preventing drought and flood. In the framework of the National Action programme the above issues should be inter-linked

with the country's struggle for poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

The national report has followed exactly the Guidelines of UNCCD, the Decision 11 of the COP1. It has drawn briefly the main information on environment protection as well as in soil conservation, forest protection and development, water conservation and sand dune fixation activities of Vietnam. It highlighted the strategies and policy framework. This report is the result of the collaboration/cooperation among the representatives of the related partners, such as Government Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the localities and the executing agencies of international programmes and projects ongoing in Vietnam. The report is also the result of a National workshop with the participation of many other social, economical, environmental sectors and institutions relating to the environment protection and sustainable development in Vietnam.

The main content of the report is divided into eight parts:

1. Summary.
2. Strategies and priorities established within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies.
3. Institutional measures taken to implement the Convention.
4. Participatory process in support of preparation and implementation of action programmes.
5. Consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of national action programmes and the partnership agreements.
6. Measures taken or planned within the framework of NAP.
7. Financial allocation from national budgets in support of implementation
8. Review of benchmarks and indicators utilized to measure progress and an assessment thereof.

The priorities and strategies of the country relating to desertification combating are indicated as follows:

1. Population growth control to release the pressure to natural resources;
2. Sustainable management of natural resources;
3. Forest protection and development;
4. Research, training and extension activities on environment;
5. Disaster control and forecasting system;
6. Planning and policy formulating on environment;
7. Control the process of desertification, forecast the impacts of this process to the most endangered provinces/areas and support these localities in setting up socio-economic development plan with environment protection concern.

The report also draws up some achievements and lessons learnt from the past experience in the process of combating desertification. It also stresses the important role of local people and community in activities related to desertification control. The report has also mentioned the organization structure of National Coordination Body (NCB) and the role of National Focal Point (NFP) in formulating and implementing the National Action

Programme (NAP). The important role of international cooperation and the necessity of integrated programmes/projects to mobilize all available resources as well as technical assistance in the process of combating desertification are also emphasized.

This report has highlighted the priorities of NAP implementation and the NAP financing strategies, the partnership arrangement for NAP implementation as well as for the Forest Sector Development Strategies, which plays very essential role in combating land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought in Vietnam. The information officially distributed on a current serious drought happening during the last seven months in the whole country, especially in Central and Southern Vietnam, which has destroyed many agriculture crops and forests, is recalling the need of further strengthening of initiatives to combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought in the country.

## **2. STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND/OR POLICIES.**

## **2.1 National plans and strategies available in other social and economic sectors**

### **2.1.1 Poverty alleviation**

Poverty is one of the main reasons for land degradation and environment deterioration. In Vietnam there are about 24 million of mountainous residents, of which 3 million from different ethnic minority groups often practice slash-and-burn cultivation; their livelihood greatly depends on timber logging or collecting other forest products. Poverty rate among this group is the highest at present standards. A socio-economic survey made in 1997 showed that in the whole country there were 2.6 million ( about 14 million people) hungry or poor families, of which 300,000 families were annually suffering from acute shortage of food. In more than 1,000 especially difficult (very poor) communes the number of poor families makes up 40 per cent or higher, there were no inter-communal roads, illiteracy rate is as high as 70-80 per cent, malaria and goiter often rages.

Poverty is one of the biggest reasons for illegal cutting, forestland encroachment, self-acting immigration far from the commune, which sooner or later lead to deforestation and forest degradation. When the land around has become too degraded to produce enough food people have to go deeper into the forest for clearing a new one, left behind the degraded land for tropical erosion, and more forest will suffer in turn. This form of deforestation occurs in all mountainous regions where the poor ethnic communities have nothing to sustain their life other than scanty crop of maize and cassava.

The poor and hungry households (about 95 %) are mostly living in Region III, known as “deep and remote region”, classified as the poorest with the most difficult living conditions, characterized by a) self -subsistence economy; b) very high rate of poverty and hunger; c) shifting cultivation is common; d) very poor infrastructure; and e) very low literacy. In the region III ( mainly Northern mountainous area, Northern part of Central region, Central sea-coast area, Central Highland (Tay Nguyen) there are 1,715 poor communes (1,568 in rural mountainous areas) with 1,100,000 households and more than 6 mil people.

In Vietnam poverty is addressed through the implementation of many hunger eradication and poverty reduction programmes (HEPREP), the most important being:

***Rural Mountainous Infrastructure Construction Programme.*** The objective is to create a favorable environment for developing rural economy, stabilizing people’s livelihood, enabling the poor to benefit from social services. Activities include construction of inter-commune roads, electricity supply, primary schools, health care points, clean water pools, and commune markets for the communes lacking these services.

***Ethnic Community Resettlement Programme.*** The objective is to completely resettle shift-cultivating people and to stop slash-and-burn practices in mountainous areas. Activities include: a) establishing new villages/communes for resettling 1 million ethnic shift-cultivating people in the north mountains and Tay Nguyen; b) constructing infrastructure such as roads, schools, health care points, electric network, clean water systems etc. in the newly-resettled villages/communes; c) allocating land and providing tools, seeds, fertilizers to the resettled families; and d) providing further assistance to the people resettled in the previous years to stabilize their life and to prevent re-shift.

***Handicraft Development Programme.*** The objective is to create in-place jobs and income opportunities for the poor. Activities include: a) providing loans to the poor for reclaiming



fallow land and redeeming the mortgaged land to sustain agricultural and forestry production, enabling all land-wanting people to have production land; b) providing tools such as ploughs, hoes, fishing nets and boats, constructing livestock breeding cages/stables, and fish-rearing pools; c) providing assistance to restore traditional handicrafts and develop public services for income; and d) providing vocational and on-job training.

***Credit Programme.*** The objective is to provide the poor with low-interest-rate loans for developing production. Criteria will be established to provide the loans to the correct borrowers and correct objectives, and to reduce cumbersome procedures and corruption. Research is needed to identify the loan term and amount appropriate to the production cycle or rotation to ensure effective investment.

***Education Assistance Programme.*** The objective is to eradicate illiteracy of ethnic communities in the deep-remote mountains, to enable the poor children to go to school. Activities include: a) providing the poor children with reduced-fee or free-of-charge education, fellowships, handbooks, notebooks etc. ; b) giving priorities for admitting poor children from ethnic minorities to high schools or universities; c) adopting appropriate policy and attractive incentives to promote teachers from plains and cities to work in the mountains; and d) encouraging helping the setting up of educational extension associations and education assistance voluntary bodies in the mountains.

***Health Care Assistance Programme.*** The objective is to enable the poor to use health care services free-of-charge or reduced-charge. Activities include: a) providing Health Care Insurance Card to the poor to use health care services in the public (government) health care centers; b) providing free-of-charge medicines and training health care staff (physicians, nurses) for the poor communes; c) distributing information and methodology on disease-preventive hygiene, campaigning against superstition, negative-backward customs, and opium addiction.

***Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery, and Business Extension and Technology Transfer Programme.*** The objective is to provide the poor with know-how and technologies in respective production and business. The activities include: a) organizing in-place training courses to train core extensionists in selecting quality seeds, mother cattle, in know-how of small business and services; b) organizing study tours to advanced farmers or businessmen to promote exchanges of experiences; c) facilitating the setting up of occupational associations and cooperative bodies

***Poverty Alleviation Staff Training Programme.*** The objective is to provide qualified staff for the poverty Alleviation Bodies both at central and local level. Activities include organizing training courses at central, provincial and district level on policy development, planning, implementation, promotion of grass-root participation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

It is widely recognized that no environmental or social-economic development programme could be fully successful if not integrated with efforts for poverty alleviation. In many such programmes the poverty-alleviation-related component makes up to 70 % or even higher of the total budget as seen below:

<b><u>Project/programme</u></b>	<b><u>HEPREP component, %</u></b>
Programme 327 and 5MHRP (Programme 661)	70
Coastal open land and water surface rehabilitation	70
Education and training	30-100

Health care and dangerous diseases control	30-100
Children care and protection	80
Culture and communication	70

For example, during the 6 years (1993-1998) of implementation of Programme 327 about 1,500,000 ha protective forests were established and 1,600,000 ha of natural forests were contracted for protection through which about 7.5 million poor people substantially benefited. The main achievements of the programme were as follows:

- Immigration and resettlement: 92,000 households
- Job creation: about 1,000,000 households
- Commune transport network building: 5,000 km
- New-irrigated areas: 13,000 ha
- Building of health care points : 17,000 m<sup>2</sup>
- School building: 86,000 m<sup>2</sup>

Only in 1998 the government funded the programme 29 billion VND to provide ethnic minorities people with food, clothes, other for-life items and to help them grow agricultural crops, cash-income medicine plants and raise cattle, buffalo, goat, poultry etc.

### **2.1.2 Other strategies and programmes**

The main other strategies related to social and economic development for the period 2001-2010 are as follows:

- a) Implement three economics targets, such as industrialization with high growth rate, effectiveness and sustainability. Sustain macro economy; prepare necessary conditions for the next 10-year period development, such as human resource development, science and technology, infrastructure and policy/institutional development.
- b) Continue implement systematic and long-term policies for development of multi-sector products development economy, mobilize all available resources to develop production, develop market mechanism, strengthen management capacity of state institutions.
- c) Link closely economic development with social-cultural development, focus on the most essential issues to create new progress in social equality and social development.
- d) Make balance between the development of the most important economic zones with other areas, create conditions for all areas to be developed; develop the advantages of each area.
- e) Continue to solve some most urgent social matters, such as illiterate eradication, ensure the rate 22-25% of number of trained labour force in total labour force
- f) Develop and increase the effectiveness of research and technology transfer
- g) Develop communication and information channel, health care services, extend the activities in remote and out of road areas.
- h) Decrease the population growth rate to 1.5% in 2010.
- i) Create job for 7 million people, decrease the jobless people in urban areas to under 5% and increase the rate of labour employment in rural areas to 75%. Reform

salary system and salary policies. Step by step formulate jobless-security fund in cities.

- j) Basically complete resettlement and ensure stable life for ethnic minorities.
- k) Prevent and decrease pollution in cities and industrial zones.
- l) Prevent social evils and bad- impact culture.
- m) Secure and stabilize social and political conditions to ensure success of socio-economic development.

To implement the strategies, there are some main programmes as follows:

**a) *Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Programme*** with the following objectives:

- Rural development focusing on food security in any conditions, increase rapidly the food resources.
- Make agriculture and rural system effective change with extension of industrial crop zone development, fruit and livestock production.
- Sea and forest economy development
- Effective harvest potential of eco-agriculture
- Increase commodity production, extend rural market
- Link agro-forestry-fishery production with processing industry and export
- Increase income resource for farmers
- Speed up infrastructure for socio-economic development

**b) *Industry Development Programme*** with the main objectives:

- Change technology of almost enterprises
- Develop some most potential sectors in priority areas, create key industrial areas in processing of agriculture products, communication and information development, oil and gas exploitation and processing, construction material production, develop centralized industrial zones...

**c) *Infrastructure Development Programme*** with the main objectives:

- Rehabilitate the existing transport construction, the main national road, the roads in rural and mountainous areas and railways.
- Rehabilitate and extend capacity of existing ports as Cai Lan, Dung Quat, Chan May, Lien Chieu, Ben Dinh and Sao Mai
- Develop communication networks covering all provinces and areas.
- Develop and rehabilitate existing electricity networks to ensure electricity supply for urban and industrial zones.
- Make plans and develop water supply systems, continue clean water supply programme for rural areas

**d) *Science and Technology Development Programme***

This programme aims at developing science and technology, enhancing internal capacity considering it an important factor to promote the country's industrialization and modernization process, catching the world's technologies and sciences, selecting and controlling the transferred technologies to Vietnam. Initially developing some

high technologies such as: electronics, informatics, biotechnology, new material and automation. Promoting technical innovation in production, especially technology quality, concentrating on applying advanced technologies in order to take the country's technological level forward to the advanced level of the region at the beginning of the 21st century. Making an obvious change in environmental and ecological protection.

Developing some high technologies such as: informatics, biotechnology, material technology. Studying to develop some new kinds of material to replace these old ones. Developing environmental processing technologies.

Developing natural and social sciences and the humanity. Studying some key theories and discriminating application of modern and future sciences, studying and applying scientific and technological measures and management mechanism and policies to increase products' quality and competitiveness.

Combining technological and scientific programmes with socio-economic programmes.

Using resources rationally and protecting environment. Stopping activities that cause environmental pollution to assure working and living environment for people living in industrial areas, big cities. Strengthening environmental management in all fields, ensuring the implementation of Law of Environmental Protection.

***e) Economic-services Development Programme***

Targeted at increasing fast kinds of services, creating new services in order to meet various demands of production and living. Making healthy competitive environment and keeping the price of goods and necessary services stable.

***f) Foreign Trade Development Programme*** has the following objectives:

- Increasing annually the total export turn-over up to 28% (excluded exports on the spot). Widening export markets, changing export products composition.
- Import concentrates on materials and raw materials, technical equipment to meet the requirement of industrialization and modernization. Total import turn-over raises 24% annually.
- Policies of encouraging export, including price insurance for export products should be carrying out consistently. Foreign exchange rate should be adjusted to make favorable condition for export.
- After joining ASEAN and preparing for the participation in AFTA, promoting participation in APE and WTO, actively taking part in activities of the Global system of trade preference (GSTP) for developing countries. Applying international trade standards and selecting to joint some international export associations.
- Attracting official development aid (ODA), both bilateral and multilateral, to build socio-economic infrastructure, and increase scientific, technological and management level. Giving prior non-returnable aid to low developing regions.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) directs at high technological products and services with high export proportion. Effective policies and measures are necessary to attract investment to potential but still difficult areas.

***g) Education and Training Development Programme***

This programme aims at increasing the people's intellectual standards, ensuring necessary knowledge for the people in socio-economic life, making new conditions and motivations to promote the country's socio-economic development process. Training, fostering and increasing the quality of human resources to meet the demand of industrialization and modernization.

***h) Resettlement programme***

The objectives of this programme is to develop thoroughly activities of culture, information, sport, health care, population, family planning and other social aspects in order to increase the quality of material, spiritual and physical life of the people and satisfy the demand of human resources development and integrate into the international community. Combining harmoniously economic growth with social justice and development, solving urgent social matters and stopping social injustice and evil.

***i) Regional Development Programme***

Creating development in all regions based on each region's advantages and potentiality exploitation, and linkage with other regions. Therefore, in each region, there will be positive changes, an appropriate economic structure that can lead to a vigorous socio-economic development of the whole country.

Especially, the development of main areas should be united with region's and the whole country's development. Therefore, shortening the gaps in growth rate among regions is necessary.

Prior support should be given to mountainous or disadvantaged areas such as deep and remote areas or to ethnic minorities who live in high mountains, making favorable condition for them to grow. Initially, enforcing policies of tax, credit and technology transfer. Vietnam will continue implementing programmes of Hunger elimination and Poverty alleviation, settlement and re-greening barren land and denuded hill. Intellectual standards will be improved and step by step socio-economic habit will be changed in order to eliminate the differences between regions and developed centers.

The strategic task of the flat countryside is to ensure national food security, provide enough food for cities, industrial regions and increase export, including export on the spot. Cattle breeding, processing technology, traditional craft, etc. are encouraged. Based on them, part of agricultural labor will be moved to non-agricultural fields that helps to reduce the pressure of population and labor on big cities.

***j) Socio-economic Development Programme in Mountainous and Ethnic Minorities Areas***

Regional agriculture, forestry and industry will be developed to exploit local advantages and resources. Employing local labor along with attracting human and capital resources from outside for exploitation, investment and development.

Regarding to infrastructure and services, transport services are focused. Building inter-commune, inter-district and inter-province road, establishing irrigation system,

bringing electricity to districts and communal centers, carrying out mountainous fresh water programme.

Developing health care and education systems in communes and villages, covering radio and television waves and strengthening communication and information systems in deep and remote areas. Reducing proportion of poor households to 30% and eliminating hunger households by the year 2001.

Continuously realizing enforced policies and guidelines together with studying, amending and revising them to be suitable for new situation in mountainous area and each region. In order to gain achievement, training to increase professional ability of staff should be enhanced and the capacity of management and implementation of authorities at all levels.

## **2.2 National plans or strategies in the field of combating desertification developed prior to the UNCCD**

Vietnam has been a country party of several international conventions prior to the UNCCD, among which the main conventions related to environment protection are as follows :

- Convention on Wetland of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (RAMSAR);
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer;
- Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal;
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- Convention on Biological Diversity,

Before ratifying UNCCD, Vietnam had already formulated the National Action Plan for implementing CBD, the National Action Programme on Environment and Sustainable Development (NAPE) for the period 1991-2000. In the National Conference in 1998, the results and achievements of implementation of NAPE were reviewed and the draft of second NAPE for the period 2001-2010 were discussed.

In 1991, the National Assembly was approved the Law on Forest Protection and Development. The Land Law was also approved in 1993. The Law on Environment Protection got the approval in 1994 and four years later the Law on Water Resource was completely in force. This was the great effort of the country focusing on land and water protection, forests development – the major factors to support the desertification combating process before becoming a member of UNCCD.

For combating desertification Vietnam has implemented a series of major national and local programmes in forestry, environmental management and natural disaster control prior UNCCD.

### **2.2.1 Forestry development and land degradation protection**

***National Barren Land Re-greening Programme 1992-1998*** (known as Programme 327). The programme was designed to prevent soil erosion, land degradation and to reclaim degraded land for agriculture and forestry production. The overall objectives of the programme were a) to make an economically better use of the unused barren land; b) to increase the watershed capacity of the country by planting protection forests; and c) to improve the protection of national parks and other nature reserves (so-called special-use forests). The programme was adopted 15 September 1992 and implementation started in 1993 with a total investment of 2,987 bill VND (about US\$ 230 million), of which 420 bill VND were interest-rate-free credit provided to people for household and community forestry development and 2,560 bill VND were government direct investment for planting protection forests and contracts for protecting natural forests. Financial and technical support was also given for growing food and cash crops and raising livestock with the purpose to reduce poverty. Under the Programme 327 financial grants were provided to implement a series of forest planting/protection projects. The households in the project area were contracted for planting trees, protecting natural forests, or enrichment planting and natural regeneration. Land was also allocated to farmers for planting cash crops, fruit trees or agro-forestry. The programme has achieved good results in improving environmental conditions and developing agro-forestry in mountainous areas. Final evaluation of the programme made in 1998 showed the main achievements as follows:

- |                                       |                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Planting protection forests         | 640,000 ha                                                                                                        |
| • Protection for natural regeneration | 700,000                                                                                                           |
| • Contract-based forest protection    | 1,600,000 ha                                                                                                      |
| • Agro-forestry development           | 6,500 ha of coffee, 7,500 ha of tea, 20,000 ha of rubber, 26,000 ha of fruit trees, 31,000 ha of household garden |

Beside Programmes 327 there were many smaller local projects which combined afforestation with other objectives such as rural infrastructure development, poverty alleviation, watershed protection, soil-erosion control, irrigation etc. It is deserved to mention the main as following:

***World Food Programme Project 4304*** - reforestation in 13 coastal provinces, cost UD\$ 20.34 million, focusing on household and community forestry development, job- and-income creation for the rural poor.

***Community Forestry and Nature Reserve in Nghe An Province***, an on-going project, costing US\$ 21.4 million funded by the EC, aiming at forest conservation, community forestry development and poverty alleviation.

### **2.2.2 Drought control and water resource management**

Drought is a frequent happening in many parts of the country. Hydro-meteorological and statistical data showed that during last 39 years, there were only 10 years without drought. In Vietnam, total capacity of man-made water reservoirs is about 25 billion cubic meters. Total flow capacity of all natural drainage systems of the country is about 330 billion cubic meters. This means that the controlling capacity is about 8%.

Presently, some water reservoirs are in the process of designing or planing to construct in the Thach Han drainage system with the purpose to supply enough water for agricultural production, living and environment protection by the year of 2010. Rao Quan Lake

( $F_{IV}=1460 \text{ km}^2$ ) will supply water for both hydropower and watering the lowland. In the period of 1995-2000, 21 irrigation projects were implemented, the most important being:

***Irrigation, Flood Prevention and Rehabilitation Project***, implemented 1995-1998, covering coastal provinces, costing US\$ 76.5 million of loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UD\$ 19.6 million of Government budget.

***Hong River Delta Water Resources Sector Project***, implemented 1995-2000, costing US\$ 60 million loan from ADB and UD\$ 15 million of Government budget, designed to ensure the irrigation capacity for paddy rice field in Hong River delta, to drain large agricultural land in Ha Nam province, and to strengthen the Hong River dyke systems as well.

***Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Sea Dykes in Northern Vietnam***, implemented 1996-1999, costing UD\$ 40.2 million, funded by a World Food Programme's grant (UD\$ 25.3 million) and Government budget (UD\$14.9 million), designed to prevent sea flooding and land salting along the coast.

***North Van Nao Water Control Project***, implemented 1996-2000, costing US\$ 9.4 million, funded by an AUSAID's grant of US\$ 5.5 million and the Government contribution.

***Lower AYUN Irrigation Project***, implemented 1994-1999 in the Central Highland, costing UD\$ 16.5 million Kuwait's loan and UD\$ 7.5 million Government budget. It was designed to improve irrigation for hundred thousands ha of arid land in Gia Lai province which is often affected by severe drought during the dry season

As a matter of fact, since the yearly 1990 Vietnam as an affected developing country has implemented a number of programmes/projects to combat desertification, the common forms of which are all types of land degradation and drought.

### **2.3 Scientific and technical desertification control activities**

The main technical activities of desertification control are focused on monitoring and evaluation as follows:

- To establish of standards and methodology for planning on environment;
- To set up a database and the system of desertification impact indicators.
- To establish a guideline framework for conducting M&E.

The main objectives of the M&E are:

- Manage forests in sustainable way to ensure the balance between the forest products supply function and the environmental protection function of forests.
- Achieve land use sustainability at all levels, of all land owners in the principle to increase the soil productivity, ensure the ecological, socio-economic function of soil for the immediate and long-term demand.
- Rehabilitate soil, prevent bad impacts and bring back the fertility of soil to serve better livelihood development.
- Significantly improve water resource management, ensure the quality and quantity of water to supply different use demand, especially in drought most affected areas.



- Strengthen knowledge and awareness of local population on social forestry and the roles of forest in environmental and ecological protection, in land degradation protection, and desertification through communication and training and education programmes.
- Continue to decrease poverty in land degradation and drought most affected areas.

## **2.4 Implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Science and Technology**

Vietnam highly appreciates the role of science and technology in combating desertification. However, the cooperation between Vietnam National focal Point and the CST is still at the very start that limit the implementation of CST recommendations.

## **3. INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION**

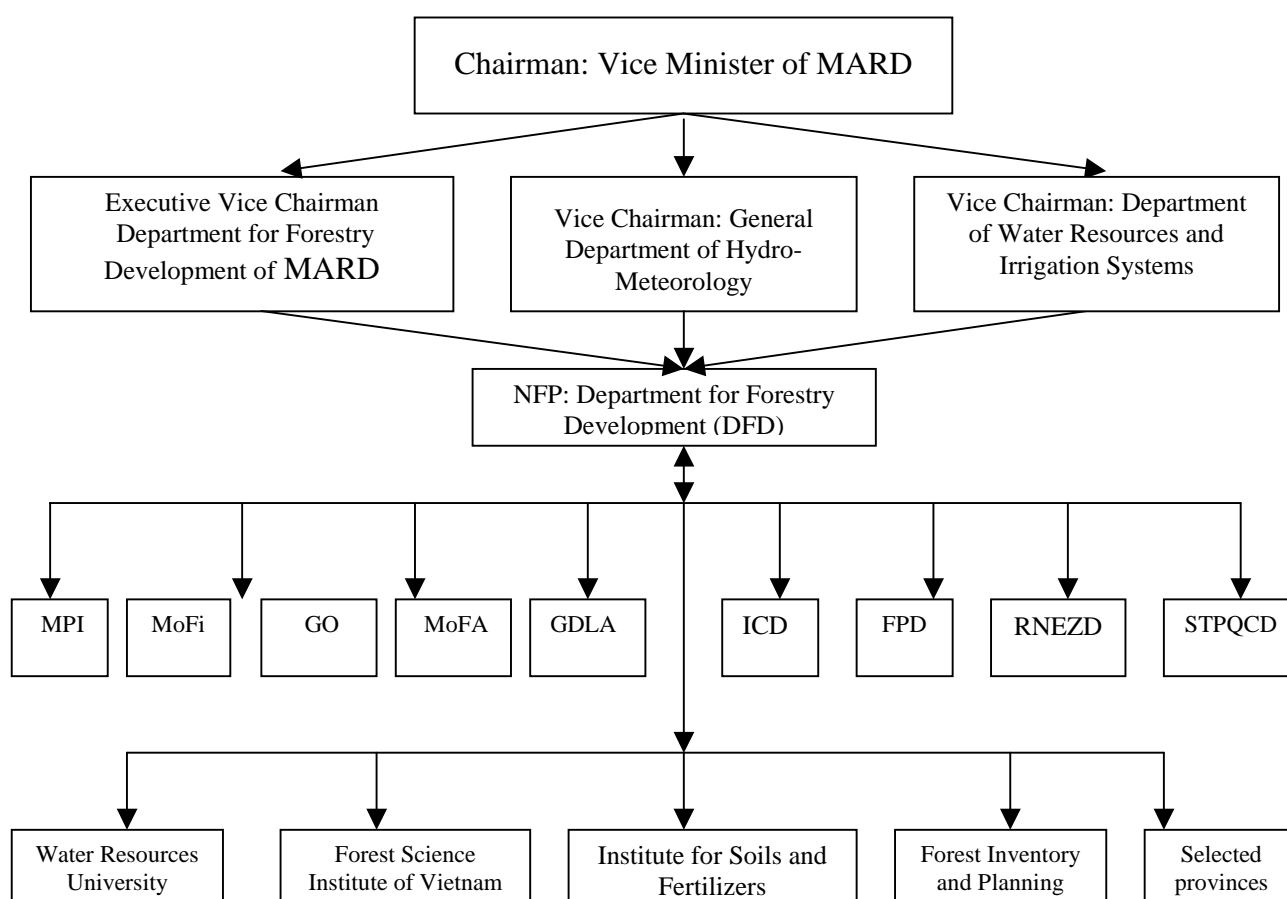
### **3.1 Established and functional national coordinating body**

To achieve all objectives of the programme, it is needed to consolidate activities of NAP and the related sectors/organizations, and all available resources for the programme implementing. NAP is a very broad programme and need multi-disciplinary approach. And one action needs to be conducted is to build up a national coordinating body (NCB), in which members of related ministries, agencies, organizations should be participated as the following organization chart.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is decided by the Government to be the NFP of UNCCD. All the ministries have to be active partners of NCB and close collaborate with NFP to implement NAP.

### 3.1.1 Resources and organization chart

*Figure 1: Organization chart of NCB*



### 3.1.2 Cross-cutting and multidisciplinary characters of NCB composition

*Table 1: Key Members of NCB*

No.	Name or Position	Responsibility
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1.	Vice-Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)	Chairman
2.	Department for Forestry Development (DFD), MARD	Executive Vice-Chairman
3.	General Department of Hydro-meteorology (GDHM)	Vice-Chairman
4.	Department of Water Resources and Irrigation Systems (DWRIS), MARD	Vice-Chairman
5.	International Organization Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)	member
6.	National Environmental Agency, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE)	member
7.	Agriculture and Rural Development Department, Government Office (GO)	member
8.	Agriculture and Rural Development Department, Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)	member
9.	Department of Foreign Financial Affairs, Ministry of Finance (MoFi)	member
10.	Science and International Cooperation Department, General Department of Land Administration (GDLA)	member
11.	International Cooperation Department, MARD	member
12.	Forest Protection Department, MARD	member
13.	Science-Technology and Product Quality Control Department (STPQCD), MARD	member
14.	Resettlement and New Economic Zone Department (RNEZD), MARD	member
15.	Forest Science Institute of Vietnam	member
16.	Forest Inventory and Planning Institute	member
17.	Institute for Soils and Fertilizers	member
18.	Water Resources University	member

### 3.1.3 Mode of operation

The activities on desertification control have to continue being implemented by a close cooperation between ministries, organizations and institutions. There will be annually organized workshops, conferences at national or provincial level to assess the implementation of plans on land degradation combating and drought effects mitigating. Through these meetings land degradation process is to be carefully analyzed, assessed and recommended.

In the above mentioned meetings, leaders of ministries/sectors and local authorities have to be invited to actively participate and give comments. The decisions of the meetings have to be distributed to all participants and reported to the related ministries, sectors and provinces. This will ensure the follow-up activities be closely cooperative and efficient.

### 3.1.4 Status of information data

There is a close contact between National Focal point and the Regional Coordinating Unit in Bangkok and the UNCCD Secretariat. All information are available by two-way (international-national) communication. There is also another information channel between TPN1,2,3 host countries and NFP and TPNs' national focal institutes through transferring information by email, internet and workshops/meetings.

Inside the country, there is also close collaboration and communication between NFP and other related ministries through NCB members. The information data are now available at NFP unit as well as at Forest Sector Support Programme Coordinating Office (the Five

Million Hectare Reforestation Programme Partnership Office). The main specific documents related to combating desertification are:

- National report on combating desertification, April 2000
- National Action programme on environment and sustainable development
- National action plan on biodiversity
- Final draft of National action Programme on combating desertification submitted to the government for approval, March 2002
- National Forest Sector Development Strategy
- Memorandum of agreement (MoA) of Vietnam Forest Sector Support Programme and Partnership
- Agriculture and Rural Development Strategies
- Land Law
- Forest Protection and Development Law.
- Investment and development legal framework.
- Compendium of rural development projects/programme, etc.

### **3.2 Institutional framework for coherent and functional desertification control**

The institutional framework for desertification control are summarized as follows:

- a) Multi-sector economic development with the following main points:
  - Continue to renovate and develop effectively state-owned economic sector to handle the key and guiding role
  - Review and assess the cooperative economy
  - Support private sector to increase efficiency of production and trading, guide the small-scale factory/production unit to become satellite for state-owned enterprise.
  - Encourage private capital economic sector to invest in areas suitable with the country strategies and objectives.
  - Encourage joint-ventures development between state-owned enterprises and foreign companies, between state-owned enterprises with national private factories...to mobilize potential resources in technology, capital and management capacity...
- b) Adopt operational conditions of market mechanism, renovate macro-management tools of the government with the following main focuses:
  - Set up systematic markets system
  - Formulate labour force market with the state guidelines and management, formulate legal documents for the Law on Labour.
  - Elaborate detailed regulations on land tenure to effectively implement Land Law. Encourage local people to rehabilitate soil in barren land and degraded land for agro- forestry activities and livestock production.
  - Develop technology market and implement legal documents on intellectual rights
  - Develop investment and funds market
- c) Continue improvement of import-export mechanism, speed up the process of regional and international economic intervention with the following objectives:
  - Identify the list of commercial permitted products

- Set up systematic policies to encourage export and adopt export procedure and operational mechanism of export support fund
  - Apply custom regulation relevant to ASEAN and international framework, prepare for AFTA joint process.
- d) Speed up administration reform process, continue renovation of institution to meet the requirement of market economy, including:
- Improve law formulation process, elaborate new laws. Adopt existing legal framework, especially the Land Law, Forest protection and Development Law, Water Resource Law...
  - Make awareness of the legal available documents to guide effective implementation.
  - Reorganize administration system based on the clear functions of state institutions and enterprises.
  - Elaborate public administration regulation and mechanism,
  - Strengthen capacity building of young staff through education and training programme and field activities.
  - Strengthen decentralization process, promote participatory approach in all activities.

### **3.3 NAP as part of the National Economic and Social Development and Environment Protection Plans**

NAP activities will be embedded in, and consensus with, National Action Programme on Environment and Sustainable Development, National Action Programme on Biodiversity and Vietnam's Forest Sector strategies, priorities and instruments, etc. Activity support will be based on shared assessments of the country's needs and capacities.

Given the objectives of the NAP (covering the social, ecological and economic dimensions), and the close relationship among *sectors* as well as *programme initiatives* (Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction Programme and other poverty alleviation initiatives), NAP requires clear and consolidated mechanisms for meaningful co-ordination and collaboration, especially within overlapping objectives (at inter-sector and national programme levels).

Current thinking on resources management stresses the importance of developing stronger cross-sector linkages among sectors and the need for a balanced approach to formulation of strategies that, in addition to emphasizing the environmental benefits of natural resources conservation, recognizes the potential of forest to contribute to poverty alleviation, sustainable agriculture and economic growth.

### **3.4 Coherent and functional legal and regulatory framework**

#### **3.4.1 Land tenure**

The agriculture land has been allocated to farmers but the forest land allocation process is still being conducted with slow trend due to some difficulties and thus limit the active

participation of local people and the efficiency of land use management. The immediate action should be as follows:

***a) For already allocated forestland***

The competent authorities should proceed with procedures of red book issuing to owners of allocated land within the year 2001. Only by doing so can the people be confident to develop production.

In parallel with the red book issuing, the Government is requested to review the credit interest rate given to forest production development. First, the interest rate should be reduced and even, farmers in very difficult areas should not be charged with interest rate over the loan they borrow for investment into forestry production. Second, the Government should provide longer-term loans to farmers because the forest business cycle is long.

The capacity of the forest extension staff should be strengthened. If the local extension staff is insufficient, forest extension services can be expanded in form of service contracts with other specialized forestry institutions.

All above-mentioned solutions should be implemented synchronically to achieve forestry business development in allocated land areas.

***b) For forest land to be allocated***

Due to limited resources, forestland allocation cannot be conducted nation wide at a timely manner. The solution is to prioritize areas mentioned in the land use planning section. Land allocation should be carried out immediately after the land use planning is approved.

The Government is requested to review, adjust the Land Law so that land can be allocated also to village community.

***c) For the land allocation itself***

Fund for 5MHRP should be increased for land allocation. With the present fee, the result of forestland allocation should not be of good quality.

A forestland allocation board/committee should be set up with the participation of sectors of forestry, agriculture, and land administration.

### **3.4.2 Framework for effective benefit sharing mechanisms**

Sustainability of projects or programmes is often discussed under four headings: economic, ecological, social, and institutional. In this section only the economic sustainability will be treated. More specifically, it will be discussed how the long-term usefulness of programme can be ensured.

A system ensuring the effectiveness for a very long period must be found. A mutually acceptable way that called benefit-sharing policy should be found to ensure the benefits (products and services) among the actors/stakeholders. However, the Government can not formulate specific benefit-sharing policy for all areas and stakeholders. It can only develop a legal framework as the guidelines for sharing of benefits and responsibilities due to diversity of natural and socio-economic conditions of the country. It is impossible to

establish quantitative standards applicable in all parts of the country and to all kinds of resources. It is more relevant, on a case by case basis, let the local partners concerned (such as a State Forest Enterprise and a group of households) negotiate a settlement that they find to be in their mutual interest.

### **3.4.3 Technical inputs for encouraging local resources to be involved actively and efficiently within the programme framework**

There is a need to develop a comprehensive policy framework relating to institutional issues, investment, capacity building and research in order to identify appropriate intervention strategies at the local level. Furthermore, identify and develop markets for agro-forest products based on advanced processing technology, increased product quality, lower production and transportation costs, lower middle-person costs to increase local incomes of communities involved in production forestry. Further, provide options and opportunity for households to develop ecologically sound agro-forestry models, based on local indigenous knowledge.

The technical designs established by specialized units need to be flexible. Given the variation in both ecological and social conditions within provinces, districts, and communes, much freedom must, however, be given to the women and men at the local level who will be responsible for implementing projects within the NAP.

Therefore, on one side, it is necessary to train the management and technical staff, especially at local level. For the field project implementing, the also needed to carry out training courses to have adequate knowledge and skill. The incentive mechanism for encouraging local staff to be more effectively involved in all activities is also necessary to be considered. On the other side, there should be needed to conduct extension and training for local farmers. For the new models, it is necessary to be evaluated in order to extend good models and stop the inefficient ones to save the financial and human resources.

And finally, it is also essential to strengthen research on science and technology, technology transfer activities to support in solving the bottlenecks of the programme, especially the agro-forestry, soil erosion control, water resource management, sustainable forest development based on decentralization, participatory, land tenure...aspects.

## **4. PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMEME**

### **4.1 Effective decentralization of the planning, programming and implementing activities**

The local authorities is and will be given a greater freedom in combining resources at their disposal for implementing local projects in the framework of NAP to be able to make more effective use of natural resources. Further, the district level is probably the best one for ensuring local cohesiveness between the several components of the NAP. Moreover, in order to ensure and integrate more local involvement there may be a need to consider the nature of resources required facilitating this process of involvement<sup>1</sup>.

There is another side to the issue of decentralization. In current situation, most projects are often carried out within the borders of a district (the same is in reality the case for most foreign-supported projects, even if many of them have a nominal coverage of an entire province or even more than one province). However, the district level authorities are given a minor role only though district authorities are quite closely involved in both preparation and implementation of projects. The fact that the "project owner" is an organization located in the district, e.g. State Forest Enterprise or a Forest Inspection Station, which are district-level agencies but under provincial People Committee not district People's Committee. An option to overcome this problem is again to provide the opportunity for increased district, commune and village level's involvement. This would potentially bring the following advantages. First, there would be a joint authority over the projects of NAP at a more localized level, facilitating easy co-operation between those projects. Second, close interaction would be facilitated between the nationally supported projects and the internationally supported ones working in the same area. Finally, an overall district framework could gradually be developed into which all "projects" within the NAP with district-level activities could be integrated through participatory processes representing local level inputs.

Though much has done, there is still a need to further develop a comprehensive policy framework relating to institutional issues, investment, capacity building and research in order to identify appropriate intervention strategies at local level. Furthermore, identify and develop markets for agro-forest products based on advanced processing technology, increased product quality, lower production and transportation costs, lower middle-person costs to increase local incomes of communities involved in production forestry. Further, provide options and opportunity for households to develop ecologically sound agro-forestry models, based on local indigenous knowledge.

By contrast, private sector firms have made considerable inroads in agro-forest products trading and processing. Because of the generally small scale of operations and consequent difficulties in capital accumulation, combined with the unfavorable investment environment referred to above, few prospects exist for upstream integration of private sector with other national initiatives. A careful consideration of development consensus legal framework referring all related issues to promote private sector involvement in natural resources sustainable management practices is very crucial.

The role of households in natural resources management has become more important in recent years. According to government statistics, around 240,000 ha of forests have been allocated to 50,000 households, and 1.6 million ha have been assigned for protection to approximately 247,000 farmer households, and all agricultural land has been allocated to households. Farmers implement activities on allocated land or under contracts. Although households carry out most of the work and assume most of the risks under the national

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<sup>1</sup> Participatory land allocation, allocation of forest land to communities/household groups, participatory planning mechanisms.



programmes, they have practically no influence on project design and planning. Incentives to invest in forestry are further diminished by the lack of investment capital, insecure tenure and scarce access to technology and markets.

In spite of the long tradition of community-based ownership and management of forest resources in Vietnam, particularly among ethnic groups, the current legal framework does not formally give adequate recognition to such arrangements, especially concerning land tenure; in the context of rural democratization, Circular 56 has provided for the development of hamlet conventions for forest protection and management, which could potentially lead to the codification of certain communal ownership forms and management practices. In practice, 5MHRP activities are often organized village-wide, particularly for forest protection.

The Farmer Association, Youth Union, Women's Union and other mass organizations have previously been involved in programmes activities and are currently represented in the National 5MHRP Steering Committee. While their positive role in forestry is generally acknowledged, their potential is far from reached, in part because the 5MHRP implementation framework is presently too focused on government agencies and state forest enterprises.

## **4.2 Social equity in access to resources, rights and responsibilities in establishing the operational framework for NAP**

Within the framework of decentralized planning, there is a need to ensure that households and individuals are recognized as *active* field partners in the planning process. This recognition requires support at policy as well as operational level. Moreover, the identifying these partners' aspects of social differentiation (ethnicity, economic class, and gender) will need consideration. The issues that will in particular require attention would include household level joint land tenure/allocation (i.e. between the male *and* female head of the household); participatory land use planning and allocation; and training and extension methodologies.

Although in certain cases the legal framework is in place (like e.g. Decree 163/1999/CP, which provides the basis for establishing forestland tenure-ship at the household level) there is a district's need to provide more specific guidelines on how to deal with social differentiation elements.

At all administrative levels, the organizational structure of the administration suffers from overlapping tasks and functions of different agencies. As a result, duplication and time-consuming decision-making procedures considerably reduced the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative bodies. Activities which promise to generate funds are of high interest for all public administrative bodies.

Human resources in public administration are generally limited. Forestry-related departments at provincial levels are short of specialists, stretching the ability of public employees to carry out their duties. The situation in districts and communes is worse.

Ensure optimal representation of all stakeholders and beneficiaries, especially of households and communities. This requires planning, financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the representation of stakeholders at all levels through local forums and formal Government's decision-making bodies linked to NAP implementation. In all planning and implementation considerations, the priority is to provide support to the ultimate beneficiaries, defined as natural resources dependant farmers and communities,

with particular attention being paid to women. Where institutional capacity for inclusion of immediate stakeholders representation is currently weak the legal framework will make special efforts to address this, which will ensure that specific groups such as very poor and remote communities, poor farmers, female-headed households and women in male-headed households are enabled in their representation. This administration reform will assist to promote participatory approach.

### **4.3 Communication and information channel**

An effective mechanism for disseminating and sharing information, knowledge and experiences within sector, among sectors, among countries and international organizations/instruments is very important for implementing NAP, which should be closely linked with Programme 112. This mechanism has the following objectives:

- Provide cutting-edge information, knowledge, and experiences on the management of NAP to sectors with or developing NAP and those supporting NAP, such as international organizations, bilateral donor agencies, and non-government organizations (NGOs)
- Generate and disseminate cutting-edge information, knowledge, and experiences relating to NAP key areas: 1) combating land degradation; 2) preventing sand movement; 3) preventing deforestation; 4) drought control; 5) livelihood improvement.
- Provide knowledge on the impact of activities in the related sectors and on relationship between sectors.
- Establish effective networking partnerships for information sharing with other organizations undertaking complementary work and provide platform to support information exchange and learning on best practices for NAP processes.
- Fill gaps in the existing communication flows between different levels of decision making that influence the implementation of NAP.
- Enhance two-way communication between the national and local levels, strengthen the provision of information, knowledge, and experiences relating to desertification issues from international organizations.
- Contribute to establishing a common understanding of NAP at international level through collaboration, information sharing and exchanging of views.

This communication mechanism will have the following approach:

- The communication will be strategic and targeted with an emphasis on quality over quantity. They will focus on NAP priority issues, and on sustainable development. The communication will be targeted to meet specific needs of NAP implementation process, needs of its main stakeholders, supporters.
- The Government will establish effective networking partnerships among sectors, organizations undertaking complementary work to achieve maximum impact with limited resources. The Government will set up a network of such partners so as to be very well connected and aware of the existing information and knowledge relevant to NAP implementation process, and to have immediate access to the best available information and knowledge.

- NAP network of partners will include international organizations, multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, environment-related conventions, regional processes, NGOs, research institutes, and the private sector. NAP key partners will be Forest Sector Support Programmes Partners. The collaborative arrangement proposed will facilitate partnership for implementing NAP. Related sectors, institutions will participate in implementing NAP through their representation on national coordination body.
- A feed back system where partners express what communication services are most effective will be central to NAP communications and to ensure that NAP remains innovative and responsive to meet varying and evolving information needs.

The following is a general list of proposed communication tools:

- NAP publications: will play a central role in disseminating NAP information to partners. There will be an issue series on the thematic areas and case studies and lessons learnt as appropriate. This can be via printed copies, electronic versions and made available on internet, and through CD-ROM compilations.
- NAP documentation: will describe NAP process in simple brochure or booklet format to be distributed to partners to inform NAP implementation.
- NAP Website: This is useful to provide up to date information on NAP implementation, on development of new policies, lessons learnt, best practices and case studies. NAP publications and documentation can be accessible through NAP Website.
- NAP contact Databases: e-mail list and mailing database must be set up and maintained to ensure that NAP publications reach target partners.
- Direct contact and participation: meetings will provide opportunities to exchange ideas, ensure accurate understanding and fostering new ideas. These could also be training and awareness activities.
- Feedback system: Effective forms of communication should be set up to ensure that NAP remain innovative and responsive to meet different needs. The feedback could be on an informal basis through e-mail or post surveys asking questions regarding the usefulness of information.
- Miscellaneous awareness tools: these could be cartoons, posters...

## **5. CONSULTATIVE PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NAP AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS**

The international partners have given and will have continued providing support to formulate and implement NAP and partnership arrangement. The preparation and

implementation of NAP is a government –driven process, in which consultants play a dual role of facilitating the process and supporting the formulation and delivery of the outputs. The international partners will therefore adopt an approach to operate these roles, while taking the responsibility for the timely delivery of participatory formulated, but government-owned outputs.

The consultants organized and will organize a series of projects design workshops at regional and national levels depending on the status of the geographical scope. The number and level of workshops will be defined at the start of NAP implementation and adjusted later if necessary. Workshops will be kept relatively small and focused in order to facilitate practical discussion on relevant issues. The logical framework will be utilized as a tool in selected workshops.

During formulation of NAP and projects, the possibility of adopting different approaches for the different components that are proposed by stakeholders are and will be given due attention and consideration. The knowledge generated in the process by the consultants are and will be transferred to Government officers and staff, as well as to provincial and local stakeholders potentially affected by activities under the NAP and projects, emphasizing the two-way nature of participation in NAP and project preparation process.

## **6. MEASURES TAKEN OR PLANNED WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF NAP**

### **6.1 Adequate diagnosis of past experiences**

Lessons learnt from the Programme 327 were that land allocation for community forestry development should be carried out only after a well-elaborated land classification and

land use planning performed with grass-root participation and accompanied by appropriate policies. It was informed that 70-80 % of land allocated to poor households were not put in use because of the lack of investment resources. Land tenure is also a very important issue which is needed to be clarified in every case. People were not risk to put their money and efforts to invest the allocated land which was not lawfully certified (Red Book Certificate).

Lessons learned from the Programme 327 showed that the 5-MHRP has to introduce an integrative approach which can help achieve sustainable land use and forest management by:

- Encouraging household forestry and community forestry. The state has a plan to complete the land allocation by the end of 2003 year. The protection forests and special-used forests will be totally supported by the state to develop, the farmers will get soft loan for development of production forests.
- Developing appropriate benefit-sharing policies to encourage people's participation in the implementation of the programme
- Strengthening the capacity through training and extension activities
- Encourage joint-ventures and companies with 100 % invested by overseas to participate in setting up production forests by giving low tax and land use rights, especially in remote areas.
- Giving technical support and conduct technology transfer, the state-owned forest enterprises are the main forces to help people in seedling, silviculture technique and product consumption.

It became clear that to improve the quality of household plantation forestry and to improve the income of forest-dependent farmers the following supportive services and measures must be undertaken: a) integrated extension on silviculture, husbandry, raising cattle and poultry; b) technical base such as growing stock, species matching, pest and diseases control, productivity; c) training of the local extension staff in the skills of planning, grass-root communication, demand-driven adaptive research trials, and evaluation; d) improve incentives and assistance to promote extension network that will facilitate farmer-to-farmer exchanges of know-how and experiences ; and e) increase of Government financial assistance to promote growing market-demand high quality crops and indigenous trees of biodiversity value.

Poverty is one of the biggest reasons for illegal cutting, forestland encroachment, self-acting immigration far from the commune, which sooner or later lead to deforestation and forest degradation. When the land around has become too degraded to produce enough food people have to go deeper into the forest for clearing a new one, left behind the degraded land for tropical erosion, and more forest will suffer in turn. This form of deforestation occurs in all mountainous regions where the poor ethnic communities have nothing to sustain their life other than scanty crop of maize and cassava.

And finally, the sustainability of projects or programmes is often discussed under four headings: economic, ecological, social, and institutional. In this section only the economic sustainability will be treated. More specifically, it will be discussed how the long-term usefulness of programme can be ensured.

A system ensuring the effectiveness for a very long period must be found. A mutually acceptable way that called benefit-sharing policy should be found to ensure the benefits (products and services) among the actors/stakeholders. However, the Government can not formulate specific benefit-sharing policy for all areas and stakeholders. It can only develop a legal framework as the guidelines for sharing of benefits and responsibilities due

to diversity of natural and socio-economic conditions of the country. It is impossible to establish quantitative standards applicable in all parts of the country and to all kinds of resources. It is more relevant, on a case by case basis, let the local partners concerned (such as a State Forest Enterprise and a group of households) negotiate a settlement that they find to be in their mutual interest.

In general the lessons learnt from the past projects and programmes can be summarized as follows:

- The objectives and activities should be linked closely with the benefits of local people, community by ensuring a suitable benefit sharing framework, land tenure as well as the rights to access resources (including credit, training...).
- The participatory approach is an effective tool for success and effectiveness of projects/programmes activities.
- The implementation should be monitored and evaluated by a suitable, logistic and systematic M&E framework and plan.

## **6.2 Established technical programmes and functional integrated projects to combat desertification**

A list of project ideas and proposals have been developed as the annexes to NAP, among which the most important projects are focused on the following areas:

- Forestry development
- Land use management
- Water resource management and drought control

The priorities are given to the following regions:

- Northern Mountainous area
- Central Coastal area
- Cuu Long River Delta
- Central Highland

Among the project proposals, there are the main as following:

- Forest sector development project, potential donor WB
- Forests and livelihood improvement in the Central Highland, potential donor ADB
- Search for and implementation of sustainable measures to prevent land degradation in Lai Chau and Son La Province
- Set up integrated technological models to improve soil productivity, rehabilitate ecosystems and improve livelihood in semi-arid areas of Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan Province
- Afforestation for sand dune fixation in semi-arid area of Tuy Phong-Bac Binh, Binh Thuan Province

- Afforestation to fix sand dune movement in Central Coastal Provinces.
- Impacts and management of saline water intrusion floodgates in coastal areas with acid sulfate soil
- Reforestation in the Coastal areas of four provinces of South Central Vietnam
- Rural water and salination in Coastal Provinces
- Support to irrigation in Central coastal areas
- Drought forecasting and warning system
- Mekong Basin Water Resources Management
- Poverty alleviation in upland areas
- Rural Development and Poverty reduction Programming
- Training in participatory management of irrigation system
- Quang Binh rural water supply
- Improvement of system wide irrigation water management in large scale irrigation schemes
- Inland water ways and livelihood development
- Establishment of advanced integrated agro-forestry models in Northern Mountainous areas
- Mangrove forests rehabilitation in Mekong Delta
- Eco-agriculture development
- Eco-forestry development
- Green zone development in Ho Chi Minh City to prevent pollution affected by industrial zones

### **6.3 NAP implemented in compliance with priority fields set out in the Convention**

Up to the end of 2001, in Vietnam there was not existing a specific national action programme on desertification, but the issue is included in NAPE. Among the activities, there are some major priorities related to desertification control as follows:

- Population growth control to release the pressure on natural resources as land, water, forests, etc.;
- Sustainable management of land, water and forests;
- Forest protection and development;
- Pollution control in urban and industrial zone;
- Education and training on forest, land and water sustainable management;
- Drought and flood forecast and prevention;
- Participatory management and policy system formulation on harvesting, utilization of water, land and forests.

The projects/programmes are divided into two groups:

- Integrated programmes/projects: desertification is the one of many other activities, with the annual budget specifically for desertification control from 10-12 % of the total programme budget;
- Specific programmes/projects: only on desertification.

Vietnam is the country which pays great interest on environment protection. The desertification combating is the one most important issue of NAPE, because it relates with the two very important natural resources - soil and water. The main activities of desertification combating process are as follows:

- Land degradation prevention;
- Sand dune fixation;
- Water resource protection;
- Drought and flood forecast and protection.

For combating desertification Vietnam has implemented a series of major national and local programmes in forestry, environmental management and natural disaster control.

In Vietnam combating desertification is carried under the following natural and socio-economic conditions:

- (a) most of the country's territory is mountainous, with very complicated topography, diverse climate, deep slopes easily liable to desertification.
- (b) deforestation has been serious for decades, expanding barren land is exposing to rapid degradation, and many parts of the country are suffering from frequent drought.
- (c) Vietnam is a developing country heavily suffering from the recent war, with backward economy, poor infrastructure, high rate of rural poverty and illiteracy in remote mountainous regions; resources for combating desertification are very limited,
- (d) Government considers afforestation, reforestation and building up watershed capacity as one of the highest priorities of the socio-economic strategy up to 2010.
- (e) Vietnam commits itself to the policy of diversification of international relationship and is receiving significant assistance and cooperation of international governments and organizations, particularly in the agricultural, forestry and environmental sector.

Since causes for land degradation and drought in Vietnam stem primarily from deforestation and misuse of land and water resources which are the direct consequence of rural poverty and the lack of understanding, measures to combat desertification must be designed to root out these causes. There is a need for an innovative solution based on an integrated approach that encompasses the participation of all relevant stakeholders and the mobilization of necessary political, financial and technical resources. Priorities should be given to achieve the following immediate objectives:

- (a) the forest cover steadily increases to reach the target of 43-45 per cent of the country's territory by 2010, so that most of the barren hill land is protected from degradation,



- (b) *Casuarina* (or other appropriate tree species) shelter-belt is established along the coast of Central Vietnam to prevent sand dune moving,
- (c) appropriate land use planning and management is established to mitigate land salination in the coastal drought-affected areas and land acidulation in the Mekong Delta, and
- (d) Mountainous rural poverty is substantially reduced to release the pressure of shifting cultivation, illegal logging, and population encroachment on the forests.

### 6.3.1 Forestry Development

Current statistics showed that since 1943 the forest cover in Vietnam has lost about 5 million ha. The majority of the remaining forests have been significantly degraded, ranking among the poorest category, with volume often below 80 m<sup>3</sup> per hectare. According to the last inventory made by the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute, Vietnam now has 10.88 million ha of forests, 9.49 million out of which are natural and 1.39 million ha plantation, the forest cover being 33.3% of the country's territory. Natural forests are mainly in Tay Nguyen, East of South Vietnam, and Central Vietnam. Among the remaining natural forests only 9% are classified as rich forests (volume above 150 m<sup>3</sup>/ha), while medium forests (volume 80-150 m<sup>3</sup>/ha) make up 33, and the poor category (volume below 80 m<sup>3</sup>/ha) - 58%.

For developing forest resources and successful preventing deforestation the following measures are recommended:

- (a) Stop logging of degraded forests for at last 10-15 years to enable natural regeneration. The policy of so called "closing natural forest" applied during the past several years has actually resulted in significant reduction of deforestation and forest degradation. However this measure should be considered as an *ad hoc* one because it has greatly affected the existence of majority of state forest enterprises who are managing most of the production forest areas, causing serious unemployment among forestry workers and deficiency of timber for domestic demand and export. Research should be carefully conducted to identify where the forests should be closed and where logging could be allowed in a sustainable way. Management of the forest enterprises should also be implemented in accordance with Government's Decree N 187 towards achieving sustainable forest management standard.
- (b) Speed up forest land allocation to households and organizations for long-term use for forestry purposes to create more income and to achieve poverty alleviation in the mountainous areas. Efforts should be taken to complete forest land use planning and land allocation, and to create forestry employment for 1 million households (2 million jobs) in the next 4 years. By 2010 three million households or 6 million farmers will earn their living from forestry. Along with land allocation the government will provide financial and technical assistance (grants, loans, seeds, tools, training, agricultural and forestry extension etc.) to farmers to help them establish plantations or produce crops on allocated land.
- (c) Contract with local farmers and communities for protecting protection forests, especially those of the critical category, at least for 5 years. This undertaking costs the Government's budget hundreds of billion VND each year and can not be lasting for decades; but its discontinuation means no more forest protection.

Therefore research is needed to develop benefit-sharing policy in protection forest management, so that the government gains protection and environmental services of the forest and the farmer/protector gains some products sustainably harvested from it, i.e. protection forests must have economic function as well. This could be achieved through applying an integrated approach combining appropriate policy, planning, technology, management, and marketing. Poverty eradication, however, would be the basic solution, because people would not risk to cut the forest illegally if little earning could be expected. Poverty alleviation is the task of the National Socio-economic Development Programme for Particularly Difficult Communes in the Remote Mountainous Regions, known as Programme 135“, enacted by the Government in 1998 and implemented country-wide, which will be highlighted below.

- (d) Implement afforestation and forest restoration projects on barren hill land, especially the 5MHRP, adopted by the National Assembly in 1998. The programme set the target to establish 2 million ha of protection forests and 3 million ha of production forests during 1998-2010. The ultimate objective of the programme is to increase the country forest coverage, to guarantee ecological safety and forest product supply for economic development and public demand, and to contribute to poverty alleviation for mountainous communities. It is expected that in 2010 Vietnam will have a total 16 million ha of forest, i.e. 5 million ha more compared with present, consisting of 6 million ha of protection forests, 2 million ha of specially-used forest, and 8 million ha of production forests, the forest coverage being 48.3% . The programme is among the highest priorities in Vietnam, requesting an estimated investment of about 35,000 billion VND (US\$ 2.5 billion) which is mobilized from all available resources, including international grants and loans.

***National Five Million Hectare Afforestation Programme 1998-2010*** (5MHRP, also known as Programme 661). Since 1998 the Programme 327 has been replaced by the ambitious 5MHRP for the period 1998-2010 which is estimated to cost about US\$ 2.5 billion. The reasons for the initiation of the programme were: a) deforestation had reached an alarming level, undermining forest products supply for the country economic development and people’s livelihood, and causing biodiversity depletion; and b) barren land had expanded to an ecologically dangerous dimension, reducing watershed capacity, causing frequent flooding, sever drought, and land degradation which were worsening rural poverty.

The main objectives of this programme are as follows:

- (a) Establishing and restoring 2 million ha of protection forests and 3 million ha of production forests on barren land to high up the forest cover to 43% by 2010, basically solving the problem of soil erosion, land degradation, and watershed protection to ensure the environmental and ecological protection requirements.
- (b) Safe protection of the remaining 9 million ha of natural forests with their biological diversity by means of sustainable forest management,
- (c) Ensuring the annual supply of 15 million m<sup>3</sup> of timber and 20 million ster of fuel wood mainly from the programme’s plantations from 2010, significantly reducing the pressure on natural forests

- (d) Achieving substantial poverty alleviation, hunger eradication and developing rural mountainous areas, creating employment for 2 million people, increasing the income of people living in forest areas.

Beside 5MHRP, there are many smaller local projects as following:

***Vietnam-Sweden Rural Development Cooperation Programme***, an on-going programme, costing UD\$ 21.8 million funded by SIDA, focusing on reforestation, rural infrastructure building and poverty alleviation in mountainous provinces of North Vietnam.

***Community Forestry and Nature Reserve in Nghe An Province***, an on-going project, costing US\$ 21.4 million funded by the EC, aiming at forest conservation, community forestry development and poverty alleviation.

***Reforestation through Local Credit Scheme in Provinces Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, and Quang Tri***, an on-going project, costing US\$ 11.7 million co-funded by Germany KFW and the Government, focusing on reforestation/rehabilitation of degraded barren land and job-income creation for the local communities.

***World Food Programme's Project in Five Provinces of Northeast Vietnam***, an on-going project, costing UD\$ 17.5 million grant of the WFP and US\$ 5.1 million of the government budget, focusing on reforestation/rehabilitation of degraded barren land by household forestry, job-income creation and poverty reduction for the Northeastern provinces.

***Forest Protection and Rural Development Project***, an on-going project, costing UD\$ 23 million loan from the World Bank, US\$ 5.0 million technical assistance grant of the Government of Netherlands, and UD\$ 8.5 million of Government budget, focusing on effective protection of Cat Tien National Park, Chu Mon Ray Nature Reserve, and of the remaining natural forests in the buffer zones, improving the livelihood of the residents in the buffer zone.

***Coastal Wetlands Protection and Development project***, an on-going project, costing UD\$ 40.0 million loan from the World Bank, and US\$ 10.0 million of Government contribution, designed to reestablish coastal mangrove wetland ecosystems to protect their aquatic nurturing and coastal protection functions in the Me Kong Delta provinces of Ca Mau, Bac Lieu, Soc Trang, and Tra Vinh in South Vietnam.

***ADB Forestry Sector Project***, an on-going project, costing US\$ 33 million loan from ADB, US\$ 5.2 million Government budget, UD\$ 7.0 million technical assistance from the Government of Netherlands, and UD\$ 8.0 million equivalent of the Project's intended beneficiaries, designed to ensure safe forest protection, to rehabilitate degraded land, to promote natural regeneration, to develop agro-forestry, and to improve infrastructure in the three critical watersheds located in provinces of Gia Lai, Phu Yen, Quang Tri, and Thanh Hoa .

Thanks to the implemented and on-going programmes/projects the forest cover of the country has increased by 1.3 million ha since 1996, the natural forests are better protected, and soil erosion has been partly prevented. These activities also significantly contributed to the National Hunger Eradication and Poverty Alleviation Programme.

### **6.3.2 Land use management**

With a rather high rate of unused land (about 30% of country's territory) and scaling desertification, land use management in Vietnam must achieve:

- (a) a relatively stable land use planning toward sustainable agricultural and forestry development at central, provincial, district and partly commune level by 2005.
- (b) fast increase in the forest cover on barren land, putting most of unused land under agro-forestry production or other use forms by 2010.
- (c) full reclamation of fallow land in the plains and the coast regions and successful prevention of sand moving and land-sliding along the coast.
- (d) successful rehabilitation of degraded land to recover its productivity to medium quality or better.
- (e) preventive measures are taken to protect the lands that are not yet degraded or only slightly degraded

In land use planning there is a need for land classification performed on the basis of its utilization value and orientation of socio-economic development, primarily of agricultural and forestry production as the largest land users. At present land in Vietnam has been classified into 5 categories, namely:

### **Classification of land**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Area, million ha</u>
Agricultural land	9.34
Forest land	11.558
Specific use land <sup>2</sup>	1.53
Housing land	0.44
Un-used land <sup>3</sup>	10.03

Each category is further divided into sub-categories such as agricultural land includes rice cultivation land, annual crop land, grazing land, gardening land, perennial commercial plantation land etc., and forest land breaks down to protection forest, specially-used forest<sup>4</sup>, and production forest. The system seems to be detailed, but it does not correctly reflect the actual land use in the field. There is a tendency of conversion of forestland into agricultural land, while the specific use land is also increasing because of urbanization and infrastructure construction. Land-use systems are largely influenced by socio-economic, cultural and political background. Most of plain land in the Hong and Me Kong delta and along the coast are used for agricultural production, while hill and mountainous land are mostly for forestry or agro-forestry.

It is to note that majority of land in Vietnam is used for forestry and agriculture purposes. In practice it is often difficult to distinguish between forest and agricultural land, especially in the mountains, where agro-forestry is largely practiced. In land use management priority should be given to land classification and land use planning, which must be conducted prior to land allocation. The current land classification system was based exclusively on subjective purposes without proper consideration of the physical and

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<sup>2</sup> Including land for construction, transport, mining, irrigation, salt production, historical and cultural conservation, cemeteries and other

<sup>3</sup> Including unused water surface

<sup>4</sup> Including national parks, nature and biodiversity conservation, areas for environment/landscape protection purposes

chemical characteristics of the soils, so that good and plain land was given to agriculture, poor and land slopes to forestry. In the whole country there are 409 state forest enterprises (SFE) which are controlling 5.9 million ha of forest land, 3.8 million ha out of which have a forest cover. Many SFE are not capable enough to manage the allocated land, leaving a lot of land under fallow, lending, lease or even conflict.

It is very important that land tenure be addressed first. According to the current Land Law and Forest Protection and Development Law all land is of state ownership, the Government allocates a part of the land to households, cooperatives and organizations for permanent agricultural and forestry production purposes. This means the land users have no tenure but the land-use rights which are certified in the land allocation process. From the view point of liability to erosion and degradation the establishment of land-use rights for forest land should be more urgent than that of agricultural land, but in practice the allocation of forest land was much slow and far behind the allocation of agricultural land which has actually been completed. Causes for slowness in forestland allocation was that there were unclear and unsolved issues in the forest land-use planning, particularly at local levels. Many provinces do not have available well-trained staff and needed budget to do the work. Also there was a lack of incentives to encourage participation of households. A number of ethnic households have no interest to accept the land. Out of the 7 million ha of allocated forestland only a small part has been certified. Allocation was mostly in record books without certifying, mapping and field demarcation, so that farmers have little confidence in putting their money to the allocated land use, a lot of allocated land still remained under fallow and liable to erosion. For speeding up allocation of denuded and degraded hill land for use in forestry and agricultural production it is important to undertake the following measures:

- (a) Enacting regulations or guidelines for forestland allocation to be applied similarly in the whole country.
- (b) Completing land use planning and mapping from central to district level
- (c) Encouraging the application of GIS in land allocation and mapping.
- (d) Establishing a mechanism to promote active participation of local people in the land use planning and land allocation process.
- (e) Providing more intensive training for the staff working in land use planning and land allocation at all levels and enough funding for the process to be completed in 3-4 years.
- (f) Providing attractive loans, technologies and other incentives to households to promote the effective use of allocated land.

Currently there is an urgent need to carry out an evaluation of the land use management work such as contracting, leasing, lending, joint venture, household production, in the agricultural and forestry sector during the last decade to draw lessons and to adjust the land use policy so that:

- (a) allocated land but still kept unused must be taken back and reallocated to other local land demanders.
- (b) land unlawfully contracted, leased or lent by the state forest enterprises to other users must be taken back and reallocated to households.
- (c) most of the forest and agricultural state enterprises should be converted to independent business unit or public service organization.

### **6.3.3 Water resources management and drought control**

Although the country's rainfall is rather abundant, but it distributes very unevenly throughout the year, with 70-80% concentrated in the rainy season, so in the rainy season the rivers and streams highly rise with very fast flow, causing spates in up-stream regions and flooding in the agricultural deltas, while in the dry season, lasting from November to March and accounting for only 15-20% the annual rainfall, many regions have no rain for several months and often experience serious drought which is extremely dangerous when combined with southwest hot wind. Also in the dry season the rivers and streams greatly narrow the flow, sometimes come down to the bottom, letting invasion of tidal water from the sea which causes salination of the coast region..

The mountainous regions in the North, the Red River delta, the North of Central Vietnam, the Central Coastal region, and the Mekong River delta are areas which often experience sever droughts during the dry season.

The main responsibility of water management is to supply enough quality water for production, public demand and to prevent drought and flooding. To mitigate the effects of drought the following measures should be undertaken:

- (a) Carry out a comprehensive survey and evaluation on water resources management work and using the survey's results for planning irrigation construction integrating with regulation of water supply and use.
- (b) Promulgate appropriate policy to promote sustainable use of the water resources. It is urgent to enact sub-law regulations and guidelines to implement the Water Resources Law approved by the National Assembly in May 20, 1998. Research should be carried out to enact a Government Decree on combating drought with responsibility allocation to authorities at all levels and the public.
- (c) Plan the use of surface water resources in the most arid areas such as irrigation constructions along rivers, reservoirs etc. to achieve a water flow regulation rate as high as 10-12%.
- (d) Complete the existing irrigation systems, develop new irrigation systems in the Mekong Delta, and protect irrigation facilities from flood for rice production and water supply for living during drought,
- (e) Strengthen the dyke systems to prevent sea water invasion and undertaking measures to desalinate the affected areas.
- (f) Strengthen the network of meteorological and hydrological stations and institutions to be able of providing timely drought forecast
- (g) Develop appropriate policies and establish necessary mechanism for providing emergency assistance to drought-affected areas and overcome the drought consequences, and
- (h) Appropriate drought-tolerant crops should be identified for drought-affected areas, especially for Central Vietnam and Central Highland (Tay Nguyen).

It is important to mobilize participation at all levels from central government to districts and communes to ensure a smooth implementation of water resources management programmes/projects. With the adoption of the Water Law, the organizational structures,

financing mechanism, project formulation procedures, and human resource capacity are needed to be accordingly improved.

Vietnam drought control programmes tried to apply an integrated approach based on:

- (a) the use of most suitable drought-resistant species with minimum water demand;
- (b) a better management and regulation of water distribution through the reservoir system between the dry and the rainy season;
- (c) the use of computer programming (e.g., OPDM and CMMS) to optimize water resources management;
- (d) strengthening the drought forecast work with the use of drought indexes Sa.I and SST, especially for the most drought-affected regions; and
- (e) building up underground dikes along the coastal zone and harmonizing sluice ways on the drainage systems.

At present there are two extremely important on-going irrigation projects, namely:

***Integrated Irrigation Project in Phuoc Hoa***, implementation 1998-2003, costing US\$ 140 million loan from the ADB, designed to ensure irrigation for a very arid zone of Phuoc Hoa

***Irrigation Development Project in Basin Cuu Long***, implementation 1997-2004, costing US\$ 101.0 million loan from ADB and UD\$ 38.0 million of Government budget, designed to rehabilitate hundred thousands of sulfated land in the Mekong delta in South Vietnam.

Thanks to the projects implemented or started prior UNCCD and being implemented after the year of UNCCD ratifying, 75 medium-to-large and many small irrigation systems, 600 medium-to-large reservoirs, 3,000 small lakes, about 2,000 pumping stations, and about 1,000 drainage systems were constructed; about 5.6 million ha of paddy rice fields, 0.56 million ha of commercial crops (coffee, rubber, tea etc.) are irrigated, 0.86 million ha of rice fields are well drained off, and 17 million rural people are provided with drinking water, drought impacts significantly reduced.

#### **6.3.4 Poverty alleviation**

In Vietnam poverty in mountainous regions is the main reason for deforestation and, consequently, land degradation. Although many hunger eradication and poverty alleviation programmes have been implemented for the last decades and the situation of the poor has been significantly improved, poverty rate in many regions still remains rather high, especially among ethnic minorities living in remote hilly or mountainous regions, where land productivity is very low, and there are few opportunities for diversification of livelihood. It became clear that economic growth in Vietnam reduces absolute poverty, but it is likely that some groups of people will not be able to take advantage of the new opportunities created by growth-promoting policies and programmes.

Because of the importance of the struggle for poverty eradication the Government of Vietnam has ranked this issue among the highest priorities to be implemented and integrated in the national strategy for socio-economic development. For the period from now to 2005 efforts will be driven to implement the so-called Socio-economic Development Programme in Extremely Difficult and Deep-Remote Communes, also known as Programme 135, adopted by the Government in 1998. The general objective of

this programme is “to improve the living standard of the ethnic people in the extremely difficult communes and the deep-remote regions, to create favorable conditions for taking them out of poverty, backwardness, under-developedness and making them mingling with the country development process, contributing to the social safety and country’s security”. The programme has 8 sub-programmes: a) Rural Mountainous Infrastructure Construction Programme; b) Ethnic Community Resettlement Programme; c) Handicraft Development Programme; d) Credit Providing Programme; e) Education Assistance Programme; f) Health Care Assistance Programme; g) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery, and Business Extension and Technology Transfer Programme; and Poverty Alleviation Staff Training Programme. Immediate objectives of the programme are as follows:

- (a) Reduce the rate of poor families in 1.000 poorest communes down to 25 per cent by 2005
- (b) Clean water supplied to all villagers
- (c) Up to 70 per cent of children go to school
- (d) Majority of the farmers receive training on experiences of farming, on technological, cultural and social knowledge, and actively apply the obtained knowledge in their daily life
- (e) Dangerous social diseases are well controlled.
- (f) The poor communes have connecting roads to administrative-economic centers
- (g) Rural markets properly developed 8 sub-programmes are well complementary to each other to achieve the common development objective - poverty reduction and eradication in the deep-remote mountains. Successful implementation of the Programme 135, an important component of the socio-economic development policy of Vietnam, will substantially change the poverty picture in the areas most liable to land degradation in Vietnam. It is estimated that Programme 135 may cost up to 10,000 billion VND.

It is realized that a considerable intensification of the programmes has been made since Vietnam ratified the UNCCD. This is a good base for Vietnam to fulfil its commitment to the UNCCD although with a lot of constraints and difficulties.

It is important to realize that combating desertification and drought is not the responsibility of a sector but an issue affecting and to be tackled by various sectors. The long term strategy and action plans should be carefully prepared and implemented to achieve the objective of reversal of land degradation and sustainable use of the land and water resources within the timeframe of 15 years. Priorities will be given to achieve:

- (a) a sustainable forestry exploitation based on establishing a balance between forest resources use and an ecologically-safe forest coverage,
- (b) a sustainable land use at all levels of landholders or landowners on the principle of upholding the biological productivity of the land with all its ecological and socio-economic value for the present and the future generations,
- (c) a proper reclamation/rehabilitation of degraded land to mitigate its negative effects and give back its original values as a fundamental property for human existence,



- (d) a significant improvement in water resources management to ensure quality water supply for various purposes under different circumstances, especially in drought-affected areas, and
- (e) a significant reduction of poverty for the local people living in areas affected by land degradation and drought.

## **6.4 Linkage achieved with SRAP and RAP**

NAP has to be implemented in close link with future SRAP for South East Asia and existing RAP. All activities have to be taken within the regional and sub-regional initiatives to achieve joint approach and common interests.

Vietnam has actively participated in regional initiatives in forest development and protection, land degradation and drought control. The continued active participation in TPNs as well as in global, regional and ASEAN meetings/conferences is needed to ensure regular exchange of lessons learnt, experience and information.

## **6.5 Effectiveness of measures in local capacity building**

### **6.5.1 Research**

In spite of some advances, the current research system largely fails to meet sectors' demands. Three main issues need to be addressed. First, related ministries have to take the lead in revising the organizational setup, including the merging of research institutes with universities and among themselves, greater sharing of research results and increased funding; the contribution through the NAP's needs to be increased and concretized. Second, research needs to become more demand-oriented, both with respect to households and communities and the private sector, which could even provide funding. Research should address the implications of large diameter wood scarcity, product marketing, as well as social forestry. And third, related ministries need to ensure that research and extension are linked more closely; models already exist, including Thai Nguyen, Nghe An and Quang Ngai, where research centers are located inside agriculture extension centers.

### **6.5.2 Extension**

The constraints facing extension agents need to be overcome if they are expected to serve as effective service supporter of farmers. Institutionally, ministries need to resolve the overlap in extension provision between the agencies as well as consider a closer link between extension and land use planning integration. Financially, wider administrative and political constraints may preclude drastic salary increases, but total compensation packages can be improved through the improvement of allowance regulations, increased revenue generation from extension activities, and better integration with the rural credit system.

The diversification of agro-forestry extension on the basis of voluntary or contract-bound service provision has to be fostered, including through farmer-to-farmer extension, mass organizations, extension clubs and the private sector. Such alternative extension sources should be considered as potential NAP's project owners.

### **6.5.3 Training and education**

As with research and extension, the priority for improving the training and education system is for MARD, MOSTE, GDHM, GDLA and MET to ensure the transfer of skills needed to meet the demand. This will require an adjustment of educational curricula, as well as more demand-driven training delivery systems. These should not only take into account the changing skills needs, but also the special demands of different trainees, including women and ethnic groups.

Training and education institutes need to develop an effective system to assess whether trainees are able to apply their new skills and whether graduates find employment in their respective fields. In addition, the institutes need to establish or strengthen effective monitoring and evaluation systems so that training and education delivery meets the diverse demands of the NAP.

Priorities for capacity building of local level are given as follows:

- Strengthen capacity in planning and land use planning;
- Update the techniques on agro-forestry and crop selection for upland areas;
- Upgrade knowledge on roles of forests in water protection, land conservation, ecology and environment protection;
- Strengthen capacity in project implementation assessment.

## **6.6 Partnership arrangement applied**

NAP as any other national action programme needs a joint approach, in which combating land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought should be linked together with poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The programme approach should be considered carefully in the process of formulation and implementation of NAP. And in somewhat extent NAP priorities relate closely with forest development. So it is essential to link the partnership arrangement for NAP implementation with the existing Forest Sector Support Programme (FSSP), in which partnership arrangement plays very important role for forest protection and development and thus also for combating land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought.

In July 1998, the Government of Vietnam (GOV) adopted the Five Million Hectare Reforestation Programme (5MHRP) through its Decision 661/QD-TTg dated July 29, 1999 and the resolution by the National Assembly in its second session of the 10<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. The 5MHRP aims to re-establish a 43% forest cover in the country by 2010, through a comprehensive programme aimed enhancing environmental protection, reducing poverty and increasing the contribution of forest resources make to the national economy.

But during the last years the forestry sector has been facing with the following limitations in implementing projects/programmes:

- The projects financed by the donor community have been mostly designed by donors and donors maintain a strong influence and control over implementation

- The Government's contribution to projects are often below 10% of the total budget; the 90% donor financing leads either to high incremental costs to the GOV during and after projects implementation.
- There is an overspread of similar development projects with the similar goals and actions, while at the same time the impact on the Government's own sector development and programme implementation is limited.
- Due to unclear procedures, disbursement are very low, especially on the larger loan projects in the forestry and rural development sectors
- Project-aid is an in-flexible aid delivery mechanism, because they often fix everything to many activity level and unit cost for several years, which requires constant discussion on adjustment in the light of real-life development. Moreover, due to their fixed budget character, there are few trade-off and thus few incentives for efficiency.

Aware of the above shortcomings, the Donors and GOV decided in the Consultative Group to aim for stronger partnership and try them, a.o for 5MHRP. Partnership could take many forms but in this case it was proposed to establish an operational programme approach. And because the 5MHRP, as defined by the GOV, is such a dominant 12-year programme in relation to forestry sector objectives, it has the appeal of a sector programme.

In December 1998, a meeting of Consultative Group was held, where the GOV requested the donor community assistance for this national forestry programme. It was agreed at the meeting to develop support to the 5MHRP and its objectives through a Partnership between the GOV and the international community. The Partnership was to result in comprehensive and effective support, taking into account of the wider policy and institutional environment in the sector and strengthening the required national capacity. Thus, an environment is created in which national and international resources are used effectively and efficiently to achieve the Government's goal and objectives formulated in the 5MHRP.

In December 1999, after consultation on the concept of a partnership, the GOV, based on its Decision 661/QD-TTg, and international donors, including NGOs, signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on the preparation of a partnership Support Programme for 5 MHRP. The objective of the MoA was to reach an agreement on a formal partnership for shared sector support to the 5MHRP to be based on agreed policies, strategies, priorities and principles of implementing in line with international agreements.

Then based on the MoA, institutional structures were set up for the partnership, including Partnership Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). The Partnership conducted a joint sector review to form the basis for programme development. MARD formulated a Forest Development Strategy for 2001-2010 period. The PSC in March 2001 adopted the Joint Sector Review (Synthesis Report) and decided that the Forest Development Strategy would form the basis for further programme development under the Partnership. As such it acknowledged that a national forestry programme has to be viewed and supported through a comprehensive and broad sector development approach.

A Programme Framework has been developed to support the implementation of the Forest Development Strategy, including the 5MHRP and to make the most effective use of national and international resources for sector development. This Programme Framework

is complemented by a set of principles for Forestry Sector Cooperation, that has been called Forest Sector Support Programme (FSSP).

A successful sector-wide partnership provides a platform whereby Government and donors discuss and outlined the nature of their involvement within a framework of agreed Government's policies, strategies and programmes over a medium-term time frame. Vice versa Government's policies, strategies and programmes are reviewed and updated on the basis of lessons learnt from the implementation.

Although the FSSP result areas identified within the Programme Framework are interconnected, it is crucial for effective planning that each signatory identifies its "niche" area/areas of interest. This encourages each donor to find the best options in the implementation of FSSP Framework. And allows the GOV to use the donor coordination for effective implementing of FSSP.

And all these initiatives have resulted in the formulation the second MoA.

To put in place arrangement for continued collaboration in support of the forest sector of Vietnam on the basis of agreed policies, strategies, priorities and principles of implementation.

Signatories to the partnership share a commitment to the sustainable management of forests and the conservation of bio-diversity to achieve: (a) protection of the environment; (b) improved livelihoods of people in forest areas; and (c) enhanced contribution of forestry to the national economy.

Parties agreed to adhere to the MoA key principles for Forestry Sector Cooperation in the following documents:

- The Programme Framework
- Matrix of Tentative National and International Affiliations
- The Common Work Plan
- The Forest Sector Manual
- The Monitoring and Evaluation System Framework.

By collaborating, the partners and GOV aim to maximize effectiveness and efficiency in the mobilization and use of all resources applied to the sector. And one of the keys to achieve the effectiveness is greater harmonization of policies and programmes in the context of shared objectives for the forestry sector.

So partnership arrangement is one of the effective tools for mobilization of available resources and strengthening cooperation among interested parties in implementing programmes and projects, especially the long-term programme related to environment protection and sustainable development. This initiative should be further used and developed for National Action Programme in the context of UNCCD implementation, which should be closely linked not only with FSSP and 5MHRP but also with other UN's conventions related to environment.

## **7. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS FROM NATIONAL BUDGETS IN SUPPORT OF IMPLEMENTATION**

### **7.1 NAP Financing**

Vietnam has a long tradition of government investment for environmental forestry (protection forests, conservation), water resources management, infrastructure building, and poverty eradication. Besides, overseas development assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment (FDI), loans, and international grants are also important financial resources for implementation of UNCCD programmes. Key points in the strategy for government and ODA investment include:

- (a) increasing the forest cover and watershed capacity through implementing reforestation and rehabilitation programmes
- (b) strengthening the irrigation systems for rice production and livelihood in drought-affected areas
- (c) strengthening the dyke systems to ensure safe protection from typhoon flood
- (d) reducing rural poverty, with special attention given to ethnic minorities and other mountainous communities in the “deep and remote zones” (zones 3).

The principle of financial management should be based on partnership contribution and cost sharing among the stakeholders as follows:

- (a) Government and international assistance will invest for items of country-wide important public interest,
- (b) Provincial and district authorities invest for items of local public interest
- (c) Private sector invests for employment-creating industries and services
- (d) Local communities provide labour
- (e) Existing projects contributing in combating desertification will arrange partnership dialogue at both central and local level.
- (f) International and national banking systems will find suitable procedures/mechanisms to work on demand-driven basis and evaluate the sustainability of the projects/programmes.

Because government budget for infrastructure development, including environmental forestry, irrigation and drainage, is limited, the central government will mainly focus public investment where there is little or no incentive for private investment and allow greater opportunities for involvement of the private sector and lower authorities in other areas. In general, large infrastructure programmes/projects that meet the long-term national strategic objectives or multi-provincial development plans should be funded from the central government budget, while small-scale projects that meet the needs of local communities should be planned and implemented by local authorities. Further decentralization in the planning process is needed to give local authorities greater autonomy in planning and implementation of programmes/projects. Mobilization of people’s resources through the partnership modality so called “government and people doing together” is of considerable potential if there is perceptible incentive and participatory approach is in use.

Vietnam is among the lowest-income countries, while the demand for infrastructure development is far beyond the country’s capacity, so ODA and loans are very important external financial support. Also environment improvement and poverty reduction are high priorities of many international donors whose assistance to Vietnam has well rooted since the 1990. It was reported that in the period of 1991-1996 the agricultural sector of

Vietnam received about US\$ 900 million of ODA investment, of which about 300 million (36.3 per cent of total investment) for agriculture, 400.5 million (40.6 per cent) for water resources management, and 206.3 million for forestry (23.1 per cent). For the period 1996-2000 the total investment for the agricultural sector (consisting of agriculture, forestry, and water management) was about US\$ 3,500 million, of which the external resources contributed US\$ 1,493 million.

To achieve the objectives of NAP, there should be a need of about 8,600 million USD for the period 2002-2010. The budget will be mainly used for development of irrigation systems, technical projects for sustainable agriculture development, forest reforestation, livelihood improvement as follows:

- The irrigation systems will need to be set up in Cuu Long Delta, Central Highland, Central Coastal areas, Red River Delta and Northern Mountainous areas with the budget of 2.500-3.000 million USD
- The 5MHRP will need about 2,500 million USD
- To set up 500,000 ha of rubber plantations there is a need of 2,000 million USD
- Setting up fruit gardens of 500,000 ha will need 300 million USD
- To set up 30,000 ha of tea in Northern Mountainous areas needs 60 million USD
- Livelihood development in Cuu Long Delta need 300 million USD
- Grant for technical assistance: 40 million USD
- Afforestation and reforestation to fix sand dune movement in coastal areas will need 400 million USD

The Government has given specific priorities in financing for land conservation, sand dune fixation, land erosion control and drought/flood prevention. Vietnam has annual financial plan for these objectives and at the same time encourages the international and national organizations to join in the investment process.

The existing financial sources are as follows:

- The State sources;
- The ODA sources ( including loan and grant);
- Sources of Government and non-government organizations, foreign companies and joint-ventures;
- Sources of localities;
- Sources of domestic enterprises;
- Sources of local people.

The sources of international organizations with the rate for projects are as below:

- For natural resource management: 65%
- For disaster forecasting and prevention management: 3 %
- For training and research on environment: 6%.

The organizations and individuals can participate in investment and implementation process of desertification combating, if they respect the following points:

- Commit their respect to Vietnam laws, do not have bad impacts on Vietnam sovereignty and interests;
- Obey legal documents, regulations on investment, environment protection and natural resource management;
- Have interest with bilateral and multi-lateral benefit;

- Have the permission of the Government for investment and cooperation in environment protection activities.

Realizing the importance of the concerned matters but due to financial difficulties so that the annual Government budget for desertification combating activities within NAP is still very far from the actual requirements, about 22-30 million USD/year (2.5%-3.0% of the demand).

## **7.2 Adopted financial mechanism**

The other constraint in programme management is the guidelines for credit for livelihood development activities, which still can not ensure the availability at most local projects and out of the control of project management boards. The local farmers can not get the loan due to several reasons, but mainly due the credit providing mechanism and procedure.

Therefore the cost norms established by specialized units need to be flexible, given the variation in both ecological/topographical and social conditions within provinces, districts, and communes. Moreover, in considering the cost norms, optimal arrangements need to be set up, at the local level, keeping in mind sustainable resource management and factors that influence the incentive to promote participation of local populations.

## **7.3 Technical cooperation developed**

In the future (2000-2010) the technical assistance will form 95% of total bilateral grant and 6% of multilateral grant fund. Besides being financially supported, Vietnam is also technically assisted through getting advises from international consultants working in Vietnam, through receiving equipment, documents and books, through capacity building programmes.

The requirements and priorities in technical assistance on desertification control are as follows:

- Conduct large-scale use of GIS in land degradation process assessment and monitoring;
- Study the methodology in analysis and assessment of impact indicators;
- Study and apply different technical solutions in forest establishment in sand dune areas;
- Select of suitable and stable crop system for upland areas;
- Research of methodology on water resource assessment and technical solutions for drought and flood prevention and for water pollution prevention;
- Review and adjustment of policy systems to promote desertification activities;
- Study on organization structure and incentive systems to encourage people participating in desertification combating process;
- Strengthen knowledge transfer on land and water protection activities;
- Elaborate a capacity building action plan for desertification control process with the emphasis of plan for local people.

## **8. REVIEW OF BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS UTILIZED TO MEASURE PROGRESS AND ASSESSMENT THEREOF**

### **8.1 Operational mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation**

The Department of Environment of MOSTE has conducted out the monitoring and assessment of environment at central level. In provinces, there is the Department of Science, Technology and Environment (DOSTE) in every province, who is in charge of monitoring and assessment of environment at local level. Though there is still not existing the national monitoring mechanism, the cooperation on monitoring and assessment of environment between central and local level already exists.

At the planning level, there is a need to develop appropriate environmental and social guidelines and criteria for the prior to approval' screening of provincial plans and projects. There will be a need:

- to set up a framework for social and environmental assessment support for the development and management of provincial plans and projects;
- to formulate guidelines to help provincial authorities and project owners ensure that positive opportunities are maximized and negative social and environmental impacts are avoided;
- to develop logical monitoring and evaluation frameworks for project plans, in which attention is given to social and environmental indicators
- to consider the monitoring procedure to provide information/data for NCB on positive and negative impacts for the NAP implementing process and finding ways to improve.

For the development of the improved planning and monitoring system, the results of the social and environmental impact assessment should be used. The monitoring and assessment of project activities can assist the Government and the donors not only in evaluating the efficiency of project activities in term of economic, social and environment objectives but also can support to update the opportunities and constraints for activities within NAP framework to amend the policy framework to fit the current (and may be changeable) situation. The monitoring and assessment activities should be committed and conducted out more often by both central and local level with legal framework on organisation and financing mechanism.

Monitoring and evaluation is important to ensure NAP's timely inputs and adjustment. This should be carried out regularly at all levels to identify constraints and measures for overcoming them. At central level the the Ministry of Planning and Investment is responsible for supervising and general monitoring and evaluation of programme/project implementation, mediating for processing inter-sector issues, and reporting to the central government with recommendations for necessary adjustment and improvement. The provincial planning and investment departments will establish a Monitoring and Evaluation Board (MEB) that functions as a focal point for monitoring and evaluating the NAP's programmes/projects implemented by sector ministries or departments in the province, while the project management boards are responsible for project implementation assessment and reporting to MEB . Responsibilities of MEB should include:

- (a) assessing and up-dating the situation of project implementation, identifying constraints and, in cooperation with implementing agency, recommending measures for overcoming these constraints
- (b) enhancing the process of constraints overcoming and reporting to appropriate levels for decisions and adjustment,



- (c) reminding and facilitating project management boards of projects under mandated responsibilities to submit reports in time,
- (d) submitting reports to appropriate levels,
- (e) organizing evaluation missions requested by the project executive agency
- (f) establishing information data base and providing guidelines for project management, evaluation and reporting.

All these activities should be taken as very urgent matters to assist MARD to ensure the success and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation of NAP implementation in Vietnam, which should be conducted by participatory approach with intensive involvement of local population to follow the strategy of the Government: *“Local people as the main actor should know, discuss, act and control every socio-economic and environmental action in the country”*.

## **8.2 Measures taken for harmonization of existing mechanisms/systems**

There are already existing 20 environment impact-recording stations in the whole country, of which 18 stations are in charge of recording technical data on soil, water and air and conducting preliminary impact assessment. The distribution of the stations is indicated in the map (Annex 3). The existing mechanism is technically and financially supported by the Government (annually about USD 300, 000 with total 350 people working in all levels), which elaborates technical documents and works out reports to submit to the Government. There is available equipment with total investment of USD 1,8000,000 to facilitate the monitoring system.

## **8.3 Planned national measures for elaboration of impact indicators**

There are already available national standards on monitoring and assessment for water, soil, air, hard wastes and poisonous chemicals. There is still a need of elaborating the national standard on monitoring and assessment of biological diversity such as ecological conditions, change in species composition (flora and fauna) and genetic variation.

It is required to set up 30 more environment impact-recording stations in the future with the estimated annual investment for equipment about USD 600,000.

The following steps should be taken to elaborate impact indicators:

- Review of existing incentive policies
- Assessment of investment policies and financing programme
- Review of agriculture and forestry support services
- Study of agriculture development impacts on the livelihood and income of local population
- Analysis of agriculture development impacts on environment
- Study of external impacts from regional and international level./.