



MOROCCO

Total population (million), 2007: 30.86
 Population density (people per km²), 2006: 38,3
 Forest area (% of surface area), 2005: 9.76
 Agricultural land (% of surface area), 2005: 68.1
 GDP (current USD, billion): 73.28
 GDP growth (annual %): 2.3
 External debt (current USD, millions), 2006: 18493
 Foreign Direct Investment (current USD, millions),
 2006: 2699
 UNCCD ratification: 1997

Source: World Development Indicators database, 2008

CONTEXT

Morocco ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1996. In 2001, as part of the UNCCD implementation process, the National Action Programme (NAP) was designed and validated. The NAP is based on the principles of integration, decentralization, partnership-building and participation.

Morocco's NAP is a strategic framework for combating desertification and is integrated into the country's sustainable development policies. It is based on four interlinked themes: rural development; poverty reduction; mitigation of the effects of drought; and rational and sustainable use of natural resources.

With the support of the Global Mechanism (GM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Morocco has implemented the NAP through:

- setting up coordination and guidance mechanisms;
- designing a consultation process;
- assessing institutional developments;
- involving development partners in decision-making processes;
- implementing concurrent sub-national and local activities;
- monitoring natural resources;
- evaluating the impacts of projects to combat desertification;
- designing priority projects for the NAP; and
- developing a national resource mobilization strategy.

Since its creation in 2003, the High Commission for Waters, Forests and Combating Desertification (HCEFLCD) has been the institutional National Focal Point for the UNCCD. The Directorate of Combating Desertification and Protecting Nature is responsible for coordinating, leading and implementing the NAP.

CHALLENGES

Combating desertification is central to not only climate change issues, biodiversity preservation, and water and soil conservation, but also to food security and combating poverty. In Morocco, 93% of land is affected by desertification processes resulting from unpredictable rainfall, which has tended to decline with unequal and irregular distribution for nearly a century.

The situation is exacerbated by human pressures: an imbalance between the demand for and scarce supply of water; vulnerability and overexploitation of forest ecosystems, rangelands, and already limited soil resources. The per capita useable agricultural area (UAA) is in continuous decline. The cost of natural resource degradation in the forest, agricultural and rangeland sectors and following the silting up of dams is calculated to be 2.9 billion dirhams a year.

The NAP must therefore translate into effective measures and actions on the ground. This is the aim of the GM's support to the design of a national resource mobilization strategy based on ensuring coherence between internal and external financing and the integrated application of a range of international instruments for sustainable land management (SLM) and combating desertification.

 The Global Mechanism (GM) was established under Article 21 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and began its operations in October 1997. The GM is defined as an organizational entity mandated "to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms... [and]... to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources to affected developing country Parties."

COMMON OBJECTIVES

The HCEFLCD has received the GM's support in strengthening national capacities to establish a development partnership and resource mobilization strategy for the NAP. The strategy focuses on:

- building the resource mobilization capacity of NAP stakeholders;
- strengthening consultations with development partners in financing priority NAP projects presented at the Development Partners Round Table held in late 2004; and
- promoting diversified sources of finance.

The strategy, supported by UNDP and Germany through GTZ, has allowed Morocco to integrate the combating of land degradation into national planning and sectoral investment frameworks, as well as into the priorities of several development partners. These partners include Spain that has made combating desertification a priority for its cooperation with Morocco, along with Japan, Belgium, the World Bank, the European Commission and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which have responded positively to the strategy by cooperating in the framework of NAP implementation. Together with IFAD and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the GM has facilitated access to Global Environment Facility (GEF) resources by financing the design of a GEF/PDF-B project that raised USD 6 million for Morocco, complementing an integrated development project to combat desertification and reduce poverty in the east of the country totalling USD 18.8 million.

WHERE DO WE STAND ON IMPLEMENTATION?

GM-HCEFLCD cooperation has already brought positive results. In recent years, the HCEFLCD and other national stakeholders (in agriculture, water resources and the environment) have designed 53 projects based on the four priority pillars of the NAP:

- Pillar 1: support to combating desertification;
- Pillar 2: support to income-generating initiatives;
- Pillar 3: activities to fight desertification and mitigate the effects of drought; and
- Pillar 4: knowledge building, monitoring and evaluation activities.

At the civil society level, the GM has financed Environment and Development in the Third World (ENDA Maghreb) to design a plan of action to combat desertification for Moroccan non-governmental organizations (NGOs), subsequently integrated into UNCCD/NAP priority projects.

Twelve projects based on interlinking and integrating the two themes of desertification and decentralization have been identified and were presented to partners during a national workshop in February 2007.

Overall, negotiations between Morocco and its cooperation partners have generated a total of 1.8 billion dirham (about USD 225 million) to finance integrated projects to combat desertification.

Through the HCEFLCD and the Ministry of Agriculture, Morocco allocates 500 million dirham a year to combating desertification and 200 million dirham to rural development, totalling the equivalent of nearly USD 100 million a year.

NEXT STEPS

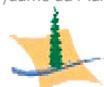
Cooperation between the GM and Morocco is based on two solid pillars:

- the GM's South-South cooperation programme, SolArid, in which Morocco participates fully, sharing its experiences of key issues in combating desertification with other countries in North and West Africa;
- assessment of financing opportunities, to provide national stakeholders with useful information on procedures and tools for obtaining financing.

These activities are supplemented by the identification of innovative and diversified sources of finance, such as those linked to climate change, particularly the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and decentralized cooperation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Royaume du Maroc



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