

PERU

CONTEXT

Peru signed the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1994 and ratified it in October 1995. The National Action Programme (NAP) was launched in 1996. Initially, the National Institute for Natural Resources (INRENA), a decentralized body of the Ministry of Agriculture, was the national Focal Point for the UNCCD. This role has since been assumed by the General Directorate for Climate Change and Desertification within the recently created Ministry of the Environment.

In 2007, a National Commission to Combat Desertification and Drought (CONALDES) was created to represent the national and local interests of both government and civil society. The commission is chaired by the National Focal Point.

Peru has been appointed Coordinator of the UNCCD Regional Thematic Network on Traditional Knowledge (TPN5). It is also a party to the Sub-Regional Action Programme on the American Puna and a member of the Community of Andean Nations (CAN).

In recent years, there has been growing interest in investing in sustainable land management (SLM); this is probably closely linked to increasing awareness of climate change issues. However, an analysis based on the Rio markers methodology has revealed that SLM investments have been low. Between 1993 and 2007, a total of USD402 million was invested in 808 projects addressing desertification, either directly or indirectly, as a primary or a secondary objective. Only 211 of these projects, (5.7% of total investments) focused on combating desertification/land degradation, as a primary or secondary objective. In 2005-2007, international cooperation provided USD12 million for 33 projects addressing desertification in Peru.

CHALLENGES

Twenty-seven percent of Peru is subject or susceptible to land degradation processes, and 6.5% is hyper-arid. Around 82% of the population live in these areas and depend on them for their main economic activities. These figures represent a significant challenge.

Problems such as soil salinization in the coastal valleys affect 40% of cultivated lands, and severe erosion processes affect 50-60% of the sierra. Land is a very scarce resource, and Peru's land availability of only 0.155 ha per capita is one of the lowest rates among developing countries.

Another challenge is rural poverty, which is closely linked to the lack of land. This is well illustrated in the dry forests of the northern coast, where rural people are forced to cut trees to survive, and on the high plateaus, where land is poorly managed. Although poverty has been reduced, 47% of Peruvians are still unable to meet their basic needs, and 18% cannot even provide a minimum food basket for themselves. Rural poverty is probably the main challenge facing Peru.

These challenges are expected to increase as the impacts of climate change are felt and production systems and human settlements have to be adapted. Existing climate variations are closely linked to El Niño - a key factor in the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall and drought episodes. A persistent and significant reduction of water sources in the Andean glaciers has also been observed over the last 30 years.

Map courtesy of IFAD



Total population (million), 2007: 28.2
Population density (per km²), 2007: 21.96
Number of rural poor (millions), 2007: 4.2
Poor as % of rural population (%), 2007: 64.6
Per capita gross national income (GNI)(USD) 2007: 3 885
Poor under the poverty line (%), 2007: 39.3
Poor under the extreme poverty line (%), 2007: 13.7



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 Global Mechanism's (GM's) cooperation with Peru is a response to these challenges and to government's increased attention to environmental issues, demonstrated by the recent creation of the Ministry of the Environment with a mandate to formulate a national strategy to combat desertification. The ministry was created in May 2008 in the context of the European Union-Latin American and Caribbean (EU-LAC) Summit on Climate Change. A favourable political environment for NAP implementation and GM collaboration is developing.

The country's leaders are also aware of the need for strategies for such issues as poverty reduction, rural development, disaster preparedness, and environmental management including climate change mitigation and adaptation. International cooperation is addressing these issues and the GM's support will add value to efforts to tackle land degradation and promote SLM.

Since 2004, the GM has been supporting NAP implementation in Peru by: i) mobilizing financial resources from the Peru-Italy Debt-Swap Trust Fund to develop a project in line with NAP priorities; ii) taking the first steps in the development of a country financing partnership to enhance programmatic convergence between the various stakeholders and ensuring a more coordinated, targeted use of existing and potential resources; iii) contributing to the design of a National Desertification Fund financed by the Government of the Netherlands; iv) developing a portfolio of projects for carbon sequestration and environmental services under the Bi-National Development Plan for the borderlands of Peru and Ecuador; and v) installing a multi-stakeholder platform and harmonizing initiatives to implement the UNCCD in northern Peru.

WHERE DO WE STAND ON IMPLEMENTATION?

Since January 2008, several activities have been launched in Peru under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/GM partnership, with financial backing from the Government of Spain, and the endorsement of the Focal Point and CONALDES. These comprise:

- analysis of financial flows to SLM, and formulation of an Integrated Financing Strategy (IFS) to combat desertification;
- analysis of public policies and reforms directed to harmonizing these;
- contributions to the follow-up to negotiations for debt swaps to finance the National Fund to Combat Desertification, and the design of a national competition for relevant projects;
- identification and analysis of civil society and other organizations whose participation in NAP implementation can be strengthened; and
- study of the potential for biotrade as an alternative income source for dryland communities.

These initiatives are being developed under the GM's supervision by national experts from the Environmental National Fund, the Research Centre of the University of the Pacific, the civil society organization (CSO) Proterra, and the Southern Regional Association to Combat Desertification and Drought.

In parallel with these initiatives, the GM has been following and backstopping the establishment of the Ministry of the Environment, improving links with international agencies in Lima and interacting with international cooperation agencies. The GM is now a member of the Green Table where agencies interact to harmonize their initiatives.

NEXT STEPS

The following activities aim to complete and consolidate current initiatives and strengthen the Focal Point and national efforts towards SLM:

- backstopping of the recently created General Directorate for Climate Change and Desertification at the Ministry of the Environment (the new national Focal Point) and of CONALDES, and strengthening their capacities to mobilize financial and technical resources for NAP implementation;
- improvement of the IFS and consolidation of the components currently being developed, such as harmonization of public policies, participation of CSOs, non-traditional financing sources, financial analysis, and valuation of land degradation (the costs of inaction).
- following up on conversations with FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) directed at integrating their initiatives in public policies, innovative approaches to resource mobilization and adaptation to climate change.

Map courtesy of IFAD



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Ing. José Luis Camino Ivanissevich
Instituto Nacional de Recursos
Naturales (INRENA)
Ministerio de Agricultura
Lima
jcamino@inrena.gob.pe



Mr Alejandro Kilpatrick
Programme Coordinator
Latin America & the Caribbean
a.kilpatrick@global-mechanism.org