

**SECOND NATIONAL REPORT ON  
IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION  
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**

**BANGLADESH**

**FINAL DRAFT**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS**

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<b>Contents</b>	
Abbreviations .....	6
1. Summary .....	7
1.1 Characterization of Land Degradation in Bangladesh .....	7
1.2 Current Initiatives to Combat Land Degradation .....	8
1.3 Required Actions To Meet Obligations of the UNCCD Convention .....	10
2. Background Information .....	12
2.1 Physical Environment .....	12
2.1.1 Soil .....	12
2.1.2 Climate .....	13
2.2 Delineating Dry Regions of Bangladesh .....	14
2.3 Economy .....	16
2.4 Definition of Desertification/ Land Degradation .....	16
2.5. Droughts in Bangladesh .....	17
2.5.1 Mitigation of Drought.....	18
2.6 The Process of Land Degradation .....	19
2.6.1 Lowering of Groundwater Tables .....	20
2.6.2 Degradation of Soil Fertility .....	20
2.6.3 Extent of Land Degradation in Bangladesh .....	21
2.6.4 The Driving Forces behind Degradation.....	21
2.7 The Effects of Climatic Change .....	22
2.8 Desertification in Bangladesh .....	22
2.8.1 Monitoring Degradation of Terrace Area Using Remote Sensing .....	23
2.8.2 Causes of Desertification in Bangladesh.....	23
2.8.3 Extent and Impact of Desertification in Bangladesh .....	24
2.8.4 Options and Measures Needed to Combat Land Degradation/ Desertification .....	25
3. The Strategies and Priorities Within Sustainable Development Policy Framework .....	27
3.1 National Plans and Strategies in Other Social and Economic Areas .....	27
3.1.1 Planning for Development .....	27
3.1.2 The Master Plan for Forestry .....	28
3.1.3 Formulation of National Environment Action Plan (NEMAP).....	28
3.1.4 Agenda 21 Implementation Plan .....	28
3.2 National Strategies Developed Prior to UNCCD .....	29
3.3 Strategies and Priorities Developed After UNCCD .....	30
3.4 Afforestation Programs .....	31
3.5 Other Programs and Projects .....	31
3.5.1 BMDA.....	31
3.5.2 Sustainable Environmental Management Programme (SEMP) .....	32
3.5.3 Ecosystem Management in the Barind Area .....	32
3.5.4 Protected Areas .....	34
3.5.5 Forest Resource Management Project (FRMP).....	34
3.5.6. Forestry Sector Project .....	35
3.5.7. Coastal Green Belt Project .....	35
3.5.8 Bangladesh Environmental Management Project (BEMP) .....	35
3.5.9 Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP).....	36
3.5.10 Follow-up on River Bank Protection Project (RBPP).....	36
3.5.11 Follow-up on Jamuna Bridge Multipurpose Project (JBMP).....	36
3.5.12 Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation and Water Supply Project (BAMWSP) .....	36

3.5.13 Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and Projects .....	36
3.5.14 Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management in Cox's Bazar and Hakaluki Haor (CWBMP).....	36
3.5.15 Biodiversity Conservation in the Sundarbans Reserved Forest (CBSRF) .....	37
3.6 Linkage of Land Degradation to Energy .....	37
3.7 Measures Taken to Mitigate the Effects of Drought .....	38
3.8 Lessons Taken from Practices of Indigenous Systems.....	38
3.9 Community Based Efforts for Rural Development.....	39
3.10 Policies .....	39
4.0 Institutional Measures for Implementing the Convention .....	40
4.1 Formation of a National Coordination Body (NCB).....	40
4.2 Need for a National Action Program (NAP) .....	40
4.3 Creation of Data Banks.....	41
4.4 Strengthening Facilities for Monitoring and Evaluation of Desertification .....	42
4.5 Promotion of Research on Desertification and Management of the Effects of Drought .....	42
4.6 Functional Legal and Regulatory Framework.....	43
5. Participatory Process for Preparation and Implementation of the Action Program	44
5.1 Effective Participation of Actors Involved in Defining NAP Priorities.....	44
5.1.1 Peoples Participation in Formulation of NEMAP.....	44
5.1.2 Methods of and Participation of Various Actors .....	44
5.1.3 National Awareness Seminar .....	45
5.1.4 Community Based Beel and Floodplains Resource Management.....	46
5.1.5 Strengthening of Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Capabilities (SEAMCAP) .....	46
5.3 Representation of Various Actors in the National Priorities Identification Processes .....	47
5.4 Nature and Scope of Information, Education and Communication Actions .....	47
5.5 Extent of Uptake of Local Concerns at the National Level .....	48
6. The Consultative Process in Support of the Preparation and Implementation of the NAP.....	49
7. Measures Taken or Planned to Enhance Knowledge on Desertification .....	50
7.1 Adequate Diagnosis of Past Experiences .....	50
7.1.1 Synthesis and Evaluation of Activities Undertaken in the Field of Combating Desertification and Mitigating Drought .....	50
7.1.2 Experience from the National Awareness Seminar.....	50
7.2 Established Technical Programs and Functional Projects to Combat Desertification .....	51
7.2.1 Inventory, Adaptation and Integration of Projects Underway within the NAP Process.....	51
7.2.2 Identification of New Actions and Planned Measures .....	51
7.2.3 Specific Actions to Strengthen National Capacity .....	52
7.3 Action Programs .....	52
7.3.1 Measures for Natural Resource Conservation.....	52
7.3.2 Measures to Improve the Institutional Organization .....	52
7.3.3 Measures to Increase the Knowledge of Desertification as a Phenomenon.....	53
7.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Measures for the Effects of Desertification .....	53
7.3.5 Measures to Improve the Economic Environment .....	53
7.4 Linkage Achieved with Sub-regional and Regional Action Programs .....	54
7.4.1 Development of National and Regional Level Programs .....	55

7.4.2 Strengthening the Efforts of Technological Advancement .....	55
7.5 Effectiveness of Measures in Local Capacity Building .....	56
7.5.1 Degree of Responsibility in Natural Resource Management on Local Communities .....	56
7.5.2 Involvement of Actors in Monitoring and Evaluation Process .....	57
7.6 Monitoring and Information Systems .....	58
7.6.1 Sustainable Development Networking Program (SDNP).....	58
7.7 Mechanism of Partnership Agreements .....	59
7.7.1 Functioning of Internal Partnership Agreements.....	59
7.7.2 Consultation and Coordination Process.....	59
7.7.3 Resource Made Available for NAP Implementation and Partners Involved.....	60
8. Financial Allocation from National Budget Related to UNCCD Support .....	61
8.1.1 Measures to Facilitate the Access to Local Sources of Funding .....	61
8.2 Technical and Financial Assistance Required.....	62
9. Identification of Indicators for Evaluation of Land Degradation/ Desertification ....	63
9.1. Criteria for Selection of Indicators.....	63
9.2 Operational Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluation.....	63
9.3 Implementation Indicators.....	64
10. Tasks Ahead.....	65

References

Annexure-I

Annexure-II

Annexure:IIA

Annexure-III

Annexure-IV

Annexure-V

Annexure-VI

*List of Figures*

1 Map of Dry Regions of Bangladesh

## Abbreviations

ADAB Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh	IEG International Expert Group
AIC Agriculture Information Centre	IPCC Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
AIS Agriculture Information Service	IPM Integrated Pest Management
APN Asia Pacific Network	IPNS Integrated Plant Nutrient System
APT Agricultural Planning Tools	ISNAR Int'l Service for National Agriculture Research
B. Aman Broadcast Aman	JBMP Jamuna Bridge Multipurpose Project
BAEC Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission	LGED Local Government Engineering Department
BAMWSP Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation and Water Supply Project	LGP Length of Growing Period
BARC Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council	logframe Logical framework
BBS Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics	LRIS Land Resources Information System
BCAS Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies	MIS Management Information System
BCSIR Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	MoA Ministry of Agriculture
BEMP Bangladesh Environmental Management Project	MoEF Ministry of Environment and Forests
BFRI Bangladesh Forest Research Institute	MoL Ministry of Land
BIADP Barind Integrated Area Development Project	MoFLS Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
BIDS Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies	MoRDM Ministry of Relief and Disaster Mgmt
BINA Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture	MoWR Ministry of Water Resources
BMD Bangladesh Meteorological Department	NAEP New Agricultural Extension Policy
BMDA Barind Multipurpose Development Authority	NAIS National Agricultural Information System
BRRRI Bangladesh Rice Research Institute	NAP National Action Program
BWDB Bangladesh Water Development Board	NARC National Agriculture Research Center
BWFMS Bangladesh Water and Flood Management Strategy	NARS National Agricultural Research System
CBD National Coordination Body	NCB National Coordination Body
CBMS Community Based Monitoring System	NCS The National Conservation Strategy
CBO Community Based Organization	NEC National Economic Council
CCD Convention to Combat Desertification	NEMAP National Environment Mgmt Action Plan
CEPs Community Empowerment Program	NEP National Education Policy
CERP Coastal Embankment Rehabilitation Project	NGO Non Governmental Organization
CHT Chittagong Hill Tracts	NWMP National Water Master Plan
CHTDB Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board	NWP National Water Plan
DAE Department of Agriculture Extension	PRA Participatory Rural Appraisal
DEM Digital elevation model	RAP Regional Action Program
DMB Disaster Management Bureau	RBPP River Bank Protection Project
DoE Department of Environment	RIMS Resource Information Management System
EAP Environmental Assessment Program	SAARC South Asia Association of Regional Countries
EIA environmental impact assessment	SACEP South Asia Cooperative Environment Program
ERD Economic Relations Division	SALT Sloping Agricultural Land Technology
ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	SDNP Sustainable Development Networking Prgm
FAP Flood Action Plan	SRDI Soil Resources Development Institute
FD Forest Department	SEMP Sustainable Environmental Mgmt Program
FEJB Forum of Environmental Journalists in Bangladesh	SOE The State of the Environment
FFS Farmer-Field Schools	SPARRSO Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization
FFYP Fifth five-year Plan	SRDI Soil Resources Development Institute
FLIS Fisheries and Livestock Information Services	SWMC Surface Water Modeling Centre
FRMP Forest Resource Management Project	T. Aman Transplanted Aman
FSP Forestry Sector Project	TNO Thana Nirbahi Officer
FSR Farming System Research	TPN Thematic Program Network
GEF Global Environment Facility	UNCCD United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
GIS geographic information systems	UNCED United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
GM Global Mechanism	UNDP United Nations Development Program
GSB Geological Survey of Bangladesh	UNEP United Nations Environment Program
HPSS Health and Population Sector Strategy	UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
HRIS Human Resource Information System	WARPO Water Resources Planning Organization
HYV High Yielding Varieties	WATMANET Watershed Management Network
ICIMOD International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development	WSIP Water Sector Improvement Project.
ICTPs Int'l Convention Treaties and Protocols	

## 1. Summary

Bangladesh is a signatory to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). It was signed in January 1996 and after ratifying the convention the country became a party to it. The Convention came into force in 1997. Among many environmental issues facing Bangladesh, land degradation due to aridity and loss of crops due to droughts have caused considerable economic losses and human suffering than any other problem in Bangladesh. It is feared that desertification process may have started in some vulnerable areas. Therefore, participation of Bangladesh in this convention will benefit the country in resolving many problems related to it.

Bangladesh comprises of the floodplains of the Jamuna, the Padma, the Meghna and some of the smaller rivers. The Madhupur Tract, the Barind Tract, and the Akhaura Terrace stand slightly above floodplain level and the Hills lie to the East and the North. The western-northwestern part of the country is generally considered as the drier region. The total precipitation in the dry regions is low but the rainfall often occurs in sudden heavy storms, which sometimes lead to flooding and soil erosion. During the 7-month dry season in some regions, the evapotranspiration exceeds the amount of rainfall by a factor of 2.0.

Between 1960 and 1991, droughts occurred in Bangladesh 19 times. Very severe droughts hit the country in 1951, 1961, 1975, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, and 1989. Past droughts have typically affected about 47 percent area of the country and 53 percent of the population. An analysis of the relative effects of flood and drought on rice production between 1969-70 and 1983-84 shows that drought is more devastating than floods to aggregate production.

According to the criteria set by the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) for defining a dry region (the ratio of annual rainfall to potential evapotranspiration ( $ET_o$ ) may be a maximum of 0.65), no region within Bangladesh can be termed as dry region. However, Bangladesh does experience long spells of dry weather and moderate to severe droughts are spread over a region of 5.46 million ha. Based on annual rainfall, dry season net evapotranspiration and excess evapotranspiration ( $ET_o-R$ ), and dry season  $R/ET_o$  ratio value, a dry region is delineated and a map is prepared.

### 1.1 Characterization of Land Degradation in Bangladesh

The estimates of the extent of land degradation in Bangladesh are that over 6.0 million ha falls below the minimum threshold for sustainable cultivation. In drier parts of Bangladesh, low soil fertility is recognized to be at the root of the land degradation spiral leading to desertification. Land degradation in Bangladesh may be considered as temporary or permanent lowering of the productive capacity of land. Natural processes that lead to land degradation in Bangladesh can be considered part of the ongoing land formation process. During 1983-84 and 1997 period, an 11% decline in total cultivable area, and specifically a 14% decline in cultivated area, has been observed.

Further evidence of land degradation is shown on satellite imagery which indicates a definite change in vegetation cover and soil moisture through many of the western regions of Bangladesh including Rajshahi, Kushtia, northwestern Jessore, Pabna, western Bogra and southern Dinajpur. These affected areas are known as the Barind Tract, a largely monocultural area with shrinking wetlands, notably the Chalan Beel wetlands. Human intervention from densely populated adjoining regions (around the national average of 900 persons per  $km^2$ ) makes these areas vulnerable.

There are accounts of groundwater table levels going below 8.95 m to 18.56 m in dry season in regions in the northwestern region of Bangladesh. This indicates that most of the shallow

tubewells go below the suction lift capacity in the peak irrigation period. The groundwater levels beneath Dhaka City have fallen steadily over the last twenty-five years in response to continuously abstraction. Water levels have dropped and reached a maximum depth of 20 meters below ground surface in 1989 (from about 3 meters in 1965).

These accounts of lower water table levels, decreasing vegetative cover and decreased agricultural yields indicate disturbing trends of land degradation in many parts of western Bangladesh. As a result, alternative practices to meet the demands for water, fuel and biomass have emerged but are deemed to be unsustainable including:

- the use of surface water for irrigation. A problem due to reduced water volume in most of the rivers of northwestern Bangladesh in the low flow season due to upstream utilization withdrawal at increasing rates. This also adversely affects groundwater recharge potential;
- indiscriminate and inefficient use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides. There appears to be little or no monitoring and regulation of these chemicals which may pose threats to the sustainability of agriculture;
- attempts to intensify agriculture and increase the irrigated areas. This has led to loss of bio-diversity through the conversion of forestland into agricultural land, abandonment of many indigenous crop varieties in favor of High Yielding Varieties (HYV), and the resulting depletion of soil nutrients and organic matter due to intensive cropping.

## 1.2 Current Initiatives to Combat Land Degradation

Bangladesh has responded to reversing these trends of land degradation through incorporating these activities as integral components of the national development strategies and national environmental planning. The current programs to combat land degradation also include strategies for alleviating poverty because these two goals are complementary.

To combat land degradation and to attain sustainable land management and development, current government programs have focused on field-oriented activities in concert with strengthening institutional capacity that would enable policymakers to make informed decisions on best practices and appropriate mitigation measures. In addition, the GoB want to build programs where field level research and community participation is strong to allow application of research results through extension programs.

Current and completed GoB programs include:

- Afforestation programs on denuded FD lands, and marginal lands controlled by a variety of other government agencies;
- The Barind Integrated Area Development Project (BIADP) (later renamed as Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA)) started in 1985 covering Rajshahi, Naogaon and Nawabganj districts, was implemented to mitigate the processes of land degradation of the Barind region;
- Soil conservation and watershed management as a major component of the Fifth Five-Year Plan (FFYP). The FFYP also emphasizes to measures to arrest further degradation of the land system and desertification process. The National Conservation Strategy (NCS) lays down the guidelines for integrating environmental

concerns with development imperatives. Some of the longer-term measures that have been suggested under NEMAP have relevance to combating land degradation;

- GoB-developed national plans or strategies in combating land degradation, prior to the convention including:
  - The National Environment Policy;
  - NEMAP;
  - Bangladesh Forest Policy; and
  - The National Water Master Plan (NWMP).

These strategies lay the foundation for promotion of homestead and social forestry, agro-forestry and reforestation of degraded sal forest regions as well as irrigation facilities to the vulnerable land;

- Annual afforestation and tree planting programs between MoEF and DAE activities. These afforestation activities are taken up under various schemes and programs of different ministries of the GoB. Under the Forestry Sector Project (FSP) plantation of 40,000 ha of sal forest are planned during 1997- 2003. Other programs and projects include BIADP and SEMP.
- Ecosystem Management in the Barind Area was designed to improve the ecosystem of the dry and degraded Barind land through community based sustainable environmental activities. The environment management action plan for Barind Area was aimed at combating desertification and environmental awareness; social mobilization and motivational type of activities have yet to be implemented;
- Electronic database on agro-ecological and drought prone areas of the country as managed by BARC. The database contains information on the country's land resources including physiography, soils, climate, hydrology, cropping systems, and crop suitability. The Agricultural Research Management Project supports strengthening of the management of the national agricultural research institutes and the promotion of research by private organizations;
- The CCD Trust Fund has been mobilized through a partnership arrangement with MoEF providing funds to selected activities for implementing NGOs;
- A two-day national seminar on "Combating Land Degradation and Desertification in Bangladesh" in 1998 was attended by over 70 participants representing governmental, educational and research institutions, local bodies, specialized NGOs and CBOs, journalists and donor agencies. This seminar was instrumental in:
  - exchanging information and experiences on land degradation and desertification and effectiveness of existing policies and programs;
  - raising public awareness on the importance of land improvement and its contribution to food production and natural resource management; and
  - deriving a set of priority program areas for National Action Plan (NAP);
  - recommending, *inter alia*, various actions for the NAP process, which are related to the identification and assessment of hot spots and rehabilitation of degraded land; and
  - outlining a program of corrective or remedial measures for combating degradation and desertification in western Bangladesh.

Donor assisted government programs include:

- SEMP, funded by UNDP as the follow-up implementation of National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP), addresses the major environmental priorities identified by people through NEMAP. It consists of 26 projects components and is being executed by MoEF and implemented by 21 government and NGOs throughout Bangladesh. SEMP will benefit at the grassroots level, particularly women in eco-specific intervention areas;
- Forest Resource Management Project (FRMP);
- Bangladesh Environmental Management Project (BEMP), CIDA-funded institutional strengthening project to assist the DoE in meeting its mandate as defined in the ECA 1997;
- Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP);
- Follow-up on River Bank Protection Project (RBPP);
- Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation and Water Supply Project (BAMWSP);
- Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management at Cox's Bazar and Hakaluki Haor funded by GEF. The threats of excessive cutting of mangrove, fuel wood, beach compaction by vehicles used in tourism, will be addressed through land protection measures, village conservation and sustainable use, and integrated management plans.

The GoB is considering the formation of a National Coordination Body (NCB) under which formal institutional measures for implementing the convention will be undertaken. Six ministries with their associated department and directorate along with NGOs could be the party of NCB to implement the obligation and activities drafted under the convention. The DoE is presently the implementing organ of MoEF and responsible for implementing the mandates of the UNCCD.

The GoB is also considering the development of a separate National Action Program (NAP) in the spirit of the convention. Under the existing policies and programs, the contents of the NAP will aim for resource management and poverty alleviation. A bottom up approach is planned for drafting the NAP involving stakeholders and people at the grass roots level, similar to those who participated on NEMAP. Priority areas have been identified and considered in formulation of the action programs inline with the UNCCD convention. The key actors and stakeholders for the NAP have been identified as government organizations, NGOs specializing in soil conservation and forestry, and Community Based Organizations (CBO), and the private sector.

### **1.3 Required Actions To Meet Obligations of the UNCCD Convention**

These accounts of Bangladesh's progress in tackling its problems of land degradation and desertification only point to the importance of continuous support from the GoB and the donor community. Follow-up actions are required to assist Bangladesh in meeting its obligations under the UNCCD convention. Prior to implementation of programs to reverse land degradation and combat desertification under UNCCD, the following tasks need to be implemented:

- Formation of National Coordinating Body (NCB) for implementation of UNCCD. The constitution of the NCB is suggested in Section 4.1;
- Formulation of NAP for implementation of UNCCD. This would involve collating all existing knowledge related to land degradation and desertification and facilitating a participatory approach to informing and soliciting inputs from all stakeholders who can affect positive changes in land degradation activities in Bangladesh;
- Conducting an NAP workshop to prioritize the issues that are most pressing in the efforts to reversing land degradation and desertification processes;
- Formulate feasible implementation programs which can be monitored and are specific in their time schedules to meet certain objectives of the NAP;
- Plan actions and mechanisms to meet the UNCCD obligations and enrich the knowledge base of land degradation and desertification processes;
- Ensure effective participation and linkages in the regional and sub-regional programs under UNCCD and the Thematic Program Network (TPN) for cooperation between affected countries. This effort will foster cooperation with regional countries on these issues, Bangladesh will join the Thematic Programme Network (TPN), specifically the MoEF-led TPN-2 “Agro-Forestry Management and Soil Conservation in Dry Areas” with assistance of UNDP in collaboration with BMDA, BCAS and other main institutions involved in these areas.

These tasks will accelerate formation of the NAP and mobilize the necessary government and donor assistance required to implement a more comprehensive, coordinated and participatory program of action to combat desertification and mitigating the effects of drought within the CCD framework. The action program will also aim to provide an institutional mechanism to achieve better natural resource management.

## 2. Background Information

### 2.1 Physical Environment

Bangladesh occupies about 147,570 sq. Km with a climate, which allows tropical to sub-tropical crops to be grown throughout the year and temperate crops in winter months. About 80% of the country is occupied by the floodplains of the Jamuna, the Padma, the Meghna and some smaller rivers together with estuarine and tidal floodplains. The Madhupur Tract, the Barind Tract, and the Akhaura Terrace stand slightly above floodplain level, occupy about 8%. Hills occupy about 12% and lie to the East and the North. Some hill terrace regions include significant proportion of valley land. Much of Bangladesh is still going through active land building. Sedimentation on the floodplain, tidal flats, and delta front and accompanying channel shifting are all part of this process.

#### 2.1.1 Soil

There is a broad range of agro ecological environment in Bangladesh, which is classified into 30 major agro ecological regions with about 88 sub regions (Chowdhury, 1993). The classification is adopted from the report of the study on the Land Resources Appraisal of Bangladesh for Agricultural Development conducted by GOB in collaboration with UNDP and FAO in 1988. The report describes broad agro ecological conditions, which occur in each region and sub-region, and how these conditions influence crop suitability, development and possibilities and research needs. Each regional description contains physiography, drainage, climate, soils, water resources, present land use, development constraints, ecological hazards and agricultural research needs (UNDP-FAO, 1988).

There is a great diversity of soil. Typically floodplain regions have a close pattern of permeable, loamy soils low in organic matter on the highest parts, grading into impermeable clays with moderate or high organic matter contents in adjoining depressions.

The Madhupur Tract has particularly complex relief and soil patterns, with mixtures of level and dissected upland relief and intricate valley patterns, and with soils ranging from deep to shallow, loams to heavy clays and well drained to perennially wet. The Barind Tract has similar kinds of relief and soils to the Madhupur Tracts, but in very different proportions: level, poorly drained, upland soils predominate (World Bank, 1991).

In hill regions, alternating beds of little-consolidated sands and shales provide complex mixtures of deep and shallow soils. Hill soils are located in the south and southeast of the country, and are often located on tracts susceptible to erosion and difficult to irrigate

Eight categories of problem soils covering a total land area of about 5.10 M ha significantly limit crop production in the country (having net cultivable land of about 9.09 M ha. These are:

- i) soils on the step slopes (1.23 M ha);
- ii) acid sulphate soils (0.23 M ha);
- iii) peat (0.10 M ha);
- iv) coarse textured soils (0.40 M ha);
- v) shallow soils (1.64 M ha);
- vi) poorly drained soil (3.06 M ha);
- vii) Severe fertility Limitations (1.10 M ha); and
- viii) saline soils (1.30 M ha) (Chowdhury, 1993).

## 2.1.2 Climate

The country belongs to sub-tropical regions where monsoon weather prevails throughout the year. The average temperature ranges from 7.2°C to 12.8°C during winter and 23.9 to 31.1°C during summer. The average annual rainfall varies from 1229 to 4338 mm (WARPO, 2000). The total precipitation in the dry regions is low but the rainfall often occurs in sudden heavy storms, which sometimes lead to flooding and soil erosion.

Rainfall is observed at 327 stations in the country, 31 by BMD and 296 by BWDB. The observation have been collected from both organizations and entered on the NWRD. Rainfall (R) is based on the monthly averages for a standard 30-year period. Dependable rainfall (DR) is the rainfall that is exceeded four years out of five for any month. Evapotranspiration (ET<sub>o</sub>) is the evapotranspiration from grass. Data for estimating ET<sub>o</sub> has been collected at 30 stations since about 1960 and entered on the NWRD (WARPO, 2000).

The pattern of rainfall excess and deficit, the difference between rainfall or dependable rainfall (DR) and reference crop ET<sub>o</sub> (in mm) is tabulated by season and by the hydrological region. The annual dependable rainfall exceeds the reference ET<sub>o</sub> except in the NW and SW hydrological region (WARPO, 2000). Rainfall (in mm) in Bangladesh by hydrological region is given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Rainfall (in mm) by Hydrological Region**

Hydrological Region	Rainfall	Dependable Rainfall (DR)	Evapotranspiration (ET <sub>o</sub> )
South East SE	2271	1746	1275
North West NW	1739	1332	1332
North Central NC	1956	1529	1316
Rivers & Estuary RE	2318	1810	1325
South West SW	1665	1259	1381
North East NE	3194	2595	1233
South Central SC	2307	1793	1287
Eastern Hills EH	2445	1733	1360
Bangladesh	2360	1725	1320
MPO 1991			1553

P = Rainfall; DR= Dependable Rainfall; ET<sub>o</sub>= Evapotranspiration  
Source: WARPO, 2000

Seasonal Balance of Rainfall and Potential Evapotranspiration is given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Seasonal Balance of Rainfall and Potential Evapotranspiration (in mm)**

Hydrological Region	Monsoon June- October					Dry Season (November -May)				
	R	DR	ET <sub>o</sub>	R- ET <sub>o</sub>	DR- ET <sub>o</sub>	R	DR	ET <sub>o</sub>	R-ET <sub>o</sub>	DR-ET <sub>o</sub>
SE	1909	1161	551	1358	610	588	200	724	136	524
NW	1539	852	581	958	271	346	131	751	405	620
NC	1550	901	568	982	333	511	206	748	237	542
RE	1972	1169	564	1408	605	516	174	761	245	587
SW	1469	872	572	897	300	365	101	809	444	708
NE	2511	1535	534	1977	1001	896	417	699	197	282
SC	2016	1222	537	1479	685	485	144	750	265	606
EH	2241	1280	566	1675	714	512	148	794	282	646
Bangladesh	1901	1124	559	1342	865	527	140	759	227	564

P = Rainfall; DR= Dependable Rainfall; ET<sub>o</sub>= Evapotranspiration  
Source: WARPO, 2000

During the dry season (of 7 months) in some regions the evapotranspiration exceeded the amount of rainfall by an amount of more than 0.5 times the rainfall. They are Northwest, Southwest, North Central and South Central Hydrological regions. So, for that duration within a year these regions may be considered as dry region. Seasonal variation of rainfall and Evapotranspiration contributes to the Rainfall/ ETo as is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Contribution of Seasonal Variation of Rainfall and Evapotranspiration**

Hydrological Region	Rainfall/ ET <sub>o</sub> (Year)	P/ ET <sub>o</sub> Monsoon 5-Months	P/ ET <sub>o</sub> Dry Season 7-months	Dependable Rainfall/ ET <sub>o</sub> (Year)	P/ ET <sub>o</sub> Monsoon 5-months	P/ ET <sub>o</sub> Dry Season 7-months
South East SE	1.78	3.46	0.81	1.37	2.11	0.28
North West NW	1.30	2.65	0.46	1.00	1.47	0.17
North Central NC	1.49	2.73	0.68	1.16	1.59	0.27
Rivers & Estuary RE	1.75	3.50	0.68	1.37	2.07	0.23
South West SW	1.20	2.57	0.45	0.91	1.52	0.12
North East NE	2.59	4.70	1.28	2.02	2.87	0.60
South Central SC	1.79	3.78	0.64	1.39	2.27	0.19
Eastern Hills EH	1.80	3.96	0.64	1.27	2.26	0.19
Bangladesh	1.79	3.40	0.69	1.31	2.01	0.18

P = Rainfall; DR= Dependable Rainfall; ET<sub>o</sub>= Evapotranspiration

## 2.2 Delineating Dry Regions of Bangladesh

Attempts were made to identify the aridity in Bangladesh using meteorological data. It was observed that Bangladesh does not fall within the annual aridity limit of 20 according to Martonne Indices. However, if the monthly data were used seasonal aridity could be observed (Jabbar, 1990). The seasonal aridity increases from 4 months (November-February) in the northeast/ southeast regions to 6 months (November-April) in the northwest region. WARPO advocates dry month periods of 7- month duration (November - May).

On the basis of annual rainfall frequency of rainfall (25mm, 50 mm), maximum, minimum and frequency of temperature (25<sup>o</sup>C, 30<sup>o</sup>C and 35<sup>o</sup>C), clear days, cloudy sky and first available rain of the season, Bangladesh has been divided into 7 seven agro climatic zones (Jabbar, 1990). Out of these, the zones E, F and G possibly be considered as relatively dry zones. These would be part of the agro ecological zones of the Barind and Madhupur Tract and the Ganges Floodplains.

Occurrence of rainfall in the Barind area has been analysed to compare the amount and distribution during 1975-93 with those of the period 1902-74 (Ahmed, 1997). The mean annual rainfall of the Barind Area has changed from 1374.6 mm in the past (1902-74) to 1491.1 mm in recent areas. There are incidences of no change and even a decrease in rainfall southwestern, southeastern and western parts. The Monsoon season (June-October) received 83.3% of the mean annual rainfall. The pre-monsoon season of March-May received 14.3% (213.1 mm) while the bone-dry season of November- February got only 2.4% (35.2 mm).

Although the mean annual rainfall in this area has gone up in recent years, the increase has almost entirely been occurred during the monsoon (1278.5 mm vs. 1389.4 mm). The rainfall in the dry months, when it is really needed, remained the same (101.2 mm in the recent years vs. 96.1 mm in the past).

According to the data registered by BWDB, the annual evaporation of the area ranges from 370 mm to 1120 mm. The ratio of annual rainfall to evaporation for this area is 1.33 but considering the dry months the ratio of rainfall to evaporation would be 0.18. According to the Length of Growing Period (LGP) concept advocated by FAO, areas with an LGP of less

than 1 day are hyperarid (true deserts); less than 75 days arid, 75 to less than 120 days (dry) semiarid, 120 to less than 180 days (moist) semiarid. These areas together correspond closely to the areas denominated as Drylands. The length of the rainfed growing season ranges from 170-180 days in the west- central west to 280- 290 days in the extreme north east (Bramner, 1999).

The humid climatic situation due to monsoon rainfall, regular flooding and 170-290 days of annual growth period are viewed as conditions where desertification is unlikely to occur (Hussain, 2001) where as Rasheed (1998) and Huq (1995) advocated in favour of desertification using the term synonymously with land degradation. Considering the lower rainfall and its distribution Hussain proposed that areas lying west of the longitudinal line of 89.5 0 E might be described as dry regions of Bangladesh (Hussain, 2001). A region that has annual annual average rainfall much lower than the national average of 2200 mm may be considered a vulnerable area for occurrence of drought and land degradation (Rasheed, 1998).

According to the criteria set by the CCD for defining a dry region the ratio of annual rainfall to potential evapotranspiration may be a maximum of 0.65. Taking into consideration of annual rainfall and corresponding evapotranspiration data no region within Bangladesh can be termed as part of dry region. But Bangladesh experiences long spell of dry months (7 months) and moderate to severe droughts are spread over a region of 5.46 M ha. Since Bangladesh has two distinct periods of Dry season and the Monsoon having duration of seven and five months respectively, seasonal influence may be given emphasis in outlining dry regions. The value of the ratio of annual rainfall to potential evapotranspiration (a maximum of 0.65) may be extrapolated for dry seasons and used to delineate a dry region. For a spell of 7-month dry season, the threshold may be approximated to 0.38. For example, though the  $R/ET_o$  values in favour of the SW and SE hydrological regions for the whole year is much above the threshold value of 0.65, the same for the dry period (of 7 months) is in the range of 0.17-0.45. These two regions also have the least annual rainfall and falls within the moderate to severely affected area of the Drought Map of Bangladesh.

Considering the distribution of rainfall and evapotranspiration regimes and the drought condition in the country, it is proposed that the regions fulfilling the following conditions may comprise dry regions in Bangladesh. The conditions are:

- (i) annual rainfall should be less than 2000 mm;
- (ii) dry season (November – May) Excess Evapotranspiration ( $ET_o-R$ ) should be more than 400 mm; and
- (iii) dry season  $R/ ET_o$  ratio value should be less than 0.65.

With this assumption made and applied on the rainfall and evapotranspiration data available for the agro ecological zones of Bangladesh (tables- 1, 2 and 3), the Northwest, Southwest and North central zones can be considered as dry region of the country. It may be seen that the drier agro climatic zones E, F, G falls into the dry regions as defined above. It is further proposed that the dry regions may be divided into two sub regions on the basis of severity of dryness as shown on Table 4.

**Table 4: Severity of Dry Regions**

Severity	Conditions/ Criteria Defined
Moderate	Annual Rainfall less than 1600 mm
	Dry season (November-May) Excess Evapotranspiration ( $ET_o - R$ ) - more than 400 mm
	Dry season (November-May) $R/ET_o$ ratio value less than 0.4
Slight	Annual Rainfall 1600-2000 mm
	Dry season (November-May) Excess Evapotranspiration ( $ET_o - R$ ) - 200-400 mm
	Dry season (November-May) $R/ET_o$ ratio value 0.4 - 0.65
Non dry	Annual Rainfall more than 2000 mm
	Dry season (November-May) Excess Evapotranspiration ( $ET_o - R$ ) - less than 200 mm
	Dry season (November-May) $R/ET_o$ ratio value more than 0.65

Considering the rainfall and evapotranspiration data available in WARPO a map is prepared to show the severity of dryness in the dry regions. A map of the dry regions of Bangladesh has been prepared and is given in Figure 1. The Rivers and Estuary hydrological region; the coastal region and the Sunderbans are considered as non-dry. The dry map of Bangladesh shows that the dry zones are extended over an area of 6.442 M ha. The extent of the dry zones are given in the Table 5.

**Table 5: Extent of Dry Zones of Bangladesh**

Dry Zones	No. of Thanas Occupied	Area covered (M ha)	Percent of total land
Moderate	64	2.015	14.37
Slight	163	4.427	31.56
Nondry	263	7.585	54.07

### 2.3 Economy

Bangladesh's economy has grown by about 4% per annum in recent years; inflation rate has been low (2%); foreign reserves have been reasonable; and GOB's domestic resource position has been favorable. GOB introduced a broad program of structural adjustment in 1993/94 to achieve macroeconomic stability. The structural reforms include trade liberalization to remove anti-export and anti-private sector bias, deregulation of private investment, relaxation of exchange controls, and reform of business laws (GOB. 1997).

Agriculture dominates the economy of Bangladesh, generating about 1/3 of GDP, providing 60% of employment and accounting for about half the value of export earnings. The country is among the poorest of the world (per capita GDP about \$350/ year). Over half the households live in moderate or extreme poverty, with a significant proportion of the remainder only marginally above the poverty line and vulnerable to falling into poverty in case of unfavorable developments.

### 2.4 Definition of Desertification/ Land Degradation

Desertification was earlier considered as the spread of desert-like conditions in arid or semi-arid areas. It is now seen as a process of degrading or changing the land use to another category and ultimately reducing the productive potentials of land. *Desertification is defined as: "Land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various*

factors, including climatic variations and human activities" (Chapter 12 of UNCED's Agenda '21). The various elements of desertification may be quantified in terms of the causes, general extent and physical consequences of the process.

*According to terminology accepted by CCD, "Land degradation" means reduction or loss, in arid, semi arid and dry sub-humid areas, of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of rainfed cropland, irrigated cropland, or range, pasture, forest and woodlands resulting from land uses or from a process or combination of processes, including processes arising from human activities and habitation patterns, such as:*

- (i) *soil erosion caused by wind and or water;*
- (ii) *deterioration of the physical, chemical and biological or economic properties of soil; and*
- (iii) *long-term loss of natural vegetation.*

*Further the CCD defines "arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas" as areas, other than polar and sub polar regions, in which the ratio of annual precipitation to potential evapotranspiration falls within the range of 0.05 to 0.65.*

Degradation of land involves the reduction of the renewable resource potential by one or a combination of processes acting upon the land. The resource potential relates to agricultural suitability (rainfed or irrigated arable cropping, animal husbandry, forestry, inland fishery), primary productivity level, and natural biotic functions.

More recent data on the extent of land degradation estimates that about 5 million hectares, or 33 percent, of total land acreage in Bangladesh falls below the minimum threshold for sustainable cultivation. In drier parts of Bangladesh low soil fertility is recognized to be at the root of the land degradation spiral (Zuberi, 1998):

**low fertility -> low water use efficiency -> low biomass production -> decline in biological activity -> low availability of energy& materials -> poor soil cover -> run off -> soil erosion -> land degradation -> drought -> desertification**

Deforestation leads to increased water erosion with an indirect impact on water resource development, depletion of soil fertility, disappearance of many plant and animal species, local aridification, etc. In addition, flooding, accelerated runoff, droughts, more sedimentation in rivers and reservoirs and depleted groundwater become more severe because of deforestation, with adverse consequences for agricultural production and human life.

## **2.5. Droughts in Bangladesh**

*According to definition of CCD "drought" means the naturally occurring phenomenon that exists when precipitation has been significantly below normal recorded levels, causing serious hydrological imbalances that adversely affect land resources production systems.*

Drought is a "creeping phenomenon," The effects of drought accumulate slowly over a considerable period of time, and may linger for years after the termination of the event. Drought impacts are spread over a larger geographical area than are damages that result from other natural hazards. Like floods, Bangladesh is also vulnerable to recurrent droughts. After 1971 Bangladesh has experienced droughts of major magnitude in 1973, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1989, 1992, 1994, and 1995. Although droughts are not always continuous in any area, they do occur sometimes in the low rainfall zones of the country. As listed above, Bangladesh experienced consecutive droughts in 1978-1979, 1981- 1982, and 1994-1995.

The droughts of 1994-95 in the northwestern districts of Bangladesh led to a shortfall of rice production of 3.5 million tons (Paul, 1995).

Two critical dry periods are distinguished (Karim et al., 1990). Rabi and pre-Kharif drought (January - May), due to:

- (i) the cumulative effect of dry days;
- (ii) higher temperatures during pre-Kharif (> 40 degrees Celsius in March-May); and
- (iii) low soil moisture availability.

This drought affects all the Rabi crops, such as HYV Boro, Aus, wheat, pulses and potatoes especially where irrigation possibilities are limited. It also affects sugarcane production. Kharif droughts in the period June/July to October, created by sub-humid and dry conditions in the highland and medium highland areas of the country (in addition to the west/northwest also the Madhupur tract is drought prone). Shortage of rainfall affects the critical reproductive stages of transplanted Aman crops in December, reducing its yield, particularly in those areas with low soil moisture holding capacity.

Considering the Agro ecological Zones (AEZ) database and land resources inventory map at 1:1,000,000 scale, BARC has identified and mapped drought prone areas of Bangladesh for Rabi and Pre-Kharif seasons (WARPO- EGIS, 1996). Recently BARC has reviewed this concept and produced three different maps for Rabi, Pre-Kharif and Kharif seasons (BARC, 2001). The drought maps has been revised by BARC to produce three maps for Rabi, Pre-Kharif and Kharif seasons. The drought severity classes defined in the maps are slight, Moderate, severe and Very severe related to the yield losses of 15-20%, 20-35%, 35-45%, and 45-70% respectively for different crops (Karim and Iqbal, 2001). Areas (in M ha) affected by drought in different crop seasons are given in Table 6.

**Table 6: Summary of Drought Severity Areas in Bangladesh by Crop Season (in M ha)**

Drought Class	Rabi	Pre-Kharif	Kharif
Very Severe	0.446	0.403	0.344
Severe	1.71	1.15	0.74
Moderate	2.95	4.76	3.17
Slight	4.21	4.09	2.90
No Drought	3.17	2.09	0.68
Non-T.Aman			4.71

After Karim and Iqbal, 2001.

The northwestern part is prone to drought mainly because of rainfall variability in the pre-monsoon and the post-monsoon periods. Inadequate pre-monsoon showers, a delay in the onset of the rainy season or an early departure of the monsoon may create drought conditions in Bangladesh, and adversely affect crop output. Since it puts severe strain on the land potential. it acts as a catalyst of land degradation through reduced soil moisture and water retention, increased soil erosion, decline in soil organic contents and overexploitation of sparse vegetation. Human interventions in the form of land abuse and mismanagement have exacerbated these actions during the spells of periodic droughts. An analysis of the relative effects of flood and drought on rice production between 1969-70 and 1983-84 shows that drought is more devastating than floods to aggregate production (World Bank, 2000 a).

### 2.5.1 Mitigation of Drought

In the early 1970s and 1980s in the drought-prone areas of northern Bangladesh the agricultural development projects were developed to provide ground irrigation through thousands of Shallow and Deep Tube Wells. Since scarcity of water was the main obstacle against intensive agriculture pumping up groundwater helped grow crops year round. Through thousands of shallow and deep tubewells, HYV paddy was introduced to hundreds of acres of marginal and sloped lands.

Since land is being over used and degraded due to pressure of population, effective population control, judicious land use and sustainable agricultural practices are urgently required to mitigate droughts. The carrying capacity of the land resource in Bangladesh has been critically surpassed. Use of land for production of two or three crops a year may be limited. Because of this soil is not getting sufficient rest to recover its health. The marginal lands should not be used for agricultural purposes. Public awareness is needed to handle land degradation and to protect land from misuse and over use. Agrochemicals should be carefully used.

The problem of land degradation may be studied to develop sustainable land use. A national land use policy is urgently needed to utilize land in judicious manner. Rehabilitation programs should have effective mechanism to minimize the impact of drought. Steps are required to develop national programs for drought preparedness (similar to flood and cyclone preparedness). Early-warning schemes have to be undertaken to inform the population of drought-prone areas and introduce drought-relief measures for the affected people as part of the national planning strategy/ national program for drought preparedness {similar to flood and cyclone preparedness}.

Attempts are being taken to update the drought data jointly with BARC and DAE in the drought affected aman rice areas. Efforts for mitigation for such droughts are quite inadequate due to lack of fiscal resources.

## **2.6 The Process of Land Degradation**

The vulnerable area includes the greater districts of Rajshahi, Kushtia, northwestern Jessore, Pabna, western Bogra and southern Dinajpur. The area includes the largely monocultural Barind Tract, the fast shrinking (due to human intervention) Chalan Beel wetlands, and densely populated adjoining regions. In fact, several parts of the vulnerable area (western Bogra, Pabna, Kushtia and northwestern Jessore), the population density is as high as the national average of 900 persons/ sq. km causing immense pressure on the fragile ecosystem.

The dry region of Bangladesh has a high population density, which ranges from 500 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in Dinajpur to 900 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in Kushtia, as against 755 persons per km<sup>2</sup> for the country (GOB, 1997). The Barind Area covers 15 thanas of Rajshahi and 29 thanas of Bogra, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Pabna district with a population of 5.038 million. There prevails a special kind of weather having high temperature from mid June to October. Virtually there is no rainfall from November to February. Soil of the area becomes hard like iron during dry season whereas it melts like wax with a very little rainfall. The Madhupur Tract is spread over Dhaka, Tangail, Jamalpur and Mymensingh districts. During 1983-84 and 1997 period, an 11 percent decline in total cultivable area, and specifically a 14 percent decline in cultivated area is observed (World Bank, 2000 b). The level of land degradation and its extent vary seasonally and yearly and by region as well as the pressure on the land are not the same either. In the whole of Bangladesh, the degradation status is revealed as light - 42%, moderate - 48% and strong - 10%. (BARC, 1998, p.24)

Using extensive soil sampling the nutrient grades of different agro-ecological zones (AEZs) was established on the basis of the levels of various nutrients (N, P, K, S, Zn, Mg) present. It was observed that there was only one AEZ, Young Brahmaputra - Jamuna Flood Plain, which could be classified as good. There were thirteen AEZs with fair nutrient status, while the rest (18) fell in the grades of poor and very poor (World Bank, 2000 a). A good soil should have organic contents of more than 3.5%. But in Bangladesh most soils have less than 1.7%, some soils have less than 1% organic matter. In Bangladesh, the average

organic matter content of top soil (high land and medium high land situation) have declined by 20 - 46% from about 2% to 1% over the past 20 years of intensive cultivation.

Considering National Agricultural Research System (NARS) database, organic matter content of the soils of dry region has been summarized in Table 7 from BARC, 1998.

**Table 7: Status of Organic Matter in the Soils of the Dry Regions**

Class of soil organic matter	AEZ	Main Location	Total Area (Mha)	% Net Cultivated Area
Very low (< 1.0)	1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 16, 25, 26, 29, 30	Dinajpur, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Tangail, Nawabganj, Rajshahi, Pabna, Kushtia, Bogra, Naogaon, Rangpur	4.05	44.5

After BARC, 1988

Barind Tract are deficient in P for HYV rice (about 0.77 M ha). Medium level response was also observed in soils of Madhupur Tract having a total area of about 0.42 M ha. Barind and Madhupur Tract area deficient in K for HYV rice having a total area of about 1.20 M ha. Soil fertility decline has occurred due to removal of nutrients as well as uneven *fertilizer application* without accounting for soil characteristics.

Some area affected by wind erosion mainly in the district of Rajshahi and Dinajpur region during drier months of the year. Most of the topsoils in the cultivated/ deforested areas of the terraces, and floodplains are acidified to a variable extent. Intensive acidification is also identified in the heavy clays in the Lower Atrai Basin and in some broad valleys within the Barind and Madhupur area (Dowlah, 1998).

### 2.6.1 Lowering of Groundwater Tables

The groundwater table goes below 8.95 m to 18.56 m in dry season in and around Shibganj, Chapai Nawabganj and Iswardi. It indicates that most of the shallow tubewell goes below the suction lift capacity in the peak irrigation period. The trend of groundwater flow in Chapai Nawabganj and Rajshahi is to the southeast. The groundwater moves towards east and southeast in Pabna, Meherpur and Kushtia area.

Recharge to groundwater in the northwestern part varies from 210 mm to 445 mm. It is observed that the loss of groundwater takes place from October to December. In the western and central part, the river is gaining from the surrounding aquifer in all the period except the wet season (IAEA-BAEC-BWDB, 2000). With ever increasing ground water extraction for irrigation in this region during the dry season in recent years and no increase in rainfall in that period, the groundwater level may fall to the extent of not getting fully replenished in the recharge season causing overdraft. The groundwater levels beneath Dhaka City have fallen steadily over the last twenty-five years in response to continuously increasing abstraction. Water levels have dropped and reached a maximum depth of 20 meters below ground surface in 1989 (from about 3 meters in 1965) (World Bank, 1996).

### 2.6.2 Degradation of Soil Fertility

Flooding leading to inundation of the plain lands is a major factor in retaining and enhancing soil fertility in the deltaic country. Soil degradation is said to be occurring in Bangladesh due to the intensification of crop cultivation and the advance of monoculture rice and providing imbalanced nutrient base to their crop. Soil fertility is degraded due to indiscriminate and inefficient use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides. Soil fertility decline has occurred due to

removal of nutrients as well as uneven fertilizer application without accounting for soil characteristics. The degradation results in a gradual decrease of soil quality.

River erosion is posing threats for both sustainability of agricultural and human habitation in Bangladesh. Population increase puts pressure on non-crop ecosystems such as forests and wetlands to convert them to croplands. The sharply reduced flow below Farakka indiscriminate withdrawal of water at Farakka during the lean period creates a serious water crisis in the affected areas and aggravates salinity in the entire Khulna-Jessore region. Saline intrusion has degraded soil and ecosystem, leading to decreased agricultural production and increased poverty (World Bank, 2000a).

### 2.6.3 Extent of Land Degradation in Bangladesh

The general extent of land degradation in Bangladesh is given in Table 8.

**Table 8: Extent of Land Degradation in Bangladesh**

Types of land degradation	Total area (M ha)	Dry region (M ha)
Water erosion	1.7	0.10
Bank Erosion	1.7	0.10
Soil Fertility Decline	8.0	1.84
P deficient (for HYV rice)	8.5	5.89
P deficient (for upland crops)	5.6	0.95
K deficient (for HYV rice)	7.4	4.82
K deficient (for upland crops)	7.5	0.95
S deficient (for HYV rice)	7.7	2.86
S deficient (for upland crops)	8.7	
Soil organic matter depletion	7.5	2.9
Water logging	0.7	
Salinization	3.05	
Pan formation	0.06	
Acidification	0.6	
Deforestation	1.5	0.10

Source: BARC, 1999; SOE, 2001; Chowdhury, 1995; Karim and Iqbal, 2001

The economic implications of land degradation are tremendous. An assessment has been made in terms of production loss of crops, and additional agricultural input necessary to maintain soil nutrients. It was found that total economic cost of land degradation exceeded to 2000 million US\$ per year as presented in the following table (GOB-BCAS-SACEP-NORAD- UNEP, 2001).

### 2.6.4 The Driving Forces behind Degradation

The driving forces and pressures, state, and impact related to land degradation, and responses to address the problems (GOB-BCAS- SACEP- NORAD- UNEP, 2001) are:

- (i) Improper Cultivation in Terrace Land, Floodplains and Piedmont Plains;
- (ii) Faulty Irrigation;
- (iii) Imbalanced Fertilizer Use;
- (iv) Plough pan;
- (v) Improper Use or Pesticides;
- (vi) Over Exploitation of Biomass from Agricultural Fields;
- (vii) Unplanned Rural Infrastructure; (Road Embankment, *FCD/I*);
- (viii) Salinization;
- (ix) Brickfields and Biomass;

- (x) Use Unplanned Industrial Development;
- (xi) Mining of Sand and Gravels from Agricultural Land;
- (xii) Land Ownership and Tenure;
- (xiii) River Bank Erosion and Sedimentation;
- (xiv) Sandy Over-wash on Agricultural Land; and
- (xv) Salinity.

## **2.7 The Effects of Climatic Change**

The IPCC reports that under some scenario of climatic change for late in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Bangladesh would remain a savanna/woodland. The availability of winter water will decrease, and irrigation will be more dependent on groundwater withdrawal. Under such a condition, it would be quite difficult to control salinity intrusion, to keep navigational routes functional, and to ensure environmental and ecological harmony in various places especially in the Ganges, Atrai and Teesta dependent areas of the country (World Bank, 2000c).

At present, western parts of Bangladesh are periodically being affected by droughts in winter. With temperature rise the winter precipitation might decrease further, and the moisture content of topsoil would decrease substantially leading to severe moisture stress. Rabi drought would severely affect wheat and Boro crops at vegetative growth stages. Increased drought will increase salinity build up in the topsoil (World Bank, 2000c).

There is a need to develop drought-tolerant crop varieties and drought- mitigation technologies that will make maximum use of the land resources, of the rain fed farming system and the limited rainfall in the region. Complementary concerns include appropriate water storage and rainwater harvesting technologies, supported with packages of agronomic practices to increase productivity of the Kharif crops and vegetables.

## **2.8 Desertification in Bangladesh**

Though Bangladesh is predominantly a riverine country, northwestern region is threatened by desertification. The ratio of cultivable land to rural population (acre/ person) has decreased in the northwestern region (Rajshahi Division) by 23.2% as compared to a decreased ratio of 17.2% in the whole of the country (GOB- World Bank, 2000). Some geographers and ecologists claims that there is evidence of desertification from the very dry soil conditions in the Barind Tract region and the white reflectance of the soil surface on air photos and satellite imageries (Jabbar et al., 1982).

Landsat imageries of the Barind Tract have been interpreted as a pronounced change in vegetation cover and soil moisture. This change has been attributed to a desert-like condition prevailing during the dry season.

The FAO experts had somewhat different view. They hold that the characteristic Grey Terrace Soils of the Barind Tract were soils, which developed in response to a hydromorphic weathering process (ferrolysis). The soils presumably always were dry in the dry season because of the very low moisture holding capacity of their silty upper layers and the heavy clay substratum (FAO-UNDP Report, 1988, p. 449).

Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) of the Government of Bangladesh is monitoring drought and other hazardous events. Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), SPARRSO, BWDB, BARC also collaborate with BMD by providing necessary information on weather, water and soil condition and suggesting appropriate action for mitigating the effects of drought and desertification.

Attempts were made to study the seasonal aridity using meteorological data. It was observed that Bangladesh does not fall within the annual aridity limit of 20 according to Martonne Indices. However, if the monthly data were used seasonal aridity could be observed (Jabbar, 1990). The seasonal aridity increases from 4 months (November-February) in the northeast/ southeast regions to 6 months (November-April) in the northwest region. WARPO advocates dry month periods of 7 months duration (November-May).

From examination of the classification of the soils of the South Asian region made on the basis of US Soil Taxonomy the soils of Bangladesh have not yet been affected in any significant way by desertification process (Soil Survey Staff, 1998). In Bangladesh, the process is probably at the very incipient stage.

The Farakka Barrage has restricted fresh water flows during the dry season and caused serious problems in southwest of Bangladesh. The diversion of Ganges water by the Farakka barrage in India has contributed to the reduction of surface water availability and aggravated the desertification process in the western part of the country. The decreased stream flow also affects river morphology, salinity, ecosystem, etc., in addition to causing large-scale expansion in groundwater irrigation in the affected areas

### **2.8.1 Monitoring Degradation of Terrace Area Using Remote Sensing**

The agricultural status and vegetation cover of the Terrace area in the Northwest Bangladesh was studied using Remote Sensing and GIS Technology by SPARRSO. The study monitored the development stage of dry season irrigation using three Landsat images (date 20.10.90; 30.01.90; and 11.04.90), which revealed the agricultural and related information. With respect to the Aman Paddy (October) to irrigation crops in January and April were only 20% and 27% (SPARRSO, 1996 b).

For studying the gradual changes of forest ecosystem of Madhupur Tract, topographic map, old vegetation map, colour infrared (CIR) aerial photograph (1983) and Landsat TM data (1988, 1991 and 1997) had been used. A change detection map was prepared by using GIS and CIR aerial photographs of the area taken on 1983/84 (SPARRSO, 1998). Interpretation of Landsat TM imagery of 1988, 1991 and 1997 showed a gradual deterioration of forest cover and density. Examination of the imageries showed that the western part of the main land forest has almost completely been cut and rubber plantations has been established.

Land degradation map are being prepared using computer and GIS technique on the satellite imageries (SPARRSO, 1993). Considering the physiography and vegetation coverage of the country, Nachol thana in the northwest and Hathazari in the south west of the country were selected for the land degradation mapping High, medium and low hills, piedmont plain and flood plains were identified and digitized. Vegetation index, vegetation status, buffer zone and erosion hazard maps were prepared. From these maps, 23% area was found in the high hazard category due to deforestation and erosion. On the other hand, 35% area was found in the category of low vegetation. The degradation map prepared for Nachol area identified degradation processes like water erosion, loss of topsoil, physical and chemical deterioration, surface scaling and crusting and soil compaction (SPARRSO, 1998, p.3).

### **2.8.2 Causes of Desertification in Bangladesh**

The general problem of dry regions with large populations is essentially one of human ecology. Mismanagement of resources has been a prime source of desertification, which is accelerating in many areas. Erratic rainfall results in widely fluctuating production leading to

scarcity, which imposes stress on these populations. As population increases, the demand on natural resources is further magnified. The consequence is an imbalance between the human and animal population, on the one hand, and plants, water, and land resources on the other. As the demand by the first persists and increases, the resources tend to become depleted and, as depletion proceeds, the stress upon them becomes even greater. As a result the ecological foundation, life support system as well as habitat are going to be lost. Thus, a process of progressive degradation of resources is set into operation, which intensifies with every famine and the period following it. If not checked timely and effectively, it leads to permanent damage in the form of loss of valuable plant species through excessive grazing or cutting for fuel; vegetal cover gets replaced by bare land or, at best, less useful plant communities. About 2.3 million ha is estimated to be prone to severe drought.

Having no alternative to fuel other than natural vegetation and gradual increase of fuel demand and economic depression of the region accelerated rapid destruction of forests/plants, which resulted environmental imbalance in nature. Less rainfall than needed created havoc of drought year after year and rapid destruction of forest brought inevitable consequence of desertification.

### **2.8.3 Extent and Impact of Desertification in Bangladesh**

About 6.0 M ha, or 43% of the total geographical area is affected by various forms and degree of degradation. The extent of various types of land degradation in the dry region of Bangladesh is given in Table 8. About one fourth of the total cultivable land is affected by drought in every year with different intensity. The recovery of such land depends upon its resilience, which, however, may be lost completely if the land is not treated in time with care. Frequent droughts, through its short-lived but recurrent stress, can aggravate the adverse impact and, if not checked properly, can interfere with the natural capacity of land to recover and advance the process of desertification.

Agricultural intensification and the increase in irrigated area have led to a number of environmental problems i.e., loss of bio-diversity through the conversion of forest land into agricultural land; abandonment of many indigenous crop varieties in favour of HYV 's leading to irreversible loss of the country's genetic resources; depletion of soil nutrients and organic matter due to intensive cropping; and deprivation of soil from organic content due to use of crop residue as fuel. Other environmental degradation includes loss of wetland habitats through abstraction and drainage resulting in depletion of aquatic fauna and flora and reduction in water availability to the rural population, increased use of agro-chemicals raising the pollution potentials of surface and ground water.

Adverse conditions resulting from desertification process are:

- (i) deterioration of the natural resources adversely affecting the socio-economic condition and livelihood support systems;
- (ii) reduction of irrigation potential;
- (iii) diminishing of the food security base of human beings and livestock;
- (iv) scarcity of drinking water extraction and depletion of ground water, interference with spacing of tubewell, including hand tubewell, shallow and deep tubewell;
- (v) health and nutrition status of the population, arsenic contamination in ground water, contamination due to disposal of waste and inadequate sanitation;
- (vi) reduced availability of biomass for fuel;
- (vii) loss of bio-diversity; and
- (viii) impoverishment, indebtedness and distress sale of assets of production.

#### 2.8.4 Options and Measures Needed to Combat Land Degradation/ Desertification

A comprehensive study at the country level on land degradation/ desertification, covering all its aspects ranging from the physical to economic, is absent. However, it is clear that the quality of land has deteriorated, and its impacts are visible. Over the last decade, crop yield has declined due to deterioration of physical and chemical properties of land and soil. It would be useful to establish a baseline survey on which future monitoring and assessment or further deterioration or improvement could be based. The country has a number of policies to deal with land degradation, but with limited implementation. The existing policies must be implemented, and a number of new activities should be undertaken in the immediate future to address land degradation.

The Convention (UNCCD) states that efforts to combat desertification must be integral components of national development strategies and national environmental planning. Development of comprehensive action programs to combat desertification should include strategies for alleviating poverty because these two goals complement one another. The country has identified the factors that contribute to desertification in the relevant socio-economic, biological, and geophysical context; and called for practical measures for combating desertification in the following priority fields (Rasheed, 1998; Jalil, 1998; Zuberi, 1998):

- (i) combating land degradation through, inter alia, intensified soil conservation, afforestation and reforestation activities;
- (ii) encourage the creation of large scale reforestation and afforestation schemes, vegetation retention schemes and community-based agro-forestry schemes;
- (iii) promote in-situ protection and conservation of special ecological areas through legislation, while ensuring the protection of biodiversity;
- (iv) promote and encourage investment in forestry development through various incentives, including legislative measures and their implementation;
- (v) ecosystem Management of drought prone areas i.e. Madhupur and Barind Tract, and other areas;
- (vi) development of water catchments, water harvesting and rainwater harvesting in the vulnerable areas;
- (vii) undertaking of silvo-agroforestry program for regeneration of degraded land, prevention of land degradation, seasonal harvesting of vegetation etc. in the dry region; (viii) improvement of ground water system through wetland conservation and management in the Chalan Beel area;
- (viii) sustainable management of natural resources which may include promoting improved management of water resources and appropriate water saving technologies;
- (ix) establishment and preservation of grassland in the marginal areas as part of the soil conservation measures;
- (x) development of ecologically sustainable agricultural practice to introduce appropriate; environmentally sound and economically feasible agricultural techniques;
- (xi) improvement of the framework for poverty reduction and food security;
- (xii) harnessing and efficient use of various energy sources;
- (xiii) creation of favorable institutional and legal frameworks;
- (xiv) strengthening of facilities for systematic monitoring and evaluation of desertification process;
- (xv) strengthening the knowledge base and developing information and monitoring systems for regions prone to desertification and drought, including the economic and social aspects of these ecosystems;
- (xvi) promotion of research on desertification control and management of the effects of drought;

- (xvii) promote understanding and arrangements among neighbouring countries which shares common rivers so that as a downstream country Bangladesh gets her due share of water for her economic use as well as for prevention of land degradation, drought, desertification and loss of biodiversity;
- (xviii) encouraging and promoting popular participation and environmental education.

There are two major constraints in preventing land degradation. The first one is the high population pressure on land, especially in the west and northwest parts of the country. In these regions, the exploitation of biomass due to a prevalent energy crisis appears to have exceeded the carrying capacity of the land, and led to encroachment on natural forests in the Barind and Madhupur Tracts. The second constraint is the absence of a comprehensive national land use policy. However, a draft land use policy has emerged as the follow-up program of NEMAP, is in place for wider discussion and government approvals. It needs to be emphasized that a plan to prevent land degradation must begin, strengthening of knowledge regarding the susceptible areas.

### 3. The Strategies and Priorities Within Sustainable Development Policy Framework

The people of Bangladesh has the tradition of living in harmony with the environment while utilizing natural resources to meet their requirements. This harmony is upset due to the expanding population, the growing demand for resources and the increase in rural poverty. The Government is concerned about environmental issues in general and land degradation in particular over the past two decades. This concern is reflected in the different policy initiatives that have been taken by the government. The major policy initiatives, strategies and plans emphasized environment and natural resource management, land management, and forest development with a view to achieve sustainability in resource conservation and utilization. These policies and strategies have relevance to measures to be taken to combat land degradation.

#### 3.1 National Plans and Strategies in Other Social and Economic Areas

The national plans and strategies, which cover the general social and economic areas, are also relevant in the context of community development, uplift and rehabilitation in the dry region of the country.

##### 3.1.1 Planning for Development

The National Economic Council (NEC), which is headed by the Prime Minister and consists of the Central Cabinet Ministers, guides the planning process. Bangladesh has had two and a half decades of development efforts at lifting the economy out of its abject poverty. Every plan targeted at an average annual GDP growth rate of above 5 per cent but achieved about 4 per cent. Plan size and actual expenditure (in million Taka) and GDP growth rate of past plans (at respective base year prices) are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: National Five-Year Plans and Their Growth Rate**

Plan	Plan Size	Actual Expenditure	Growth Target (%)	Realized Growth (%)
First Five Year Plan	44,550	20,740	5.50	4.00
Two Year Plan	38,610	33,590	5.60	3.50
Second Five Year Plan	172,000	152,970	5.40	3.80
Third Five Year Plan	386,000	270,110	5.40	3.80
Fourth Five Year Plan	620,000	598,480	5.00	4.15
Fifth Five Year Plan	1969,521		7.00	

The Fifth Five Year Plan placed emphasis on poverty alleviation, increased self-reliance and meeting the basic needs of the people with particular focus on human resources development, women in development and environmental sustainability. The policy thrust and key elements of growth and conservation strategy in development process to prevent land degradation and improve the capacity for sustainable development in the vulnerable areas are:

- (i) Conservation of land, water and biological resources;
- (ii) Assessment of drought condition;

- (iii) Arsenic mitigation and water supply;
- (iv) Development of rainfed agriculture; (v) Appropriate agricultural/ farming systems which economize on water-use; and
- (v) Rural infrastructure development.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan is being completed with due emphasis on the aspects of land degradation and desertification. Moreover, Bangladesh is planning to undertake various community-based programs under MoWR and MoEF, focusing on effective implementation and delivery of programs to mitigate the effects of land degradation and desertification.

### **3.1.2 The Master Plan for Forestry**

The Master Plan for Forestry Sector (ADB-UNDP-GOB, 1996) aims to protect land against degradation by soil erosion, floods, landslides, desertification and other effects of ecological imbalance, conserve ecosystems and genetic resources, promote sustainable use of non-timber forest products, and contribute to the growth of local and national economies by managing forest, developing forest-based industries and creating opportunities for income generation and employment. Soil conservation and watershed management is one of the major components of the Plan. The Plan also emphasizes to halt further degradation of the land system and desertification process. The National Conservation Strategy lays down the guidelines for integrating environmental concerns with development imperatives. Bangladesh Wildlife Preservation Act, 1983 incorporates provisions of buffer zone management, and allocates some revenue, which is generated in the protected areas for community development.

### **3.1.3 Formulation of National Environment Action Plan (NEMAP)**

The formulation of the National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) in 1995 is the major policy document used by the Government for environmental activities in the country. With the formulation of the NEMAP, the government's strategy now recognized the inseparable links between environmental degradation, poverty, and population growth and the implications for natural resource management. Longer-term Measures under this plan include (NEMAP, 1995):

- a) Design and implement a comprehensive program on environmental research, data collection, analysis and dissemination;
- b) Review selected policies and regulations to favor private sector involvement in environmental management;
- c) Provide proper incentives for private afforestation activities by enhancing wood prices progressively to world market prices;
- d) Strengthen Environmental Forest Divisions to demarcate and protect reserved forests.

Presently, the implementation of NEMAP is ongoing under the UNDP-funded project, SEMP. The activities related to SEMP are furnished under Section 3.5.2 of this report.

### **3.1.4 Agenda 21 Implementation Plan**

The Agenda 21 recognizes the problems of droughts and desert-like conditions, particularly due to land degradation process, and calls for adopting and/or strengthening information sharing, launching afforestation and soil conservation activities, and expanding conservation areas (protected areas) in the representative ecological zones. It also calls for implementing integrated resource management programs in the ecologically sensitive areas, integrating desertification combating policies in the national development plans, developing an early

warning system, expanding watershed conservation activities with people's participation and continuing forest management through users' participation.

Bangladesh recently formulated its National Agenda-21 program in line with UNCED Agenda-21 where provisions had been kept for action plans related to land degradation and desertification. In pursuance of this, country-specific programs of action have been proposed for channeling investment resources (both internal and external) into ecologically compatible projects. The MoEF is the nodal agency for coordinating the environment related action programs under the purview of NEMAP, Environmental Conservation Act 1995 and Environmental Conservation Rules 1997.

### **3.2 National Strategies Developed Prior to UNCCD**

The National Environment Policy sets the policy framework for environmental action in combination with a set of broad sectoral guidelines. NEMAP calls for improving forest management by continuing community forestry schemes, improving rangelands, and implementing efficient and cost-effective structural techniques for watershed protection with a view to reduce soil erosion and downstream sedimentation. The plan also provided a basis for expanding alternative energy use to reduce dependence on biomass sources. NEMAP further proposes programs to address cross-sectoral issues on biodiversity. It is hoped that the implementation of the proposed programs through stakeholder participation will ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and have positive impacts on soil and water conservation and poverty alleviation. Bangladesh is presently under the process of preparing national biodiversity strategies and action plans funded by GEF. Provision has been kept there to address the land degradation through restoration of habitat for biodiversity conservation.

The government has adopted the policy of social forestry and agro-forestry as a part of poverty alleviation and environment protection. Increasing social forestry, in addition to increasing the availability of biomass and other forest products, would also provide employment for the rural poor, particularly women, in planting, nursery development and husbanding trees.

An entire process of risk minimization activities has been identified to address crucial elements of disaster management including its prevention or mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and development. Based on this identification, and to design the institutional and functional arrangements for disaster management, the GoB has taken the initiative to frame a disaster management policy. This policy would encompass all aspects, such as accurate definition of disaster threats, organizational arrangements required to prepare response to and recover from disaster events, assessment of resources available to deal with threats, and recognition of ways for the national disaster management policy to interlink with other national development policies.

There are various governmental and community-based organizations working in the field of disaster management and mitigation. The focal point of the government of Bangladesh for disaster management is the Disaster Management Bureau (DMB), a specialized organization under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) is responsible for forecasting natural disasters, particularly cyclones, droughts storms. The Bangladesh Space and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO) is responsible for providing satellite images to BMD, particularly as an aid to make the daily weather forecast. The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) forecasts flood with help from the Surface Water Modeling Center (SWMC) and EGIS. DAE provides different services to mitigate agricultural losses after disasters.

### 3.3 Strategies and Priorities Developed After UNCCD

Bangladesh recognized the problems of soil erosion and fertility decline in many vulnerable areas. The policy focus is on proper land use, rehabilitation of degraded areas. Policies are also formulated to maintain a link and network related sectors such as forestry, agriculture, fisheries, water and land resources to combat the problems of land degradation and increase agricultural production. Recently, policy directives have also been issued to enact legislation, and develop procedures for the implementation of the Conventions to which Bangladesh is a Party, including the UNCCD.

Although Bangladesh has yet to develop a separate policy and program for the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in a comprehensive manner, some policies which relate to soil and water conservation and forest emphasize public awareness and facilitate people's participation, including that of women and youth to minimize the land degradation process in order to halt further degradation of the land and water system.

A strategy for sustainable development of land resources require a comprehensive National Land Use Policy. This needs introduction of multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral approaches to ensure optimum use of land, protect land from degradation, reclaim unutilized or degraded land for sustainable use and improve land resources for future generations. MoL has taken the initiative to prepare a Land Use Policy for Bangladesh. There are other national policies and measures that have indirect positive impacts on combating land degradation. The noteworthy policies are the National Environment Policy, National Environment Conservation Act and Rules, National Forest Policy, National Conservation Strategies, and the Strategic Plan for National Agricultural Research.

A comprehensive study at the country level on land degradation, covering all physical to economic aspects is absent. However, it is clear that the quality of land has deteriorated with its impacts visible. Over the last decade, crop yield has declined due to deterioration of physical and chemical properties of land and soil. It would be useful to establish a baseline survey on which future monitoring and assessment of further deterioration or improvement could be based.

The country has a number of policies to deal with land degradation, but with limited success. The existing policies must be implemented, and a number of new activities should be undertaken in the immediate future to address land degradation. Research and its extension to practice are the most important steps that should start without delay. A strategy is also required to obtain support from international agencies.

There are various options and measures that can be useful to arrest further land degradation and improve the existing situation, such as:

1. adjustment of cropping patterns on a large scale incorporating legume/green manure crops and crop diversification, to have a balanced cropping pattern and improvement of organic content of soil and sustainable agricultural production;
2. survey of the present of state of land degradation and impacts, cropping and land capability to identify future course of actions required for addressing land degradation;
3. introduction of appropriate cropping patterns, introduction of salt tolerant varieties, soil conservation, and watershed management for the improvement of soil quality, crop production in saline soil and restrict land degradation;
4. catchment based watershed management to arrest erosion in the hill slopes and improve gradual situation in the floodplain (UNEP 2001).

GOB is preparing NWMP extending to the year 2025 on the basis of National Water Policy (1999). The primary issues are how best to manage the annual floods during the monsoon and how to allocate scarce water resources in the dry season, with or without augmentation. The planning has been undertaken through a participatory process to identify key water resources issues and policy recommendations, along with strategies to improve water resources management and identification of the institutional requirements for their initiation.

The preparation of a National Water Management Plan has contributed to the rational economic development of the country's water resources, while protecting the natural environment and improving the quality of life of the people of Bangladesh. The plan has addressed the following problems (WARPO, 2000):

- i) Flooding and drainage congestion (WARPO, 2000);
- ii) Drought;
- iii) Siltation;
- iv) River bank erosion;
- v) Salinization;
- vi) Pollution of surface and groundwater.

The NWMP study will build on the findings of recently completed studies under the Flood Action Plan (FAP) and National Water Plan (NWP) and will aim at further developing and strengthening the change of focus that dates to the government's "Bangladesh Water and Flood Management Strategy" (BWFMS) of November 1995 (World Bank, 1999). FAP includes drought mitigation and water quality regulations as an important aspect of the plan.

### **3.4 Afforestation Programs**

The Government of Bangladesh has approved the Forestry Sector Master Plan (1995-2015) and promulgated the National Forest Policy 1994. Both the documents have emphasized the afforestation program in the country with a 20% coverage of Bangladesh targeted in the Master Plan by 2015. To achieve this target, the FD is undertaking a plantation program under the ADP. With regards to the number of FD projects to be implemented, the MoEF approves the afforestation and social forestry programs proposed by the FD. The GoB has imposed a moratorium on tree felling in 1989 to encourage forest conservation. This moratorium is extended to 2005. Further activities include attempts by the GoB to increase by 10% the amount of protected areas in reserved forest lands by 2015

Under the Forestry Sector Project (FSP) plantation of 40,000 ha of Sal Forest are planned during 1997- 2003. The progress of activity of the forestry sector in the dry region is shown in Annexure-I.

### **3.5 Other Programs and Projects**

#### **3.5.1 BMDA**

To retain the environmental balance and to check the desertification of the Barind region, the government in 1985 had taken the Barind Integrated Area Development Project (BIADP) later renamed as Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) in Rajshahi, Naogaon and Nawabganj districts. Before the project activities started in the region, Barind Tract was the most unfavourable agricultural section of the country with rainfed local T. Aman as the dominant crop. The ensured supply of DTW irrigation has fundamentally changed the agricultural scenario in the Barind. In place of single crop, now multiple crops are grown with

higher agro-economic productivity. This transformation to multiple cropping has resulted in productive cropping patterns and increased cropping intensities. Construction of cross-dams, water control structures, re-excavation of canals and ponds have contributed to improve surface water augmentation. This is reflected in satisfactory command area development, ecological balance and pisciculture. Due to the lack of good road network, the slow moving bullock cart was the main transport used for carrying goods and passengers. Construction of feeder and rural roads has changed the status of rural livelihood through uplift of rural economy by BMDA. The objective of the project and the progress of its activities are shown in annexure I.

### **3.5.2 Sustainable Environmental Management Programme (SEMP)**

SEMP, as the follow-up implementation of NEMAP, addresses the major environmental priorities identified by people through NEMAP. It is the first program approach initiative of the country office as well as the Government of Bangladesh, consisting of 26 projects (components) being executed by the Ministry of Environment and Forest and 17 implemented by 21 government/non-government agencies throughout Bangladesh. Focus areas relating to the environment are Policy and Institutions; Participatory Eco-System Management; Community-based Environmental Sanitation; Advocacy and Awareness; and Training and Education. SEMP will support community capacities for sustainable management of environmental resources and strengthen the capacity of the public sector to develop new framework for policy development in support of enhanced community participation, protection of the environment, and sustainable management of the country's environment and natural resources. SEMP will benefit grassroots level people, particularly women, in eco-specific intervention areas (Jilani, 1998).

### **3.5.3 Ecosystem Management in the Barind Area**

As an important component of SEMP, the programme named "Eco-system management in the Barind area" was designed to improve the ecosystem of the dry and degraded-Barind land through community based sustainable environmental activities. The Environment Management Action Plan for Barind Area aimed at Combating Desertification, environmental awareness; social mobilization and motivation type of activities is yet to be implemented by the civil society bodies, research organizations and NGOs.

The Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA), a semi autonomous body under the MoA, entrusted with the integrated development activities in the northwest part of the country. The Barind area is an environmentally concerned area due to aridity and land degradation. The jurisdiction of the authority is the Rajshahi, Naogaon and Nawabgonj district. a major part of the activities of BMDA covers the field of ecological advancement alongwith irrigation, water conservation, communication, electrification, rural water supply and multipurpose infrastructure developemnt. SEMP has a component of ecosystem management in Barind Area and BMDA has been entrusted with the responsibility of impleemnting the same. the main objectives of the programme are as follows: i) to ensure pilot intervention on eco-system manageemnt, ii) to conserve the Soil and water in areas inhabited by poor and distress people, iii) to combat aridity through massive afforestation with indigeneopus plant species, iv) to develop awareness among rural women on ecological activities and on improved fuel use, v) to make people aware to take care of the ecosystem they live in through eco-village concept, vi) to prepare Barind Environemnt Management Action Plan to identify new innovative activities (BMDA 2001).

The three districts namely Rajshahi, Naogaon and Nawabgonj comprising 25 upazillas of the Barind area will be covered under the programme. But the activities will be concentrated in the tough areas called as "High Barind". The following works will be undertaken on pilot basis (BMDA 2001):

- soil conservation and afforestation- there will be pilot programme on soil health conservation through demonstration of organic manuring and compost preparation. In rural areas the farmers usually keep their manure yard open and thus the nutrient content is leached out. Few villages will be selected where manure shed of steel frame with asbestos sheet roofing will be constructed on private land to demonstrate the quality improvement of the homestead manure yard. Green manure will be demonstrated by supplying Dhaincha (sesbania) seeds to model farmers free of cost. Compost heap will also be established on demonstration basis.

The present afforestation works of the department of forest, NGO's and even the BMDA are confined with the quick growing species of which mostly are of exotic species. There is a need for plantation of trees which provide food and shelter for the local birds such as Banyan, Paikares, Kadam, Simul, Palm, Nim, etc. Contractors will be engaged as per the procedures followed in BMDA's main programme to perform the plantation of saplings. Since the financial year of SEMP is the same with the calendar year, the maintenance period for the contractor will be up to November. Thereafter the same will be done by engaging watchers on daily basis. The work load will be 1000 saplings or one kilometer road with saplings. The local distressed people especially the women will be employed for the purpose. The maintenance period will be 2-3 years depending on the growth of the sapling from handing over of the same by the contractors.

- Pond and canal re-excavation and excavation: a) Pond: re-excavation of ponds will be undertaken in areas of extreme poor people (preferably in adivasi area). If land is found on voluntary basis, new excavation may be taken up if the owner allows using it by the community for at least 7 years in villages having no ponds. b) canals: natural canals which have potentials for conserving water and to use the water for irrigation and other purposes, may be taken up for re-excavation. In such canals water control structures may be built and afforestation works undertaken on the basis;
- water control structures: Low cost water control structures of appropriate design may be built across the re-excavated canals for conserving water which will be used for supplemental irrigation of rain fed paddy and for low water consuming crop cultivation. The water thus stored in the section of the canal may be leased out to groups/individuals having land on its vicinity to cultivate fish duck and supplemental irrigation on early basis;
- Construction of Mini Ditch/Pond: On farmlands having no source of irrigation, harvesting of rainwater will be done by excavation of mini ditch/pond and use the same for supplemental irrigation. In the year 2000 mini ditch of size 5m x 5m x 2m (length x breadth x depth) size was excavated on private land. From the field visit it has been suggested by farmers and most of the dignitaries including PMU people to increase the size. So it is proposed that the size will be increased to 10m x 10m x 2m or as per requirement from the next seasons;
- Prepare Environment management Action plan to find out new innovative activities to be taken up in the Barind areas;
- Demonstration of improved fuel use for women in rural areas and introduction of renewable energy through constitution of biogas plants. In areas where Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) constructs biogas plants the costs to be paid by the farmers may be borne from this programme if necessary. Similarly pilot

demonstration of solar based home lightening will be done in some selected village to be brought under eco-village concept;

- community organizing for developing awareness among the poor preferably the women for checking environmental degradation. training programme will be organised in the selected Eco-villages to train the villagers particularly the women folk to aware them about the eco-system they live in;
- Eco-village concept will be implemented in some selected upazilas depending on the fund available. factors affecting the eco-system of the villages will be determined with consultation with the villagers. Program for the removal/upgrading the degrading factors will be solved on priority basis as per recommendation of the villagers. Activities such as supply of potable water, sanitation, horticulture, manure management, biogas plant, solar lightening, homestead gardening, afforestation activities will be implemented.

All these activities will be implemented in the extended period from 2001-2003 along with other activities (BMDA 2001). The following works to be undertaken by the NGO if appointed in addition to works to undertaken by BMDA:

- innovate sustainable environmental initiatives;
- component that seems to be not under taken by BMDA as per recommendation of the Barind Environmental Action plan;
- conduct training on efficient fuel use and introduce renewable energy.

It is proposed that the works will be implemented within December 2003 as proposed in the original MOU.

### **3.5.4 Protected Areas**

There are seven national parks, eight wildlife sanctuaries and one game reserve, covering a total of 244,175 hectares (less than two percent of the total land area); separate conservation principles have been established for each, but the resources, management and staffing needed to implement these principles are lacking. A further eight wetland areas in Sylhet and eastern Mymensingh, and three wildlife sanctuaries, are proposed as conservation area. Together with the existing parks they would expand the conservation area to 700,000 hectares (5 percent of the total land area). The wetlands support a rich diversity of species, including an estimated minimum of 330 species of plant, 270 species of birds, 120 species of commercially important fish, 50 species of reptile, 42 species of mammal and 8 species of amphibians. The Sundarbans support the Royal Bengal Tiger and the estuarine crocodile. These are not only repositories of natural biological diversity but have also helped in combating desertification.

### **3.5.5 Forest Resource Management Project (FRMP)**

Under ongoing FRMP, the following could be achieved in the next three years: Forestry Management Information System (MIS) to additional four Forest Divisions established; additional 200 ha participatory forestry development program with landless poor and destitute women completed; about 60,000 ha forest resources expansion and mangrove plantation programs established; forest management and conservation plans finalized; mangrove research and professional forestry education for technology generation and human resources development operating effectively (ADB-UNDP-GOB, 1996).

### **3.5.6. Forestry Sector Project**

Forest Department of Bangladesh is implementing the Forestry sector project (FSP) that cover 52 district of Bangladesh excluding 10 coastal districts (Barisal, Jhalkhati, Patuakhali, Borguna, Bhola, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Lakshmipur, Noakhali and Feni) and Rangamati and Khagrachari hill districts. The project period is from 1997-98 to 2003-2004. The primary objective of the project is to increase overall tree resource base of the country; to arrest depletion of forest resources; to enhance conservation of forests in selected protected areas and attain sustainable management of forest resources through local community participation. These objectives will be achieved through forestation program on all available land, be that along the road sides, canal banks, railway lines, the degraded sal forests and U.S.F. land using participatory approaches following benefit-sharing mechanism. The project aims to establish the following types of plantations: a) woodlot plantations (new and 2<sup>nd</sup> rotation) on 20786 hectares of degraded sal forests and the areas already planted under previous project; b) agroforestry plantations (New and 2<sup>nd</sup> rotation) on 11905 hectares of encroached and areas harvested following maturity; c) strip plantations over 25000 km along the slopes of Roads and Highways, railroads, embankments and feeder roads; d) afforestation of 7800 ha inland char land; e) afforestation of the Barind Gullies over 750 km; f) soil conservation and afforestation on pond and Tank boundaries 300 ha.; g) participatory sal coppices management of 40000 ha of degraded sal coppice forests; h) participatory conservation of about 43440 ha of National park and wildlife Sanctuaries in reserve forest area; i) rehabilitation of 1000 jhumia families on 2000 ha of degraded U.S.F. land in Banderban district; j) Enrichment planting over 10000 ha. of degraded U.S.F. land; k) raising of 53.8 million seedling for selling and institutional planting; l) straightening/Modernization/Further development of 80 FENTCs; m) Further development and upgrading of 335 thana nurseries (FD 1997).

### **3.5.7. Coastal Green Belt Project**

FD in Bangladesh has been running the Coastal Green Belt Project since 1995. Under this project, afforestation activities have been conducted in the coastal regions of Bangladesh. The project is scheduled for completion in June 2002.

The project was successfully implemented by the FD. Under this project, over 1300 km of embankment plantations, 7500 km of strip plantations, 665 ha of foreshore plantations and 28.9 million seedlings for sales and distribution were a part of the project activities.

### **3.5.8 Bangladesh Environmental Management Project (BEMP)**

Bangladesh Environmental Management Project (BEMP) is ongoing and being implemented by the DoE and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) focusing on areas including:

- (i) Demonstration models of sustainable environmental management;
- (ii) Development of environmental management tools and techniques;
- (iii) Provision of practical training opportunities for DoE officers and stakeholders in local communities and industry;
- (iv) Raising environmental awareness among stakeholders and the general public;
- (v) Preparation of an overall strategic plan for DoE.

Under DoE's Strategic Plan, direct activities related to land degradation is management of ecologically critical areas (ECA) as declared under Article 5.2 of the Environmental Conservation Act 1995. The Article also allows for declaration of future ECAs under this Act.

### **3.5.9 Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP)**

The project is aimed to improve the performance of the water management systems in Bangladesh and ensure their sustainability through improved operation and maintenance, appropriate institutional reforms, assist GOB in implementation of its National Water Policy. This objective would contribute significantly in promoting agriculture production and flood plain fisheries, improving local navigation, mitigating adverse environmental effects of past interventions, and ensuring environmental protection (World Bank, 2000 c).

### **3.5.10 Follow-up on River Bank Protection Project (RBPP)**

This project aims to reduce vulnerability of the poor by more extensive implementation of river training techniques developed under RBPP to mitigate against further river bank erosion which leads to disastrous loss of land, crops and property every year (World Bank, 2000 c).

### **3.5.11 Follow-up on Jamuna Bridge Multipurpose Project (JBMP)**

The project is expected to make a positive contribution to the reduction of economic damages caused by erosion in the project areas by preventing the loss of about 7,800 ha of riparian land, including about 1,500 ha of urban area in Sirajganj and protect about 1,000 people from loss of livelihood, displacement and impoverishment. By preventing, perennial flow into the Bangali River from the Brahmaputra River, the project would prevent potential incremental flood damage to crops, property and infrastructure over an area of nearly 300,000 ha populated by more than two million people (World Bank, 2000 c).

### **3.5.12 Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation and Water Supply Project (BAMWSP)**

Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation and Water Supply Project (BAMWSP) aims at alleviating the adverse impacts of arsenic contamination of drinking water. The components of BAMWSP include on-site mitigation by the installation of deep tubewells and improved understanding of the arsenic problem through study of detailed hydrology characterization in the affected areas.

### **3.5.13 Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and Projects**

The BSAP will focus mainly on building an unifying framework to guide and coordinate various biodiversity related programs and projects that are now under implementation or at design stage, identifying national priorities. The said BSAP will reflect national aspirations and will built on existing national strategies and plan. This project will step forward more to meet the national obligations to the CBD.

The primary objective of the BSAP is to develop a comprehensive national biodiversity strategic action plan and establish coordination among relevance sectors fulfilling the country's international commitment under the purview of CBD (MOEF, IUCN and UNDP, 2002).

### **3.5.14 Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management in Cox's Bazar and Hakaluki Haor (CWBMP)**

In recent years, Bangladesh has demonstrated increased determination and commitment to address the challenges of ensuring sustainable use and conservation of its natural resources, including its biodiversity. A number of specific policies, laws, action plans and strategies have been developed in this regard. A major current challenge is to ensure the effective implementation of the 1995 Environmental Conservation Act, which includes a key

provision providing the Department of Environment (DoE) with broad powers for conservation of sites that it determines to be Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs). In the context of formulating the present project, BGD/99/G31-Costal and Wetland Biodiversity Management in Cox's Bazar and Hakaluki Haor, DoE has taken the crucial step of nominating the first six ECAs, all within the country's highly significant coastal, marine and freshwater wetland ecosystems. The overall objective of the present project is to establish an innovative system for management of ECAs in Bangladesh that will have a significant and positive impact on the long-term viability of the country's important biodiversity resources. The project will support DoE efforts to operationalize the ECA concept at two main sites: one site (which includes three ECAs) within the country's long and biodiversity-rich coastal zone and the second at one of the largest and most important of the country's many inland freshwater wetlands. Through a combination of GEF incremental cost financing and baseline and co-financing, conservation and sustainable use of these sites will be demonstrated. This demonstration should create important opportunities for replication in coastal, freshwater wetland and other ecosystems throughout the country, including other sites recently nominated as ECAs. This present project(BGD/99/G31- Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity management in Cox's Bazar and Hakaluki Haor) is the outcome of the recently completed PRIF STUDY PROJECT- UNDP-GEF: BGD/94/G41-Costal and Wetland Biodiversity Management by Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest (Ahmed 2002).

### **3.5.15 Biodiversity Conservation in the Sundarbans Reserved Forest (CBSRF)**

The main objective of the on going CBSRF project is to establish an effective systems for the participatory and sustainable management of the ecosystems of Sundarban Reserve Forest (SRF). The main scope of the project include, i) a program of biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management, ii) a community development and participatory resource management program that will provide credit for the alternative income generating activities to reduce dependence e on the SRF and to break the exploitative relationships between money lenders and resource extractors, iii) the development of eco-tourism infrastructure that will serve as a catalyst for the development of tourism industry in Bangladesh, iv) a new multi sectoral agency capable of willing to adopt and implement the new approach of participatory management require for an integrated conservation and development approach. The project will prevent steady depletion of the forest and reserve ecosystems that provides the healthy habitat for the last survival populations of Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) as well as a range of other endangered and threatened plant and animal species (Ahmed 2002, MOEF, FD and ADB, 1997).

### **3.6 Linkage of Land Degradation to Energy**

The Energy Perspective Plan has established a linkage between the process of land degradation and energy consumption pattern, particularly the biomass fuel. This plan emphasizes the need for switching over the use of biomass fuel to clean energy, which is likely to contribute to increase the green cover and minimize the loss of nutrient rich soil.

The 1991 census also confirmed that the majority of the 19.98 million households in Bangladesh in 1991 (consisting of 3.97 million in urban areas and 16.01 million in rural areas), were dependent on bio-mass for fuels. BCSIR is undertaking a Biogas Pilot Project consisting of to the installation of 5000 biogas plants, one in each municipal ward or union. The gas will provide a family of 8-10 members (owning 5/6 cows) to cook its two meals and light one gas lamp. The National Program of Improved *chulas* (Clay Stoves) is also being implemented since 1994 to improve energy conservation. The thermal efficiency of these *chulas* is about 60-65 percent as compared to 5-15 percent in the traditional *chulas*. *Thus*

far, over 67 thousand improved *chulas* have been supplied to the rural and semi-urban households in 105 thanas of 35 districts; this is against an estimated potential of over 10.0 million households (SEHD, 1998; Government of Bangladesh, 1997).

While the efforts to supply more energy efficient *chulas* have been modest, there have been preliminary discussions between various donor agencies and the GoB on projects to reduce the demands of biomass fuels and other materials. Projects that promote the use of more energy-efficient technologies, domestically available alternate fuels and renewable energy sources are under consideration by the GoB.

### **3.7 Measures Taken to Mitigate the Effects of Drought**

In the event of drought the Government undertake relief measures by providing drinking water, foodgrains fodder, food subsidies to special groups and employment through food-for-work-programme. The Disaster Management Bureau coordinates drought relief works with local governments. The activities of the Bureau also comprise human resource development, research case studies, database and information services, and documentation on disaster management. Rural Works programme of the GOB provides employment to the population affected by drought and helps to mitigate the severity of the drought wherever it may occur.

### **3.8 Lessons Taken from Practices of Indigenous Systems**

The indigenous knowledge of the local population regarding land management may be encouraged as these are generally environment friendly. In Sal Forest Region of the Madhupur Tract, tree species like mango, Mahogany and Jackfruit grow in upland (*chalas*) around homestead where lower slopes (*baid*) are used for growing paddy. Sometimes gentle slopes and *chalas* are used for growing vegetables, maize etc. (NEMAP, 1995). This practice increases moisture retention, improves soil fertility and crop yield; and reduces surface runoff and thus halts soil erosion. Home garden system provides healthy ecosystem for humans, animals, birds, livestock, and miscellaneous flora and fauna. Homestead bamboos are planted because these develop rapidly and are good soil binders. Use of homestead ash is done to supplement k and organic matter in the soil and to keep insects away from insects. Banyan trees are considered as a symbol of preservation of ecosystem because through its extensive root systems it holds large chunk of soil and provides shelter and food for birds and other wild animals.

Khari development is encouraged in the Barind area to make storage of water by making embankment in some segments of a drainage/ irrigation channel. Trees and shrubs are planted to reduce further evaporation (Zuberi, 1998). Pond digging in is done to facilitate judicious use of storage water for domestic and agricultural purposes. People of the entire village or community decide where to dig the pond and entire operation and digging and maintenance thereafter are being done on a cooperative basis. In the past, such ponds were also used as storage of rainwater. These days they don't get sufficient water in the dry season as ground water recedes further below. We have to improve upon this technique to include arrangement of rainwater harvesting and storage. Cropping pattern and choice of crops and cereals in some areas are adjusted keeping conformity with the water balance of that area. The dry areas are now looking for suitable alternative cash crops like cotton, maize, sunflower, melon.

The practice of agro-silviculture creates a favourable environmental condition that reduces evapotranspiration and produces fuelwood, timber and fodder. Many indigenous systems are practiced in the hilly regions to facilitate various local problems related to watershed management and utilization of natural resources. Use of bamboo in earth dam construction;

use of brushwood and waste woody material for soil conservation; harvesting of forest product by skidding; and production of various useful tools and implements are good examples of application of the indigenous system in the Hill Tract region.

### 3.9 Community Based Efforts for Rural Development

The policy of empowerment of village communities and their involvement in developmental activities including natural resource management has been strengthened through the national perspective plan. A host of subjects such as agriculture, land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation, water management and watershed development, animal husbandry, firewood and fodder, social forestry has been included. The UNDP supported Community Empowerment programme (CEPs) supports, through several projects, the Government of Bangladesh's poverty alleviation efforts. The different CEP projects are pursued as pilot schemes with an underlying long-term objective of replicating a successful model at the national level. Strategic linkages will be developed with other service providers that are institutionally appropriately placed to provide sustainable support to the target clients in meeting their social, economic and infrastructure needs.

### 3.10 Policies

The National Conservation Strategies, the Environment Policy, the NEMAP, the Forestry Master Plan, the Flood Action Plan, National Water Policy are significant components of an overall environmental strategy for sustainable development in Bangladesh. The review made during the NEMAP process showed that, as far as specific sector and cross-sector policies are concerned, several of these have only come into existence in the last few years; and that most of them do not discuss desertification *per se*. During the National Awareness Seminar on Land Degradation and Desertification it was realized and suggested that these policies required being revised/ updated in the light of the provision of the UNCCD (Haque, 1998). The policies that have significance of an overall environmental strategy for sustainable development in Bangladesh are listed below:

- (i) The National Water Policy;
- (ii) National Agriculture Policy, 1999;
- (iii) New Agricultural Extension Policy (NAEP);
- (iv) Draft Land Use Policy;
- (v) National Forest Policy, 1994;
- (vi) National Policy on Environment, 1992;
- (vii) National Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy;
- (viii) Pesticide regulations Act 1997;
- (ix) Health and Population Sector Strategy (HPSS);
- (x) Draft National Education Policy (NEP);
- (xi) Integrated Pest Management Policy, 2000;
- (xii) Integrated Plant Nutrient System (IPNS).

Recently, the Government has approved IPM policy in the Cabinet meeting. This will assist in conserving biological resources including the restoration of their habitat and which will automatically reduce the land degradation.

## **4.0 Institutional Measures for Implementing the Convention**

### **4.1 Formation of a National Coordination Body (NCB)**

The government of Bangladesh is actively considering forming a National Coordination Body (CBD) under which formal institutional measures for implementing the convention will be undertaken. A new government has been formed in Bangladesh since last reporting. The new democratic government in its policy statement has emphasized the need for addressing the issue of environmental degradation, including desertification, on a priority basis. Thus, the activities initiated earlier for the formation of NCB would gain further momentum through this political commitment.

As reported earlier, the following government and their associated department and directorate along with non-government organizations could be the party of NCB to implement the obligation and activities drafted under the convention:

- (i) Ministry of Environment and Forest with associated Department and Directorate;
- (ii) Ministry of Agriculture with associated Department and Directorate;
- (iii) Ministry of Water Resources with associated Department and Directorate;
- (iv) Ministry of Land with associated Department and Directorate;
- (v) Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock with associated Department and Directorate;
- (vi) Ministry of Defense (SPARRSO and BMD);
- (vii) NGOs (including Coalition of Environmental NGOs); and
- (viii) Research Organizations and Universities.

### **4.2 Need for a National Action Program (NAP)**

The need for a National Action Plan (NAP) in support of UNCCD mandates has been appreciated in Bangladesh at policy level and its formation is underway. Many sectoral initiatives have been under taking in Bangladesh, which profoundly contributes to the cause of implementing the mandates of UNCCD. Thus one of the main focus of the NAP formulation has been to coordinate these initiatives.

The Fifth Five Year Plan in its Chapter 10 has dealt elaborately the planning framework for environmentally sound and sustainable development and drought and land degradation issues have found expression with emphasis in that. During the Fifth plan period many programs related to natural resources have been implemented having relevance to land degradation/ desertification and droughts.

The National Conservation Strategy (NCS), National Agenda-21 implementation program and NEMAP deal with issues covering land degradation/desertification. Some of the environment related programs reviewed here shows that the existing mechanism of their implementation will be effective in coordinating actions to combat desertification. So, Bangladesh is prepared to meet the obligation to “establish strategies and priorities, within the framework of sustainable development plans and/ or policies, to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought”. Bangladesh has not designed a separate National Action Program (NAP) to combat desertification. The programs related to natural resources implemented under the Five Year Plans, particularly the Fifth Five year Plan, may be considered as complementary to NAP. The Sixth Five Year Plan is under preparation based on the experience of implementation of the Fifth Plan. Due consideration have been given in the formulation of the Sixth Plan to coordinate the sectoral initiatives, keeping the emerging needs to address the mandates of the UNCCD and the framework of NAP in view.

This implies that a framework of sustainable development including the linked policies/strategies does exist in the country and the NAP may be linked to it.

Based on the evaluation of on-going strategies and programs and the assessment of current and future needs to combat desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, programs would be taken up with a thrust on meeting needs of food, fodder, firewood, drinking water of rural population and to improve their quality of life. The existing sectoral policies, strategies and action plans do give serious consideration to the principles of participation, partnership and involvement at the grass-root level, particularly of women, poor and the rural population. This is in conformity with the UNCCD principles. Bangladesh is required to develop a separate National Action Program (NAP) in the spirit of the convention.

Under the existing policies and programs the contents of the NAP will aim for resource management and poverty alleviation. Implementation of these policies and programs clearly indicate that people-oriented activities are successful and emphasis has to be given to enhance people's participation in all sectors of community development and natural resource management.

The Department of Environment (DoE) is presently the implementing organ of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and is responsible to carry out the mandates of the UNCCD. Bangladesh Environment Management Project (BEMP) is now under implementation with the objective of strengthening the capacity of the Department of Environment for accomplishing institutional planning to enable DoE to fulfill its legislated mandates inclusive of GOB and donor projects.

#### **4.3 Creation of Data Banks**

The Department of Environment (DoE) is also developing environmental database and information system (including setting up a metadata base, which as a coordinated national repository of information on environment and development in all sectors, would be very much relevant for the requirements of UNCCD) on various aspects of environment and management practices, which could be used to address the requirement of UNCCD amongst others.

The metadata base mentioned above would include, among others, the following major repositories of setoral database:

- Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) has electronic database on agro-ecological and drought prone areas of the country. The database which contains information on the country's land resources including physiography, soils, climate, hydrology, cropping systems, and crop suitability. The database may be used to generate readily accessible information on the physical land resources of the country for use by researchers, extension workers, and decision makers in land and agricultural resources management as well as agricultural development planning;
- The Land Resources Information System (LRIS) includes additional databases and procedures, in particular data on socioeconomic and demographic factors influencing agricultural production. With the present facilities, dynamic multi-layered GIS database may be created in which the component layers are modeled as variables that change over time. A user-specified digital elevation model (DEM) has been developed with the national (reconnaissance level) soil association layer to create a more detailed Soil/ Inundation Land Type layer (BARC brochure, 2000);

- Meteorological station data is analyzed at BARC using the Agricultural Planning Tools (APT) calculator, and the resulting data is then used to create GIS surfaces showing important climatic properties related to plant growth by season as well as the variability of these properties. Study is made to improve the assessment of single crop and cropping pattern suitability in individual inundation land types. Suitability for various cropping patterns is rated using a database of known and potential cropping patterns (BARC brochure, 2000). In addition DAE is also preparing electronic database on drought-affected area chronologically;
- The Forest Department has initiated a program to establish a management information system (MIS) with the design of three components completed. The FD has also established a RIMS-GIS unit. This unit is already providing information on forest management and necessary maps.

#### **4.4 Strengthening Facilities for Monitoring and Evaluation of Desertification**

The Agricultural Research Management Project supports strengthening of the management of the national agricultural research institutes and the promotion of research by private organizations to generate profitable and sustainable agricultural technologies for Bangladeshi agricultural producers. This will enhance the knowledge base and develop information and monitoring systems for regions prone to desertification and drought, including the economic and social aspects of these ecosystems. Bangladesh Environment Management Project (BEMP) will also improve DoE's infrastructure capability to formulate environmental regulatory instruments and will help implement their procedural and enforcement applications.

The BEMP and SEMP initiatives in particular, which are being implemented, would strengthen institutional capacity of the DOE to monitor and evaluate the effects of desertification. Further, the on going activities of SRDI, BARI would further strengthen this capacity. Transformation of EGIS into a national resource center on environment and resource management would also add substantially to this effect.

#### **4.5 Promotion of Research on Desertification and Management of the Effects of Drought**

For the whole of the Ganges belt including the Barind and Madhupur Tracts no crop cultivators or rainfed farming practices specially suited to the prevailing soil and agro-climatic conditions have been developed yet. There is thus an urgent need to develop drought-tolerant crop varieties and drought-mitigating technologies that will make maximum use of the land resources of the rainfed farming systems and the limited rainfall in the region. Complementary concerns include appropriate water storage and rain water harvesting technologies, supported with packages of agronomic practices to increase productivity of the Kharif crops and vegetables strengthening of the agricultural research and extension systems in order to develop new technologies relating to crop varieties, integrated farming system, organic farming, improved agronomic and agro-processing technologies, and for diffusion of the proven technologies; restoration/improvement of soil fertility through better management of the organic matter of soil to improve yields of crops; towards this end, production and use of bio-manure will be encouraged; development and dissemination of post-harvest technologies for reduction of post-harvest losses and the removal of transport bottlenecks (Chowdhury, 1993).

The mainstream research agenda of the organizations such as BARI, BIRRI, BAU, BARC, SRDI, SEPERSSO, BAEC etc. has major focus on issues related to desertification as it applies to Bangladesh, the implementation of which is a on going process. Once the NAP is

formulated, the scope of coordination would widen to bring the research agenda of these organizations more relevant to the requirements of the UNCCD.

#### **4.6 Functional Legal and Regulatory Framework**

The Constitution of Bangladesh asserts that 'it shall be a fundamental responsibility of the state to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people (Article-15). With this commitment of enhancing productive forces of nature, Bangladesh has so far signed, ratified and acceded to 22 international conventions, treaties and protocols related to environment including the UNCCD. Bangladesh signed the UNCCD on January 1996 and after ratifying it came into force in 1997. Bangladesh is committed to implement these conventions and treaties, which have provisions to frame and implement rules and guidelines on the environment. No separate legal measures have been initiated to implement the provisions of the Convention. But legislations existing in the country support the strategies and policies aimed at conservation and management of natural resources and preservation and protection of the environment. Legislation facilitating community forestry activities exists in the country in order to carry out effectively extension programmes and developing forestry. Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995, Environment Conservation Rules, 1997 and the Bangladesh Forest Act, 1927 will ensure protection and development of forests and controls conservation and improvement of environment. The Groundwater Management Ordinance, 1995 and the Groundwater Management Rules, 1997 regulates the suitability of sites for installation of tube wells and concerns irrigation water required for agricultural production. There are also laws governing particular aspects of water use such as water rates that needs to be consolidated (World Bank, 1997).

During the process of preparation of NAP, existing legislation will be further reviewed, and gaps and the enforcement status will be identified. After reviewing measures may be recommended to ensure functional legal and regulatory framework which will prompt the development of natural resource management capacity and CCD implementation.

Major development initiatives taken in respect of legal and regulatory framework since last reporting are:

- The enactment of the Environment Court Act for establishing environmental administration in the country
- Amendment of the Environmental Conservation Act, 1995
- Formulation of the Strategic Plan for the DOE. In this plan the obligation and responsibilities of Bangladesh under the ICTPs, including UNCCD have been reviewed and strategic actions have been identified. The plan targets, among others, to develop a regulatory regime and institutional set up responsive to natural resource conservation mandate of the DOE, including the UNCCD requirements;
- Amendments to the Forest Act during 2001 and 2002 to incorporate the social forestry programs and building of enforcement capacity.

## **5. Participatory Process for Preparation and Implementation of the Action Program**

### **5.1 Effective Participation of Actors Involved in Defining NAP Priorities**

The UNCCD calls for effective participation of key actors in its implementation. In the NAP process, the key actors and/or stakeholders have been identified and comprise government organizations (ministries, departments), NGOs working in the field of soil conservation, forestry, federation of NGOs and CBOs, private sector representatives particularly the land owners, academia, media, youth and women. Efforts are made to involve them in information sharing and consultative process in UNCCD related activities to the extent possible.

Gram Parishads have been set up at village level with elected permanent committees. The Parishads have been entrusted with responsibilities of managing water and sanitation requirements. They may also be involved in making assessment of land degradation/desertification and drought conditions and suggesting appropriate measures to combat the situation.

#### **5.1.1 Peoples Participation in Formulation of NEMAP**

National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) is the first national environmental plan prepared through participatory process and follow-up of NEMAP, SEMP Projects are being implemented involving various government and non-government organizations through community participation. The NEMAP process involved - a series of workshops with people from all walks of life including local officials, local people's representatives, academics, farmers, fisherfolk, women and the poor. Data for this consultative process were collected over a period of 8 months using multiple data collection techniques which included Exploratory Study, Secondary Sources of Data, Hydrological Study, Biological Study, Women and Environment related Activities, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and holding of a series of workshops with people's participation from all walks of life and discussion with all the stakeholder groups. A number of public awareness programs have been launched through governmental and non-governmental organizations. Information is collected, processed and disseminated through the media or through official channel.

#### **5.1.2 Methods of and Participation of Various Actors**

An approximately one-hour program is aired once a week through national radio on State-managed forests and environment management. A number of TV filler (1-3 minutes duration) have been made on the management of agricultural practices and broadcasted. A 30-minute agriculture program is also aired daily to provide information on soil fertility, farming technologies and other agriculture practices. Besides, occasional programs are launched on television to telecast episodes, news and spots to create public awareness on natural resource and environmental management. Ministry of Agriculture and Forest Department have launched these programs. There are a number of leaflets, brochure, posters on IPM techniques and a handbook in Bengali on beneficial insects. A leaflet published by FD Extension project in Rajshahi contains a slogan "There is no alternative to afforestation in combating desertification".

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) project has created great awareness on IPM among the farmers, policy makers, politicians, researchers and the general public (UNDP, 1999). This resulted in getting a tremendous support for IPM from farmers, politicians, donor agencies and others. In many places in the country, the IPM trained farmers have started IPM clubs where the members meet periodically and discuss IPM practices. In many places,

impressed by the IPM training at the FFS, the members of the parliament and other local elites have come forward to donate money to build a clubhouse, to buy a TV and radio sets. In other places, the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) has willingly provided financial support from agricultural development program fund for the club to start more FFS and train farmers. Women participation in IPM clubs is also widely seen as a very positive step in many ways.

MoEF, LGED and Ministry of Agriculture have started the publication of their respective newsletters twice every month. These contain valuable information on natural resource management and environment conservation and status of the development programs undertaken in the respective sectors. GOB has included environment course in the formal education in primary, lower secondary and secondary education throughout the country. The environment and science courses include some information on problems of land degradation and corrective measures. Universities have begun to teach Environmental Science as a separate faculty.

BFRI has developed a simplified field manual on land capability assessment and site-specific selection of the species. The manual gives a ready-made information for species selection by the foresters as well as villagers. Easy and workable field identification keys have been developed for various timbers, forest trees, bamboo and canes. Brief description, occurrence and uses of these resources are also available (BFRI, 2000). An easy and inexpensive preservative technique has been devised by the institute for extending the service life of rural housing materials such as bamboo, wood, sungrass and straw. This technique extends 3-5 times the service life of the materials. Such adaptive measures are communicated to the stakeholders through posters, pamphlets and brochures published by the Forest Department. It has been considered that these initiatives will likely produce knowledge-based and skill manpower on environment management in near future.

NGOs are equally involved in launching public awareness activities at the grass root level for natural resource management. Some NGOs are launching programs on environment, gender and community forestry separately. Land degradation and environmental issues are regularly telecast through documentary films. Besides, a number of NGOs also publish and distribute newsletters and journals to let the people know about their activities on resource management.

### **5.1.3 National Awareness Seminar**

In the process of CCD implementation, MoEF organized a two-day national seminar on "Combating Land Degradation and Desertification in Bangladesh in 1998 in collaboration with the UNCCD Secretariat. The seminar was attended by over 70 participants representing governmental, educational and research institutions, local bodies, specialized NGOs and CBOs, journalists and donor agencies (M.K. Farooque, 1998). The main issues discussed in the national seminar include the identification of problems encountered in land and water resource management, development of a framework for NAP and for improving productivity of different land uses, and recognition of the roles of different stakeholders for the preparation and implementation of NAP. This seminar was instrumental in exchanging information and experiences on land degradation and desertification and effectiveness of existing policies and programs, in raising public awareness on the importance of land improvement and its contribution to food production and natural resource management, and in deriving a set of priority program areas for NAP.

The priority in an action program to combat land degradation / desertification should be to: a) control the process in already degraded areas and (b) monitor and implement prevention measures in lands that are not yet degraded, but are vulnerable. In both efforts the participation of local communities, governmental agencies, NGOs and regional and international organizations is essential.

In the context of west-northwest Bangladesh, a series of priority measures for combating degradation/ desertification may be outlined here: (a) Introduce methods of land use planning in ecologically sound ways; (b) Rehabilitate degraded lands and sustain their productivity for farming and agroforestry through soil and water conservation; (c) Protect existing trees and other vegetation cover and improve management of forest resources; (d) Increase the vegetation cover through such activities as afforestation/ reforestation, agroforestry arid social forestry; (e) Establish woodlot as sources of fuel wood. and encourage the development and use of other sources of energy along with the use of energy-saving cooking stoves; (f) Manage surface and ground water use in environmentally sustainable ways; (g) Introduce and encourage vigorously the measures to control population growth; (h) Assess the impact of urbanization and industrial expansion of land degradation / desertification ; (i) Create and develop awareness among the local population about the problem, motivate them to take combat measures, promote partnership between government agencies, non-government organization and affected land users and ensure fullest possible public participation of local communities in measures against land degradation; (j) Strengthen national institution capabilities to combat degradation/desertification, and build regional and international cooperation for combating desertification.

Parallel to control measures a plan is needed for monitoring degradation/ desertification in Bangladesh. This monitoring and surveillance plan would be based on the recognition of desertification indicators and the establishment of standard for comparison and evaluation.

#### **5.1.4 Community Based Beel and Floodplains Resource Management**

Implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Forest and funded by UNDP, IUCN-Bangladesh has been assigned to execute Community Based Haor and Floodplains Resource Management in selected wetlands sites. BCAS has been appointed to undertake the initiative in the Chanda Beel area as a part of the Madhumati Floodplains system. As a part of its awareness campaign, the project has launched several initiatives that include bringing out a local Bengali monthly wall magazine named *Jolabhumi Barta* (Haque, 1999).

#### **5.1.5 Strengthening of Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Capabilities (SEAMCAP)**

In response to the recommendations contained in Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit, the Environmental Assessment Programme (EAP) of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) took the opportunities to review the activities of its several components. The EAP established certain principles, which would underlie its activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. As part of Strengthening of Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Capabilities (SEAMCAP) for Bangladesh, SoE Data Collection and Reporting Project, a national training workshop was held in Dhaka. The training workshop was jointly organized by the DoE, MoEF, BCAS, SACEP and UNEP (Alam and Jilani, 1998).

#### **5.2 Gender Balance of Actors Involved in Defining NAP Priorities**

Women contribute to 45.6 per cent of labour in agricultural production (FAO, 2000). Realizing it, women involvement has been institutionalized in natural resource management through user group mobilization approach. GOB has enunciated policies to involve women and other sections of the society to enhance their participation in all types of national development activities including resource management. In order to enhance their access to economic activities, saving and credit programs have been launched in selected areas and/or integrated as an integral part of community development programs.

In the social forestry projects the number of women participants are rather low. For instance, in Jessore Forest Division there were 732 female participants out of 18,581 numbers, which was only 4%. There will be an increase of women members from 3.9 percent to at least 50 percent in the new groups.

Projects carried out by NGOs and women farmers, promotes mulberry tree plantings and cocoon production to boost domestic silk production. In recent years, women have also been encouraged to manage forests and implement soil conservation activities through women community user groups. GOB is furthering this process by providing additional incentives.

However, gender imbalance has been noticed in land ownership, and women participation has been limited due to low level of education, traditions, practices and cultural barriers. Efforts are underway to increase the participation of women, and some NGOs are also working to increase women participation in community development activities. The organizations where women are working will further be encouraged to organize public awareness programs and participate in the Convention matters.

### **5.3 Representation of Various Actors in the National Priorities Identification Processes**

The consultation process has been started at different levels to identify issues and priorities for public awareness. NGOs are also very active in raising issues for public debate and in providing suggestions for natural resource management. The draft national policies are made available for public review. This process has approached to seek the participation of various actors in national environment related policies and programs. The district level organizations involved in natural resource management and the local bodies also conduct a series of consultations with stakeholder and this process has enhanced the understanding that public consultation will lead to the successful participation of activities designed for natural resource management with people's participation. Hence, various actors and/ or stakeholders participate and provide suggestions and comments on priority issues and public participation process is on-going. The participants of the National Awareness Seminar on Land Degradation/ Desertification emphasized that a bottom up approach would be used for drafting the National Action Plan (NAP) involving stakeholders and people affected at the grass root level, similar to those used for NEMAP. It was also advocated to form a body named as "NAP Implementation Cell" composed of technical experts from concerned technical departments/ agencies and members of the civil society (Haque, 1998).

### **5.4 Nature and Scope of Information, Education and Communication Actions**

Governmental and non-governmental organizations, research and academic institutions are involved in collecting and disseminating various types of information related to natural resources management. Soil conservation and watershed management information, particularly on the implication of soil erosion and landslides, off-farm techniques, bio-technological aspects etc. are communicated through the mass media and official publications. Consultative workshops and seminars are frequently organized by the governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote information exchange at the national and local levels. The national and regional workshops are organized, as and when necessary, for program selection.

MoEF, MoA, and the Ministry of science and Technology organize many workshops to seek additional inputs from the local level organizations. Although they are not directly related to CCD implementation, the programs identified in annual planning workshops at the district and regional levels contribute to land improvement and resource management.

Bangladesh celebrates World Environment Day, Desertification Day, Earth Day and Biodiversity Day including other international events to raise public awareness on the theme of each Day. At national level, tree plantation week is celebrated to enhance public awareness on the forest and soil conservation. Every year the Ministry of science and Technology observe a Science Week where symposiums are held on subjects related to various aspects of environment. Information is also made available through media or publication and dissemination process.

### **5.5 Extent of Uptake of Local Concerns at the National Level**

In view of the nature of the problems of land degradation and natural resource depletion, the participation of the actors are duly acknowledged in the decision-making process and are considered by the policy-makers and legislative bodies. For example, introduction and understanding of the benefits of community forestry programs in the Barind area led to expansion of the provision of involving the community users in the early 1981 by reflecting them in the national development plan.

The present top down service-driven system in the social forestry programme may be changed to a bottom up demand driven system where the group member will accompany the planning, implementation and management. The government agency and NGO may function as facilitators on the demand of the group. Farmer-led management will ensure timely harvest of forest produce and distribution of benefits to the participants, including reforestation of the area.

In 1993, Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board (CHTDB) in collaboration with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu, Nepal launched a programmed for the promotion of Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT)- a participatory farming system approach to soil conservation extension in Chittagong Hill Tracts (Khisha et al., 1998). The project will create awareness among the policy makers, development workers, extension staff and the hill farmers about the danger and consequences of soil erosion, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation.

## **6. The Consultative Process in Support of the Preparation and Implementation of the NAP**

After the NAP document is finalized, appropriate programs identified and prioritized, the line ministries and departments for mobilization of the much-needed resources in combating desertification problems will carry out consultation with international donors.

Bangladesh has welcomed international partners in many fields of activities earlier, as evidenced by the following projects:

- (i) IDA is assisting GOB in the Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP) to improve the performance of the water management systems in Bangladesh;
- (ii) IDA is also expected to finance foreign exchange cost tentatively of about 105.7 million US\$ for the Bangladesh River Bank Protection Project initiated by BWDB;
- (iii) IDA would finance about 46.0 million US \$ equivalent, the European Community (EC) 17.0 million US \$ for the Bangladesh Coastal Embankment Rehabilitation Project initiated by BWDB;
- (iv) The GEF supported ADB- Sunderbans Biodiversity Project, undertaken by FD, is currently under implementation.

Participation of donor communities has been instrumental in natural resource management and in the process for poverty alleviation. Various actors participate in government-launched programs by attending the working groups, workshops and seminars or by providing necessary fund. MoEF has recognized the importance of cooperation and partnership building through informal consultation and exchange of information. During the national awareness seminar in 1998, UNCCD, UNDP and other donor partners were invited to participate in the seminar and valuable inputs were received from them that would help in formulating the NAP.

GOB in collaboration with the World Bank and the UNDP, has undertaken a two-year program to develop environmental management guidelines to strengthen the environmental management capacity of the government agencies and provide a sound technical basis for assessing proposals and applications, determine the technical requirements, make statutory decisions and monitor and regulate the sectoral performances.

## **7. Measures Taken or Planned to Enhance Knowledge on Desertification**

### **7.1 Adequate Diagnosis of Past Experiences**

#### **7.1.1 Synthesis and Evaluation of Activities Undertaken in the Field of Combating Desertification and Mitigating Drought**

Issues of land degradation, particularly soil erosion and watershed, and soil fertility conditions, were identified during the preparation of the Master Plan for Forestry Sector in 1995 and NEMAP in 1995. Since then, studies have been conducted and information updated as part of the planning process. However, no specific study has been carried out at the national level to identify the problems of land degradation in the recent years in the spirit of the Convention.

Experiences gained in soil and water conservation, and forest management and conservation of agricultural land, demand for launching land improvement programs with people's participation. There is also a need for involving the local people for community development works. The Ministry of Environment and Forests intends to conduct a special study to collect information and develop broad-based programs with regard to the implementation of the UNCCD. This study would be funded through regular national budget. The study should enumerate the state of desertification and drought problems in Bangladesh, elaborate efforts on sustainable natural resource management and identify priorities for national plan of action. NEMAP/ SEMP interventions included the planning, implementation and operational elements including awareness raising, training and capacity building, communication and participatory processes, emergency preparedness etc.

In addition a large number of NGO initiated projects are being implementing over the past years, which have strong relevance to UNCCD mandates. These include, among others, social and community forestry project, awareness raising, community level participatory natural resource conservation.

#### **7.1.2 Experience from the National Awareness Seminar**

In the light of the NEMAP/ SEMP interventions and to initiate a program of action to combat desertification and drought, MoEF organized a national seminar on "Combating Land Degradation and Desertification" in 1998. The seminar was conducted to create public awareness on the causes and consequences of land degradation and emergence of desert-like condition, and seek inputs for the preparation of NAP. The recommendations of this seminar would form the basis of the strategies and priorities of the draft action program. Information generated under these initiatives, studies and proceedings has been the basis for expanding public awareness programs and NAP formulation.

The National Awareness Seminar stressed the need for preparing and implementing the National Action Program (NAP) for combating land degradation, drought and desertification under the UNCCD as a national obligation. The following priority areas may be considered in formulation of the action programs with regard to the implementation of the UNCCD:

- (i) Strengthening the knowledge and information base;
- (ii) Expansion of intensive soil and water conservation and afforestation activities;
- (iii) Development and promotion of agro-forestry system and sustainable alternative livelihood;
- (iv) Development of comprehensive anti-desertification program integrated with national environment and development plans;

- (v) Development of drought preparedness and drought relief and self-help schemes; and
- (vi) Launching public awareness and promotion of popular participation programs.

## **7.2 Established Technical Programs and Functional Projects to Combat Desertification**

### **7.2.1 Inventory, Adaptation and Integration of Projects Underway within the NAP Process**

On-going projects and programs in relation to CCD priorities have been reviewed to derive a set of activities to integrate in NAP process. The review indicates that consultation in the NAP process could be integrated in soil and water conservation and forest management projects in broader perspectives. The BIADP-I has been completed and BIADP-II is under implementation in three administrative districts (one- seventh of the total districts of Bangladesh) can play an instrumental role in generating public awareness and rehabilitate the degraded lands. A total of 289.7 million Taka has been utilized up to May 2001 and the implementation is proceeding with the target to complete it by the year 2002. This project is likely to empower the local people in managing natural resources.

The Social Forestry initiated by FD has been implemented with the objective of forestation and enhancement of natural resources in the whole country except the Hill Tracts. The project activities are being implemented with expected pace and be completed by the year 2003. The project named "Eco System Management in Barind Area" has been initiated under SEMP in 1999 with the objective of soil conservation and afforestation work and preparation of environment management plan for the Barind area. The project is well underway and will be completed in 2003.

These field-based projects and programs focus on soil and water conservation and forest management with people's participation. The farmers are the target beneficiaries of these projects, which continue assisting the local people in increasing the agricultural production and natural resource management through public awareness, and technology modification and transfer. Although these projects are not directly related to CCD implementation, the successful implementation of the components included in these projects will contribute to land and water conservation and empower CBOs. The experience gained in implementing these projects will also be a cornerstone to build up NAP.

### **7.2.2 Identification of New Actions and Planned Measures**

As a follow up to the experience of the Fifth Plan, the Sixth Five Year Plan, which is being prepared would take cognizance of the UNCCD commitments and provide the framework for more coordinated planning of the sectoral activities keeping UNCCD requirements in view.

Bangladesh has continued its effort to encourage the project proponent to include the issue of land degradation and sustainable management of water resources during project implementation, particularly in road and flood control projects. This has been made possible through the integration of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) system, which should be carried out legally as per the environmental legislation. During the approval of the EIA report of development projects and programs, MoEF is making every effort to include mitigation measures and environmental monitoring priorities for the management of natural resources.

Some projects are under implementation after the approval of EIA reports. Environmental auditing will be carried out in the near future in order to document the effectiveness of the mitigation measures adopted for soil and water conservation. In a broader sense, land and

water conservation issues have been integrated and will be continuously integrated in development projects through the EIA system.

### **7.2.3 Specific Actions to Strengthen National Capacity**

Skills enhancement trainings are organized by governmental and non-governmental organization for the conservation of soil and forests. Quite a few trainers' training programs are being organized on natural resource management. The Ministries of Environment and Forests, Local Development, and Agriculture frequently organize local level training and public awareness programs to strengthen local capacity in resource management and community development, develop skills and enhance knowledge and know-how. During the NAP process, the sectoral organizations, which have the networks of local organizations, will be encouraged to organize training and capacity building programs at the grass-root level. MoEF is also encouraging the local NGOs and CBOs to launch programs for capacity building by providing seed money through the Trust Fund. It has been suggested that the programs developed through innovative approach like Khari development and big pond digging in the Barind area may be supported from this Trust Fund to be created with the help of the convention Secretariat (Reazuddin, 1998).

Bangladesh Environment Management Project (BEMP) recently through its Environment Initiatives Fund is funding local NGOs to address local level environmental problems. The thematic focus of many of these would be relevant to land degradation, ecosystem management. Such initiatives would strengthen capacity building efforts at local level to address the issues relevant to UNCCD. SEMP has also taken similar initiatives.

## **7.3 Action Programs**

### **7.3.1 Measures for Natural Resource Conservation**

The priority areas for actions identified during the national seminar and on-going studies will provide a basis for furthering the step of identifying the action programs. The Government of Bangladesh has undertaken a two-year program to develop environmental management guidelines for eighteen industry and activity sectors in the country. The program is aimed at providing technical information and recommendations to guide, promote and facilitate improved environmental performance by the relevant sectors including the government agencies.

For taking coordinated natural conservation initiatives, proposal to enact an umbrella law for natural resource conservation is being discussed at different levels in Bangladesh. The BEMP project is also developing strategic approaches for the DOE so that it could address its natural resource conservation mandates under the ECR, 1995. The Forest Department, the Ministry of water Resources and the Ministry of Land have expanded their conservation mandates through several policy and program initiatives.

### **7.3.2 Measures to Improve the Institutional Organization**

GOB has established a functional network of district level organizations for the implementation of forestry and agriculture related activities. In addition, the federation of the NGOs and CBOs and other NGOs are also strengthening their institutions to ensure information sharing and to raise public awareness at the local level, and to implement activities that conserve natural resources. It is also planned to develop and increase the number of knowledge-based human resources in the existing institutions to provide technical assistance to NGOs, CBOs and the local people. These institutions will be

involved in the NAP process at the field level. However, there is a shortage of financial resources to mobilize the local level institutions and improve efficiency.

Major institutional strengthening initiatives that were undertaken in the recent past and have relevance to UNCCD include, among others, the modernization of land records system based on GIS, Institutional strengthening of the DOE through BEMP and formation of EGIS into a National Resource Center on environment and natural resource management.

### **7.3.3 Measures to Increase the Knowledge of Desertification as a Phenomenon**

Local level organizations are involved in sharing information and experiences and documenting traditional knowledge for soil and water conservation and forest management. Although they are not directly related to the desertification process, it is envisaged that this will provide a basis for halting further degradation of the land and forest resources. Land degradation and forest depletion issues are in the forefront of public awareness programs. Information sharing has been started through national and the local radio, print media and other electronic media. A number of newsletters, posters and pamphlets also carry the message of land degradation. Each organization is encouraged to impart and share information related to land degradation and desertification at the national and local levels. This information will be useful for the NAP process.

Following the National Seminar, several workshops/seminars organized by NGOs and government organizations/agencies on environment and sustainable development were held, which underscored the need for addressing the issues of land degradation, soil erosion, drought etc. through coordinated planning of related sectoral initiatives relevant to UNCCD requirements. Further, the State of the Environment Report and the National Agenda 21 prepared by DOE have put emphasis on the desertification issues and institutional strengthening to implement the commitments of the UNCCD.

### **7.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Measures for the Effects of Desertification**

Bangladesh has included the provision of monitoring and evaluation programs as in-built mechanisms for monitoring in project implementation. The environmental auditing which shall be carried out in future will provide a basis for the identification of impacts of the development projects and its contribution to improve the conditions of land and water systems. Information generated through this process will also provide a basis for developing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to know the effects of desert-like condition in the selected areas. At present, soil conservation and watershed demonstration and research plots have been used to monitor the process of land degradation on regional basis. Some such demonstration plots are also established and monitoring is on going to generate information on nutrient loss in selected ecological regions.

Further, there have been some recent initiatives taken by the government, which would add to the existing capacity of Bangladesh to monitor and evaluate the effects of desertification phenomena as it applies to Bangladesh. The major initiatives in this respect includes, among others, reformation of EGIS- a project of the Ministry of Water Resources on GIS and remote sensing based data and information acquisition and dissemination, into a national center for environmental and resource management data.

### **7.3.5 Measures to Improve the Economic Environment**

Income generating activities have recently been introduced in natural resource management programs in view of the fact that the conservation programs take time to pay back and local people below the poverty line face difficulty in getting involved in natural resource management programs. At present, the social forestry user groups involved in forest

management are legally entitled to manage and use the forest resources at a sustainable basis. After commissioning of these deep tube wells, about 1.10 million tons of excess food grains are being produced annually.

Local bodies are also empowered to collect revenue and generate fund. These measures are expected to improve the economic conditions of the local people. The government is also expanding the integration of income generating activities as an integral part of natural resource management to ensure sustainability and this issue will be analyzed in greater depth during the NAP process.

Following the change of government through democratic process, the new government has outlined its development policy, which has strong focus on the improvement of socio-economic environment of the country through environmentally sound industrialization, poverty alleviation, and increasing allocations in the social sectors.

#### **7.4 Linkage Achieved with Sub-regional and Regional Action Programs**

A number of meetings have been held during the past few years to chalk out a program for regional cooperation in Asia under the aegis of the UNCED with support of UNCCD Secretariat. The First Regional Conference on implementation of UNCCD for Asia was held in New Delhi in August 1996, which agreed upon the establishment of network of regional cooperation. The Conference also helped in identifying the major cross cutting elements for combating land degradation/desertification. Second Ministerial Level Regional Conference at Beijing followed this in May 1997. The Ministerial Conference conceptualized a framework for the formulation of the Regional Action Program (RAP) and development of National Action Program (NAP). RAPs will support the NAPs through the establishment of Thematic Program Network (TPN) for cooperation among the affected countries. The Beijing Conference identified the following TPNs:

- TPN1- Desertification Monitoring and Assessment
- TPN2 –Agro-forestry and Soil Conservation in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas
- TPN4- Water Resources Management for Agriculture in Dry Areas
- TPN5 -Strengthening Capacities for Drought Impact Mitigating and Combating Desertification

An International Expert Group (IEG) meeting on RAP for Asia was held at ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand from November 10-13 1998 on the preparation of RAP for Combating Desertification and Drought in Asia and the Pacific. It was decided that the TPNs would be formulated and implemented building upon existing knowledge and experience as well as strengthening partnership. Flexible modalities for partnership were acknowledged as guiding principles to develop TPNs. These thematic programs being regional in nature, it was recommended that international organizations, particularly the Regional and International financing institutions lend their technical and financial support to the preparation and implementation of RAP. The network is expected to help the member parties to strengthen their existing infrastructure for tackling the problems they face in combating desertification.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests is trying to establish and function of TPN-2 named “Agro-forestry Management and Soil Conservation in Dry areas”. This will be facilitated through the UNDP in collaboration with BMDA, BCAS and other main institutions involved in these areas. The overall objective of TPN-2 is to curtail the process of wide-scale deforestation and watershed degradation through the development, dissemination and promotion of traditional and new technologies, which are economically sound and socially

acceptable while complementing national efforts under the respective National Action Programs in the countries member of the network. Bangladesh has initiated to prepare national action plan (Nuruzzaman, 2000). The Ministry of Agriculture will consider participation in the TPN4- Water Resources Management for Agriculture in Dry Areas.

GEF has recently approved to finance a project with land degradation component entitled "Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management at Cox's Bazar and Hakaluki Haor" under DoE. The threats of excessive cutting of mangrove, fuel wood, beach compaction by vehicles used in tourism, will be addressed through land protection measures, village conservation and sustainable use, and integrated management plans.

#### **7.4.1 Development of National and Regional Level Programs**

Bangladesh is proposing an action program to implement the SAARC Regional Action Plan on Environment. This action plan outlines activities related to strengthening institutions and further halting of natural resource degradation processes through the integration of resource management into development projects and programs. Bangladesh also participated in the SAARC initiatives on programs to control the process of land degradation Bangladesh has also joined the Asia Pacific Network (APN) on climate change which focuses the study of climate change and forest degradation issues in the sub-region. However, specific projects of sub-regional character have yet to be developed and implemented for the Convention matters. In future, there are possibilities to develop and implement plans and programs of regional character while implementing the Asian Thematic Network programs.

The Asian WATMANET facilitates farmers' organizations for watershed management at small watersheds, promotes exchange of experiences at farmers to policy maker level and exchanges information among the participating countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) for sustainable natural resource management in the fragile watersheds in Asia. The experiences gained through this project will also be equally useful for the NAP process. In 1993, Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board (CHTDB) in collaboration with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Katmandu, Nepal launched a program for the promotion of Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT)- a participatory farming system approach to soil conservation extension in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

#### **7.4.2 Strengthening the Efforts of Technological Advancement**

Through SDNP efforts are underway to undertake capacity/need assessment and identify the nodal institutions as well as modus operandi of establishing electronic networking in the country. New technologies should be economically profitable, socially acceptable and technically sound. A wide gap exists between potential yield and what farmers are getting out of the new technologies. The national average of improved rice, wheat, potato and mustard varieties are far below their achievable potential yields. Rice, potato and what fields could be increased by 3, 4 and 2 times, respectively.

Technological advancement is crucial to sustainable agriculture. Appropriate application of modern technologies need to be developed locally. At present, major emphasis is given by BARC to develop technologies in the following areas of agriculture (Chowdhury and Dasgupta, 1993):

- (i) Biological nitrogen fixation;
- (ii) Bio-technology;
- (iii) Enhancement of photosynthetic activity;
- (iv) Water harvesting technology (including irrigation);

- (v) Multiple cropping systems;
- (vi) Erosion control and soil management;
- (vii) Integrated farming systems;
- (viii) Waste utilization and organic matter recycling;
- (ix) Post-harvest technology.

The farmers of Bangladesh are used to living with nature. Farmers adapted drought tolerant varieties of Aus and B. Aman and flood tolerant varieties of B. Aman rice. A further risk aversion technology is the mixed cultivation of Aus and B.Aman. The local plough, minimum tillage, traditional cultivation of sugarcane, mixed cropping of vegetables, etc. are some examples of farmers innovative technologies. These technologies require almost no or very low input and their productivity is also very low, but they are well adapted to local conditions.

The Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) has developed 26 modern varieties of rice which cover at present 35 percent of the total rice cropped area (Chowdhury and Dasgupta, 1993). A major breakthrough has been achieved in wheat production. At present, 95 percent of total wheat area are covered by modern varieties, developed/adapted by BARI are now grown in 64 percent of the potato area and contribute to 70 percent of total potato production in the country. Some improved varieties of pulses, oilseeds, tubers and vegetables have also been developed. Technologies on bamboo propagation and preservation have been developed and strong location-specific agro-forestry programmes are in progress. It is not sufficient to seek self-sufficiency in food production. It is also essential that food quality is improved to maintain normal health. There is need for crop diversification integrating the crop component with livestock, poultry and fisheries. This means that traditional commodity research needs will have to be balanced with a farming systems research/whole farm approach.

Bangladesh is involved in technical committees of SAARC on environment and establishment of SAARC Agriculture Centre. However, there is still a need for establishing a linkage with the scientific community in the region to implement the Convention.

## **7.5 Effectiveness of Measures in Local Capacity Building**

In spite of the focused in-service and local capacity building efforts, which have been made by the concerned Ministries as well as by the local Governments and non-governmental agencies, local level actors have not yet been reached to the extent desired. A lot remains to be done in terms of capacity building, particularly at the grass-root level, for the efficient implementation of the NAP.

### **7.5.1 Degree of Responsibility in Natural Resource Management on Local Communities**

Introduction of community forestry programs in the late 1980 has been instrumental in developing the capacity of local people in the management of community forests. Introduction of the leasehold forestry has also been effective to bring the poor farmers and disadvantaged groups of people into the mainstream of forest conservation and income generation. The effort to empower the local people in managing natural resources, the soil, forest and water through the users group concept has increased the degree of responsibility among the people.

The IPM project has been giving emphasis upon a more participatory, decentralized community based approach termed as 'community IPM' in which farmers become the instigators and not just the recipients of IPM. One of the important activities of community IPM is farmer-farmer training; the project has already completed some Farmer-Field Schools

(FFS) run by farmers and is currently training 640 farmers to become farmer trainers. These farmer trainers will in turn train as many as 25,000 farmers. In addition to farmer-farmer training, the project has also facilitated starting of many IPM clubs. In many places in the country, the IPM trained farmers have started IPM clubs where the members meet periodically and discuss IPM practices.

Local capacity building and utilization of indigenous technologies have further been enhanced through the involvement of NGOs and CBOs in managing the natural resources in rural areas. This process has also enhanced the mobilization of local women to work in groups in areas of saving and credit, soil and forest management. These activities have promoted local communities to assume their responsibilities for management and introduce best method for a sustainable use of resources. A feeling of ownership over the natural resources has also been developed which will have long-term effects on its management.

Recently BEMP and SEMP have undertaken several community based environment management projects at local level. It is expected that through the implementation of these projects outreach network of the DOE would be strengthened, which would help DOE to formulate a participatory NAP and implementation like the NEMP. The GEF project on Coastal Wetlands Biodiversity, which is going in to the implementation phase very soon has strong focus on community participation. The recent projects of the Forest Department, such as the coastal afforestation project, Sundarban Biodiversity project have strong emphasis on community participation. Further, some recently under taken resource management projects of the NGOs, such as MACH project fund by USAID have their main focus on GO/NGO participation.

### **7.5.2 Involvement of Actors in Monitoring and Evaluation Process**

Monitoring and evaluation has been a crucial part in the development projects. Actions implemented by the governmental organizations are monitored and evaluated by the concerned agencies. For example, in the implementation of Coastal Embankment Rehabilitation Project (CERP) an agreement with the Forest Department (FD) is made to cover FD provision of technical services and training for the afforestation component. FD would also be represented within the Project Implementation Unit. Funding agencies also monitors NGO activities. The present practice of involving the community groups has emphasized self-monitoring and evaluation. In case of funding provided by MoEF from Environment Protection Fund, the monitoring and evaluation is done by MoEF itself and the local bodies. It is also planned to involve NGOs and CBOs in monitoring the activities funded by MoEF. This mechanism will further strengthen local governments and organizations for monitoring NAP programs. It has also been realized to form monitoring and evaluation committee having representation from different stakeholders in the process of implementing the Convention. DAE and Forest Department is working on drought and tree plantation, which could be treated as measures for deducing land degradation as well as combating to desertification. BARC has electronic database on agro-ecological and drought prone areas of the country. In addition to that Department of Agricultural Extension is also preparing electronic database on drought-affected area chronologically. Water Resources Planning Organization is also preparing electronic database, which includes crop agriculture and their water requirement from both ground and surface sources. The Agricultural Research Management Project supports strengthening of the management of the national agricultural research institutes and the promotion of research by private organizations to generate profitable and sustainable agricultural technologies for Bangladeshi agricultural producers.

The recent developments as mentioned in the above sections, in respect of institutional capacity building, would ultimately contribute to proactive participation of various actors in monitoring and evaluation process as will be delineated in the NAP.

## **7.6 Monitoring and Information Systems**

Extension workers and farmers along with researchers are involved directly in the on-farm testing activities to keep all concerned abreast about the merit of the technology. Besides this, Agro-business newsletter, slide-films with sound fact-sheets etc., are being used for the rapid dissemination of technology. Bangladesh has a strong FSR (Farming System Research) program. At present, 20 FSR sites are functioning across the country.

An Agriculture Information Centre (AIC) has been established at BARC with a modest capacity. This is linked to NARS institutes by a network called National Agricultural Information System (NAIS). Besides these, BARC has a computerized database on agro-ecological zones, climate, temperature and rainfall of the country. This information is used frequently in technology transfer activities. Agriculture Information Service (AIS) and Fisheries and Livestock Information Services (FLIS) of the Government of Bangladesh are also functioning to provide information in their respective areas.

Management Information System (MIS), an integral part for management planning, has been developed at BFRI with the assistance of BARC/ ISNAR. It includes a computerized modeling system for estimating allocations of personnel (technical and supporting) as well as funds to different research programs of the institute. The Human Resource Information System (HRIS), a sub-set of the MIS, also maintains the personal information for the professional staff. The documentation is being updated annually since 1988. The MIS will eventually lead to a larger Resource Information Management System (RIMS) of the institute in particular and NARS in general. This will help the institute to keep pace with the global information systems in near future.

Since several Ministries are involved in land-based programs it is proposed that NAP is monitored by the Planning Commission with the active support of DoE and the MoEF. The objective of the strategy would be to develop a user-friendly monitoring and evaluation system, incorporating the relevant indicators, base line data, targets, data source and collection methods. In order to ensure that the data provided on implementation of the NAP activities are reflective of the opinions and realities of local populations, periodic local level consultations shall be provided in the strategy. This would help in developing a Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS) at the local level.

Many government and NGO projects have developed Monitoring and Information Management Systems, and they are many on the drawing board. With the formulation of NAP these systems could be reviewed and the relevant systems for UNCCD could be identified and coordinated for UNCCD requirements.

### **7.6.1 Sustainable Development Networking Program (SDNP)**

SDNP is located at BIDS. A national steering committee for SDNP will be formed with participation of GOB, NGO, civil societies, media agencies, academic/ research institutions, UN System and existing Internet service provider organizations. UNDP will provide technical assistance of US\$ 1.4 million for 5 years program leading to develop a self-sustain national program. Main activities proposed under the SDNP (UNDP, 2000) are:

- (i) institutionalize SDNP with the participation of government, NGOs, civil societies, media agencies, academic/research institutions;
- (ii) capacity/ need assessment by type of institutions and by level of existing and potential users;
- (iii) setting up of the technological framework at the central hub and develop at least 5 regional (administrative regions in Bangladesh) nodal points;

- (iv) develop/ connect 500 active users (each nodal point will be enable to link 100 users);
- (v) impart massive training to the users and monitor usage of network and follow up services;
- (vi) motivate, mobilize, disseminate and advertise specialized information on SHD, poverty alleviation, disaster management, agriculture/food security, health, education as well as Agenda/ Capacity 21 related information (it will also cover R & D). The installation of equipment will be done at four levels:
  - a. Local Area Networking (intra-office);
  - b. Wide Area Networking (intra and inter cities);
  - c. microwave links (coastal and other area); and
  - d. on-line networking.

## **7.7 Mechanism of Partnership Agreements**

### **7.7.1 Functioning of Internal Partnership Agreements**

The Convention emphasizes partnership arrangements for the implementation of land improvement and desertification control programs. This process would help in building the local capacity for combating desertification and make the program sustainable. This will also avoid or minimize duplication of works and ensure best use of limited technical and financial resources. Cost sharing for irrigation development and on-farm conservation has been made through formal partnership arrangement.

The CCD Trust Fund is also mobilized through partnership arrangement, as MoEF provides funding to selected activities, and the recipient NGOs implement the activity. Some NGOs are also implementing natural resource conservation programs through partnership arrangements. For example, the Environment Trust Fund supported micro-funding is designed to support the local NGOs and CBOs to implement environment and natural resource conservation programs through a kind of partnership agreement between the host NGO and the local NGOs and CBOs.

The activities under above partnership agreements reported earlier are functioning well. Many other natural resource sectoral projects have incorporated this feature, which are waiting for implementation.

### **7.7.2 Consultation and Coordination Process**

Almost all policies and programs related to natural resource management emphasize public consultation during program design and implementation. This consultation process has been ensured in collecting relevant information for NAP. Once background information is collected, the consultation process will be started to accommodate the concerns and opportunities of the people, NGOs, CBOs and the donor community. Furthermore, efforts are underway to develop coordination mechanism by constituting a Coordination Committee for the relevant Conventions such as UNCCD, UNFCCC and NCB to furthering consultation process.

Most of the projects and programs undertaken since last reporting have identified strong need for participation of stakeholders in the planning, implementation and monitoring phases of the projects/programs and have incorporated consultation process through coordinating with the national apex body of the NGOs, in order to earn ownership of the communities in the project activities.

### **7.7.3 Resource Made Available for NAP Implementation and Partners Involved**

Bangladesh has allocated 0.275 million Taka for the collection of background information for the implementation of the Convention. Bangladesh has received technical and financial assistance in a number of natural resource management programs through multilateral and bilateral funding. International partners have yet to be contacted for the NAP process under the Convention.

## **8. Financial Allocation from National Budget Related to UNCCD Support**

### **8.1 Adopted Financial Mechanism**

The major actors in the sphere of sustainable natural resource management and desertification control are the Ministries of Environment and Forest, Agriculture, Water Resources, Local Government, and Relief & Rehabilitation. The sources of funding available to these Ministries for implementing their sustainable development programs including combating desertification are the national budgets, dedicated sectoral funds and external assistance. Some assistance has been received in soil conservation and watershed management activities, forest management, and soil fertility improvement programs, all indirectly related to issues related to combating desertification.

Budget planning is done for a fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). The current mechanism of funding of sectoral plan projects would be followed for NAP. Under this mechanism the local governments in partnership with village communities would prepare projects within the NAP framework and forward it to the National Committee for CCD for technical scrutiny with the Executive Committee releasing funds for implementation. However, funding procedures need to be streamlined so that funds are made available on a timely basis for governments and project implementation authorities.

Through the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance, the Government has the primary responsibility for coordinating its foreign aid receipts from initial proposals through negotiations to utilization. according to ERD guidelines, efforts for securing external assistance will be made only for those projects formally approved in principle by the Government. Care is taken so that external aid proposals do not disrupt budgetary discipline or the planning process. ERD approaches development partners for assistance to a project or program only when appropriate, having evaluated the preference, priority, accompanying terms and conditions of the development partners.

#### **8.1.1 Measures to Facilitate the Access to Local Sources of Funding**

To increase access of NGOs and CBOs, GoB intends to establish a Land degradation Trust Fund for channeling the financial resources. The NGOs and CBOs may submit technical and financial proposals to secure funding from these sources, and the Executive Committee would select the proposal and allocate necessary funds. Although the CCD Trust Fund would be a legal funding mechanism, it would depend on limited national budgets. Local actors are aware of the availability of funding and would be consulted for submission of proposals within a specified time. However, these sources have limited funds and are unable to meet the demand of NGOs and CBOs. Besides, local actors may receive some funding through the government program for joint implementation and management. These sources may be designed for environmental and resource management which contributes to combating desertification process. MoEF will review, in the near future, the administrative procedures and organizational set-up of the Trust Fund, and will develop new sets of rules for the administration of the fund. This study will also explore possibilities and ways and means for fund raising through internal and external sources. Bangladesh would welcome any offer to strengthen this fund as a financial mechanism for combating desertification and natural resource management programs.

## **8.2 Technical and Financial Assistance Required**

At the commencement of Bangladesh's UNCCD program, Bangladesh will require adequate technical and financial assistance for the implementation of the UNCCD, specifically the formulation and implementation of NAP, public awareness, capacity building and information exchange. Similarly, technical assistance would be required to prepare inventories of traditional knowledge, know-how, practices and technologies. Partnership building and private sector involvement represents other priorities for technical cooperation. Technical assistance is also required to strengthen the process of community empowerment in the field of forestry, soil conservation and watershed management

## **9. Identification of Indicators for Evaluation of Land Degradation/ Desertification**

### **9.1. Criteria for Selection of Indicators**

Despite the seriousness of the environmental and socio-economic impacts of desertification, few efforts have been made to devise diagnostic and monitoring techniques for appraising the status and trend of desertification. Integrated information that can provide data on threshold levels, status and evaluation of relevant physical, chemical and biological processes are generally considered as indicators. It is, therefore, necessary to use indicators to develop a system for evaluation of land degradation and desertification as applicable to Bangladeshi conditions. Indicators can be easily communicated to the public or policy-makers and can be used as reliable information in geographical information systems (GIS) to determine spatial extension and geographic distribution of degraded areas and to relate direct and indirect causes and impacts. For all these purposes, selection of complementary indicators reflecting different aspects of environmental stress is necessary. A reconnaissance survey was conducted in Godagari thana of the Barind area attempted to determine the level of preliminary information obtained through interviewing 120 households. The study (Rasheed, 1998) revealed an awareness of the problem among 87% of the correspondents. The indicators cited include decrease in soil fertility, decline in the quantity of both surface and ground water, decrease in the tree cover and biomass; and increased soil erosion.

### **9.2 Operational Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluation**

Bangladesh has recently introduced environmental monitoring as an integral part of project monitoring. As per the National Environment Policy 1992, the concerned line ministries are responsible for monitoring impacts on project activities on the environment. However, MoEF is made legally responsible for environmental impact auditing. The line ministries have established a monitoring and evaluation division or unit to monitor the project performance and its impact on the environment. The monitoring depends on indicators listed in the EIA report and the project document. In general, project specific indicators are developed, monitored and evaluated through the system specified for the concerned project.

The DAE, SRDI and NARS are involved in monitoring nutrient loss from agricultural land. Sectoral agencies have developed information system to disseminate knowledge and experiences. Bangladesh is in the process of establishing a national environmental information data bank to be completed by 2003. This data bank will include information on the status and trend of natural resources.

The BFRI, NARCs, Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC), Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA), SRDI etc. are particularly involved in scientific studies and monitoring of natural resources. Some institutions like SPARRSO and Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB) are also involved in macro-level monitoring by using satellite imageries. At the project level, academic and research institutions are sometimes involved in monitoring and evaluation activities.

Bangladesh is yet to establish a full-fledged database on desertification. However, a number of national sectoral databases do exist such as a water quality database from the Joint Rivers Commissions. There are also efforts to work towards a national database as detailed in Section 4.3 of this report. As a consequence to these efforts, these databases can be consolidated as a part of the NAP activities.

### **9.3 Implementation Indicators**

Bangladesh has gone through the preliminary stage of the implementation of the convention. Necessary background information has been gathered related to land degradation in the dry regions. Monitoring and evaluation process may begin only after pilot projects are initiated. Bangladesh will follow the logical framework approach for proper monitoring and evaluation of projects related to implementation of UNCCD . This approach comprises of preparation of a list of different components, such as output and activities, indicators of achievements, actual achievement, source of verification and responsible unit. For example, CCD implementation processes are:

- (i) awareness creation about the Convention and identification priorities;
- (ii) formulation of National Action Program (NAP); and
- (iii) implementation of field projects and activities within the framework of NAP.

## 10. Tasks Ahead

The foregoing accounts describe the excessive pressure of an ever-increasing human and animal population and their consumption needs that have an adverse impact of the country's renewable natural resources in the dry regions of Bangladesh, causing widespread land degradation, desertification and accentuating the effects of drought. The Government is aware of the magnitude of the desertification and drought problems and since 1985 have taken several measures to mitigate its effects.

Programs initiated in the 1980s have since been evaluated and modifications made. The programs, policies and institutions are already in place. This may be taken as an expression of the government's desire to combat desertification. However, continuous follow-up actions are required to meet the UNCCD convention. The following tasks are required to be completed prior to implementation of programs to reverse land degradation and combat desertification under UNCCD:

- Formation of National Coordinating Body (NCB) for implementation of UNCCD. The constitution of the NCB is suggested in Section 4.1;
- Formulation of NAP for implementation of UNCCD. This would involve collating all existing knowledge related to land degradation and desertification and facilitating a participatory approach to informing and soliciting inputs from all stakeholders who can affect positive changes in land degradation activities in Bangladesh;
- Conducting an NAP workshop to prioritize the issues that are most pressing in the efforts to reversing land degradation and desertification processes;
- Formulate feasible implementation programs which can be monitored and are specific in their time schedules to meet certain objectives of the NAP;
- Plan actions and mechanisms to meet the UNCCD obligations and enrich the knowledge base of land degradation and desertification processes;
- Ensure effective participation and linkages in the regional and sub-regional programs under UNCCD and the Thematic Program Network (TPN) for cooperation between affected countries.

The National Action Program (NAP) will comprise the above tasks and is aimed at supplementing government resources with external assistance available within the CCD framework for a more comprehensive, coordinated and participatory program of action to combat desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The action program will be targeted to provide an institutional mechanism in terms of achieving better natural resource management.

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## Annexure- I

### Progress of activities under Barind Integrated Area Development Project (BIADP)

*Progress of activities under BIADP*

#### Project Activities 1990-97 1997-2001 Total

Deep tubewell (nos) 3195 302 3497  
 Electrification of irrigation equipment (No.) 2353 677 3030  
 Water Distribution System 1986 67 2053  
 Afforestation plantation (million) 7.95 0.47 8.42  
 Road construction (km) 81 81  
 Re-excavation of ponds 538 222 760  
 Re-excavation of canals (km) 12.5 27.5 40  
 Cross dam (No.) 23 7 30  
 Utilization of GOB fund 3486.6 1037.5 4524.1  
 Green Manu ring (ton) 1.48

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### Consolidated progress report under Barind Bridging Project:

Sl. No.	Physical component/project work activities	Target for 2001-2002	Progress upto February, 2002
1.	Surface water augmentation: a) Re-excavation of Ponds (Nos) b) Re-excavation of canals (Kms) c) Cross dam (Nos)	60 5 4	30% 20% 15%
2.	repair and maintenance of water distribution system	1050	30%
3.	Demonstration of Pisciculture pond (Nos.)	75	70
4.	rehabilitation of DTW	65	20%

Source: BMDA, 2002

### Intensive Afforestation Project:

Sl. No.	Physical component/project work activities	Target for 2001-2002	Progress upto February, 2002
1.	Plantation (in lakh) a) Forest trees b) Fruit trees	4.4 0.48	4.48 0.47

Source: BMDA, 2002

Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP):

Sl. No.	Physical work component/project activities	Target for 2001-2002	Progress upto February, 2002
1.	Afforestation (In Lakh) a) Plantation of saplings b) Plantation of palm seeds	2.15 -	0.34 -
2.	Re-excavation of ponds	12 (no.)	3
3.	Excavation of Miniditch	130(no.)	115
4.	Compost demonstration	75 (no.)	30
5.	supply of dhaincha seeds (kg)	-	-

Source: BMDA, 2002

### SEMP- Eco System Management in Barind Area (1999-2003)

The followings works will be undertaken in programme on pilot basis:

(i) Soil Conservation and afforestation; (ii) Ponds & canal re-excavation: (iii) Water control structures:

Low cost water

control structures of appropriate design may be build across the re-excavated canals for conserving water which will

be used to supplemental irrigation of rain fed paddy and for low water consuming crop cultivation; (iv)

Construction of

mini pond/ ditch on farmland having no source of irrigation water for harvesting rainwater and use the same for

supplemental irrigation; (v) Demonstration of improved fuel use for women in rural areas and

introduction of

renewable energy; (vi) Community based awareness programme for checking environmental

degradation; (vii) Create

Barind Environmental Fund to support and promote innovative sustainable environmental projects and

(viii) Prepare

Environment Management Action Plan to combat desertification in the Barind Tract.

### Project Activities Progress in 1999-2000

Afforestation plantation (million) 0.09

Excavation of ponds for rain water harvesting (No) 09

Excavation of mini ditch (No) 150

Compost preparation demonstration (No.) 56

### Social Forestry Activities Carried out by Rajshahi Forest Extension Division

Forests created by Rajshahi Forest Extension Division are tabulated below:

Year Woodlot

Forest (ha)

Agro forestry

(ha)

Strip Plantation

(km)

Seedling Distributed

(million)

Training of

participant (nos)

Forests Created under Community Forestry

1981-87 792.91 12.15 286.74 2682

Forests Created under UANDP

1987-90 190.28 73.28 103.15 0.001 250

Forest Created under Thana Afforestation

1990-95 493.72 127.19 1376.68 0.59 6106

Forests Created Extended Social Forestry  
 1995-97 10.60 61.00 342.51 0.13 2075  
 Total 1487.51 273.62 2109.08 0.721 11113  
 Source: Nur Nabi Mridha, Personal Communication, 2001.38

**Social Forestry Activities Carried out by Tangail and Mymenshingh Forest Extension Division**

Forest lands of Tangail and Mymenshingh Forest Divisions under Madhupur Tract once covered by vigorous sal has slowly converted to scattered stand with small coppice sal that shows poor regeneration capacity indicating the effect of recurring felling of trees, burning and soil erosion mostly caused by local inhabitants and encroachers. To recover forestland and to rehabilitate the degraded forest land social forestry programmes had been initiated through Thana Bonayon and Nursery Development Project since 1988-89. Woodlot, agroforestry and strip plantation have been raised involving local landless poor people within these divisions through benefit sharing mechanism. Following table will give brief idea about the success of rehabilitating the degraded land through the social forestry programs.

**Plantation raised under social forestry programme:**

Forest Division	Woodlot (ha.)	Agro-forestry (ha.)	Strip plantation (km)	Remarks
Mymenshingh	6017.10	1799.43	1373.00	
Tangail	7025.46	1408.44	363.41	

**Plantation area harvested (raised under social forestry programme):**

Forest Division	Woodlot (ha.)	Agro-forestry (ha.)	Strip plantation (km)	Remarks
Mymenshingh	570.85	43.22	-	
Tangail	441.69	161.93	-	

**Forest Products after harvest :**

Forest Division	Round log (cft.)	Balli (poles) (number.)	Fuelwood (cft)	Remarks
Mymenshingh	2,07,463.20	1,47,013	1,69,634.35	
Tangail	3,37,138.63	1,52,104	3,47,589.46	

**Beneficiaries involved in social forestry programme:**

Forest Division	Number of beneficiaries
Male	Female
Remarks	
Mymenshingh	6782 264
Tangail	7643 477

**Plantation raised in Jessore, Faridpur, Kushtia Forest Divisions**

Division	Block/Woodlot (ha)	Agro-forestry (ha)	Strip Plantation (km)	Char Plantation (ha.)
Jessore	50.00	16.00	1866.56	35.0
Faridpur	81.78	15.00	1874.30	35.0
Kushtia	130.12	-	1495.06	-
Total	261.90	31.00	5235.92	70.0

Source: M. Nuruzzaman, Forest Department, Dhaka.39

**Annexure II**  
**Plantation Activities for 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 under**  
**Forestry Section Project, Forest Department**

<b>Fiscal Year: 2002-2003</b>	<b>PLANTATION</b>	
	Woodlot Plantation (New)	3000ha
	Woodlot Plantation (2nd)	2636ha
	Agroforestry Plantation (New)	2000ha
	Agroforestry Plantation (2nd)	1500ha
	Strip Plantation (New)	4000km
	Strip Plantation (2nd)	4500km
	Char land Plantation	1000ha
	Barind Gully Plantation	100km
	Tank/Pond Plantation	25ha
	Sal Coppice Management	6000ha
	BufferZone Plantation	1000ha
	Enrichment Plantation	1000ha
<hr/>		
<b>Fiscal Year: 2001-2002</b>		
	Woodlot Plantation (New)	512ha
	Woodlot Plantation (2nd)	1700ha
	Agroforestry Plantation (New)	310ha
	Agroforestry Plantation (2nd)	521ha
	Strip Plantation (New)	2040km
	Strip Plantation (2nd)	1639km
	Char land Plantation	30ha
	Barind Gully Plantation	30km
	Tank/Pond Plantation	5.6ha
	Sal Coppice Management	1060ha

Source: Md. Zaheer Iqbal, ACF, Forest Department, Bangladesh

## Annexure:IIA

### Afforestation programmes implemented and in the process of implementation in Rajshahi Social Forestry Division under Forestry Sector Project

Activities	2000-2001	2001-2002
<u>Woodlot Planataion (2<sup>nd</sup> rotation):</u> Seedling raising		85600 no.
Institutional plantation: Seedling raising	60000 no.	40000 no.
<u>Strip plantation (new):</u> Seedling raising Plantation	312000 no. 60 km	126000 no. 148 km
<u>Strip plantation (2<sup>nd</sup> rotation):</u> Seedling raising Plantation	240000 no. 50 km	156000 no. 167 km
<u>Char Land:</u> Seedling Raising Plantation	- -	481500 no. 30 ha.
<u>Barind Gully:</u> Seedling raising Plantation Soil protection embankment	36000 no.	86400 no. 30 km 30 no.
Pond/canal renovation and plantation: Seedling raising Plantation Pond renovation	10000 no. - 6 no.	23000 no. 5.6 ha. 8 no.
Seedling raising for sale and distribution from thana nursery	250000 no.	220000 no.

Source: Md. Zaheer Ikbal, ACF, Forest Department, Bangl

**Annexure III**  
**Division wise Plantation done during 1999-2000 & 2000-2001 under Foresty**

Sl. No.	Forest Division	Woodlot (New) ha.		Woodlot (2nd rotation) ha.		Agroforestry (New) ha.		Agrofore: (2nd rotatio	
		1999-2000	2000-2001	1999-2000	2000-2001	1999-2000	2000-2001	1999-2000	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	Dhaka Forest Division	-	220	23.12	222.16	-	-	75	
2	Mymensingh Forest Division	-	305		570.85	-	-	-	
3	Tangail Forest Division	-	50		643.75	-	65	-	
4	Sylhet Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Total Central Region	-	575	23.12	1436.76	-	65	75	
5	Dhaka Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
6	Comilla Social Forest Division	-	5	10	10	-	-	-	
	Total Dhaka Social Forest Region	-	5	10	10	-	-	-	
7	Bogra Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
8	Rangpur Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
9	Dinajpur Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
10	Rajshahi Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
11	Pabna Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Total Bogra Social Forest Region	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
12	Jessore Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
13	Faridpur Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
14	Kustia Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
15	Bagerhat Social Forest Division	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Total Jessore Social Forest Region	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Total	-	580	33.12	1446.76	-	65	75	

Source: Md. Zaher Iqbal, ACF, Forest Department, Bangladesh

**Annexure IV**  
**Plantation's Information (area in km) for 1995-1996 to 2000-2001**  
**Coastal Greenbelt Project**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Type of Plantation</b>	<b>Chittagong</b>	<b>Feni</b>	<b>Noakhali</b>	<b>Lakshmipur</b>	<b>Bhola</b>	<b>Patuakhali</b>	<b>Piro</b>
1995-96	Embankment	38	4	0	20	6	52	
	R & H and Railway	29	4	8	10	11	18	
	Feeder Road	67	10	20	25	68	54	
	Foreshore							
1996-97	Embankment	39	5	5	20	25	128	
	R & H and Railway	20	3	20	30	7	25	
	Feeder Road	52	14	35	60	70	76	
	Foreshore						20.5	
1997-98	Embankment	46	2	10	58	13	126	
	R & H and Railway	22	5	12	50	6	17	
	Feeder Road	126	87	100	105	133	75	
	Foreshore	13		55			41	
1998-99	Embankment	20	0	5	25	5	93	
	R & H and Railway	11	0	11	40	3	10	
	Feeder Road	83	50	120	180	100	80	
	Foreshore	30		80			40	
1999-2000	Embankment	35		20	12	5	100	
	R & H and Railway	30		18	23	6	4	
	Feeder Road	140	55	160	180	100	103	
	Foreshore	40		35		50	45.5	
2000-2001	Embankment	10		20		7	120	
	R & H and Railway	29		41	31	10	8	
	Feeder Road	115	65	210	250	200	145	
	Foreshore	35		55		50	75	
Total	Embankment	188	11	60	135	61	619	
	R & H and Railway	141	12	110	184	43	82	
	Feeder Road	583	281	645	800	671	533	
	Foreshore	118	0	225	0	100	222	

Source: M Oli Ul Haque, ACF, Forest Department, Bangladesh

**Annexure V**  
**Location wise major component of the Forest Resources Management Pro**

	Category of Plantation/Division	Unit	Achievement/Plantation raised						
			92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99
A.	Industrial Plantation								
A.1	Short Rotation (SR) - (6'X6') - 3000/ha.								
	Sylhet Forest Division	hectare	190	190	190	190	189.96	0	156.4
	Chittagong Forest Division	hectare	1215	1215	1215	1215	1215	1215	1215
	Cox'sbazar Forest Division	hectare	550	550	550	550	550	550	550
	C/A Chittagong Forest Division	hectare	0	0	47.15	0	0	0	0
	Sub-total (SR):		1955	1955	2002.15	1955	1954.96	1765	1921.4
A.2	Long Rotation (LR) - (9'X9') - 1330/ha.								
	Sylhet Forest Division	hectare	250	225	225	225	123.6	0	122.99
	Chittagong Forest Division	hectare	650	600	600	600	630	630	592.5
	Cox'sbazar Forest Division	hectare	700	600	600	600	600	600	600
	C/A Chittagong Forest Division	hectare	0	0	24.3	334	0	0	0
	Sub-total (LR):		1600	1425	1449.3	1759	1353.6	1230	1315.49
A.3	Long Rotation (Teak)- 3000 plant/ha.								
	Sylhet Forest Division	hectare	50	75	75	75	38	0	17
	Chittagong Forest Division	hectare	150	200	200	200	210	210	197.5
	Cox'sbazar Forest Division	hectare	100	200	200	200	200	200	200
	C/A Chittagong Forest Division	hectare	0	0	0	50	0	0	0
	Sub-total (teak):		300	475	475	525	448	410	414.5
	Total Industrial Plantation:		3855	3855	3926.45	4239	3756.56	3405	3651.39
B.	Mangrove Afforestation: 4400 plant/ha.								
	C/A Chittagong Forest Division	hectare	760	725	773	310	300	600	590
	C/A Noakhali Forest Division	hectare	2500	2850	1600	1400	850	1500	2200
	C/A Bhola Forest Division	hectare	415	530	700	650	500	500	750
	C/A Patuakhali Forest Division	hectare	650	700	775	370	200	275	500
	Total Mangrove Afforestation		4325	4805	3848	2730	1850	2875	4040
C.	Participatory Forestry Development:								
	Chittagong Forest Division	hectare	0	0	0	0	0	50	100
	Cox'sbazar Forest Division	hectare	0	0	0	0	0	50	100
	Sub-total (PFD):		0	0	0	0	0	100	200
	Total Afforestation under FRMP	hectare	8180	8660	7774.45	6969	5606.56	6380	7891.39

Source: Implementation completion report, FRMP, 2002, Forest Department, Bangladesh



**Annexure- VI**  
**National Awareness Seminar on Combating Land Degradation Desertification in Bangladesh**  
**from**  
**April 21-22, 1998**

To create a public awareness, ensure inter-sectoral discussion on preliminary issues, causes and consequences of land degradation, drought and desertification and derive a set of priority actions as guiding indicators for the preparation of the National Action Programme (NAP), the first ever National Awareness Seminar on the formulation and implementation of the National Action Programme was organized from April 21-22, 1998 in Dhaka by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in collaboration with and financial assistance from the Secretariat of the of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UNDP country office, Dhaka There were five technical sessions where Key- notepapers were read by invited resource persons/specialists. Groupdiscussions were held in five groups with 70 participants from various departments/ agencies/ educational institutes/ journalists' forum.

**Key Note Papers**

1. Status of Land Resource Use and Desertification, Drought and land Degradation in Bangladesh: Obstacles and Effective Policy Options and Measures for Sustainable Use of land Resources -Dr. K.B. SajjadurRasheed, Professor of Geography and Environment. University of Dhaka.
2. Role of Forestry and Biodiversity Conservation in Combating Land Degradation and Desertification in Bangladesh- Mr. S.M. Jalil. Acting Chief Conservator of Forest, Department of Forest. Government of Bangladesh.
3. Combating Desertification in Bangladesh: Case Studies, Lessons Learned from Experiments, Constraints and Opportunities -Professor M.I. Zuberi. Team Leader, Department of Environmental Science, Gono Bishwabidhyalay. Dhaka.
4. National Action Programmes (NAPs) to Combat Desertification, Drought and Land Degradation in Bangladesh -Dr. Mahfuzul Haque. Chief Instructor, Academy for Planning and Development. Dhaka
5. Catalytic Schemes and Innovative Approaches for Utilizing Financial in Kind and Technical Support in the Context of an Integrated Programming Framework. for Sustainable Development -Mr. Md. Reazuddin. Deputy Director. Department of Environment. Govt. of Bangladesh.

This working session was divided into five groups having a number of 12 participants in each group with different topic. Dividing all the participants on the basis of their expertise and experiences in the subject matters constituted the groups. Each of the group after a long brain storming identified issues, developed strategies and recommended actions with the inclusion of different stakeholders i.e. Implementing and collaborating agencies.

**GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following are the major recommendations of the different groups:

**Group. A.**

Status of land resource use and measures for sustainable use of land resources

1. Bring all land under vegetative cover and undertake appropriate research programs for controlling soil erosion.
2. Introduce appropriate horticulture practice in the hilly areas.
3. Introduce appropriate crop rotation and location specific balanced use of chemical fertilizers with organic mineral and green measures.
4. Stop deforestation or the removal of natural vegetation, overgrazing, agricultural and bio-industrial activities to combat land degradation (marginalisation of agricultural land and productivity decline).
5. Introduce agro forestry/ social forestry / home stead forestry involving local people and protect existing forests and forest resources from overexploitation.
6. Harness alternative source of energy and enforce existing laws to stop fuel wood in brick kiln. Use solar energy/ improve stoves of BCSIR.
7. Encourage the use of other construction materials as a substitute of wood.
8. Formulate proper land use policy and monitor and evaluate physical biological and socio-economic component of land use.
9. Formulate and maintain policy on cropping pattern and cropping intensity.
10. Encourage alternate orchard cultivation and rehabilitate Jhum cultivators through providing alternate source of income.
11. Initiate target oriented research programme on land use/ land management/ land resource issues such as drought /salinity resistant crops and interrelation between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem.

**Group -B:**

Topic - Land erosion/ degradation and process of desertification in Bangladesh -Strategy and effective policy options within the purview of national, regional and international partnerships.

1. Strengthen capacity building through awareness of local people in combating land degradation and desertification.
2. Massive afforestation with fast growing drought resistant preferably indigenous species involving local community.
3. Develop a national land use plan and decentralize land responsibilities to local bodies.
4. Improve policy framework and institutional capacity for land management by strengthening land use planning, soil and agro forestry.
5. Encourage people's participation in soil conservation and watershed management ensuring the role of women as an effective agent for resource conservation, who is involved in fetching firewood, fodder and drinking water.
6. Focus future actions on the assessment and mapping, development of an integrated approach for natural resource management on watershed basis. more research and extension, and integrating poverty alleviation program for halting further land degradation and resource depletion.
7. Develop and monitor action plan for environment protection, land use institution, legislation, policies and programs.
8. Implement Ganges Barrage project and rehabilitate the Gorai river in order to increase dry season water flows in the southwest region to combat salinity intrusion.
9. Develop and utilize in stream storages of water and static water resources
10. Increase river flows and reduce siltation of riverbeds through augmentation and trans-boundary co-operation.
11. Emphasize the need for international cooperation to pursue sustainable development objectives relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of droughts and land degradation.
12. Undertake survey to assess causes and con-sequences of land degradation, drought and desertification and determine priority areas for action.
13. Give particular attention to the implementation of preventive measures for lands that are not yet degraded or which are slightly degraded.
14. Enhance nation-based climatological, meteorological and hydrological capabilities and the means to provide for drought early warnings.
15. Promote policies and strengthen institutional framework to develop cooperation and coordination among the donor community, governments of all levels, local populations and community groups and facilitate access by local populations to appropriate technology.
16. Establish and or strengthen food security systems including storages and marketing facilities particularly in rural and drought prone areas.
17. Train local people to the drought prone areas to adaptation and enhance professional education in natural resource management, protection and management of degraded agro-ecological resources.
18. Develop sustainable irrigation programmes for both crops and livestock.

**Group- C.**

Topic- Scientific studies, research and lessons learned from experiments and opportunities with regard to combating land degradation and desertification.

1. Contain the downward spiral of land degradation, manifested in soil erosion and deterioration of its physical, chemical, biological and economic properties with concerted actions in scientific and technological frontier by pooling together all the resources available -scientific and technological,
2. Explore new opportunities and identify the organizations institutional requirements as well as areas of studies wanting additional attention and diversify a mechanism for such mechanism
3. Identify the relevant organizations dealing with studies/research/ survey related to the problems of land degradation and desertification and make those available in easily accessible format (Directory/ CD RoM/ web site in the internet).
4. Compile the list of local and international resource persons working on the different aspects of land degradation and desertification as well as land management practices.
5. Strengthen Institutional capacity, human resources development, and promote and encourage indigenous knowledge and technology.
6. Commission study/ research/ survey to combat land degradation, drought and desertification with the creation of National Trust Fund. Initially with seed money/ block grant from the National Government. The fund may be additionally buttressed from sources like UNCCD and other UNA-Agencies, International organizations, any other sources (like donations, fund raising lottery etc.). The fund may be operated by an Executive Committee comprising representatives of appropriate level

from all the stakeholder of both the public and private non-governmental set up and shall be subject to financial accountability under the established rules and regulations.

7. Develop national information data-base related land degradation, drought and desertification in any existing organization/ ministry working in the forefront of environment.

8. Assess land degradation through practical and initiative research and development programmes and re-package the information and appropriate technologies and disseminate to the needy local people.

9. Launch immediate actions to receive data from the satellite, install upper air observation and radar to monitor the movement of the storm in order to better ensure early warning system.

#### **Group -D:**

Topic- Institutional Requirements for formulation, implementation and evaluation of national action programs in combating desertification (NAPCD)

1. Prepare and implement a participatory and comprehensive National Action Programme (NAP) under the broad framework of the issues, strategies and recommended actions with the active involvement and participation of different stakeholders.

2. Encourage utilize and activate existing institution rather than creating new ones.

3. Formulate three-tier body for national action programme, existing national environment committee (NEC) headed by the Hon'ble Prime Minister be the apex body for formation, implementation and evaluation of NAP for combating land degradation drought and desertification. The executive committee of the NEC headed by the Hon'ble minister for environment and forests (MOEF) with MOEF and the department of environment as implementing agency. Since NEC and ECNEC meeting cannot be held frequently, national committee for convention to combat desertification (NCCCD) held by the secretary, ministry of environment and forest be set up with all stakeholders (NGO/ civil society) as members and the director general of the department of environment shall be member secretary who will take actual charge of activities. The NCCCD will report to the ECNEC and the ECNEC subsequently to the NEC.

4. Composition of the NCCD shall comprise representatives of the ministries/ department s/ agencies like Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Land (MOL), Ministry of Water Resources (MOWR), Ministry of Relief and Disaster Management (MORDM), Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MOLLS), Department of Environment (DOE), Department of Agriculture Extension (DOE), Department of Forest (DOF), Soil Resources Development Institute (SDRI), Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC), Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO), Disaster Management Bureau (DMB), Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO), Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Surface Water Modeling Centre (SWMC), NGO Affairs Bureau, Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh, Forum of Environmental Journalists in Bangladesh (FEJB) and Academic Institutions

5. The TOR of NCCCD to be formed later on.

6. Create a cell in the office of DOE to monitor and evaluate the problem of land degradation drought and desertification comprising of 10 personal having appropriate equipment and logistic support, financial and technical support may be sought from the CCD secretariat and other relevant international organizations.

7. DOE may keep contact with SAARC countries as well as other countries of the world for exchange of experiences information technological issues ad development of management information system (MIS) on CCD.

8. Exchange of visits of officials/ experts of the concerned countries on CCD.

CCD and other international organizations in this regard may provide necessary support.

#### **Group -E:**

Topic- Role of Forestry and Biodiversity conservation in combating land degradation/ erosion and desertification in Bangladesh.

1. Introduce proper land use planning and environment friendly programmes in respect of forestry, pasture, agriculture, fisheries and water management

2. Utilize soil conservation measures such as terracing, contour cropping, check dams in hilly areas

3. Adopt integrated participatory approaches for eco-system management

4. Encourage homestead and village forestry.

5. Facilitate increased use of improved stoves to reduce pressure on forest resource

6. Increase fuel-wood and timber supply for increasing population and use solar, water and biogas energy for generation of electricity.
  7. Increase carbon-di-oxide sink by planting trees.
  8. Provide incentives. Grants, subsidies, credits for proper land use, watershed management and forestry activities.
  9. Protect the loss of vegetative cover from population pressure, overgrazing and unplanned development of projects, township etc.
  10. Prohibit misuse of land affecting ecosystem by filling up ponds, canals, beels, haors, baors etc.<sup>42</sup>
- There was a field trip to (a) Barind area and (b) Gorai off-take and its adjacent area. The visit to the Barind area included two places namely Adda and Parbatipur. Adda represented an area where land is significantly damaged by recurring and insufficient land management. In contrast, Parbatipur is a place where canals and reservoirs integrated in farmlands through Barind Integrated Area Development Project (BIADP) has brought tangible results. The Gorai river is a tributary of the Ganges River used to supply abundant water resources to local people. The flow at the Gorai off-take area was almost totally eliminated by a large deltaic bar changing the Gorai to a completely dry river. Small irrigation projects such as installing reservoirs and rehabilitating degraded riverbeds and sides can be undertaken to supplement the activities under implementation of the Gorai River Rehabilitation Project.