

**REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**MINISTRY OF NATURE PROTECTION**

**THIRD NATIONAL REPORT**  
**ON IMPLEMENTATION OF UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**  
**IN**  
**ARMENIA**

**YEREVAN 2006**

**THIRD NATIONAL REPORT**  
**ON IMPLEMENTATION OF UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN**  
**ARMENIA**

The Third National Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of UN “Convention to Combat Desertification” and provides information on initiated measures in the Republic of Armenia through 2002-2006 for implementation of the Convention

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## SUMMARY

A number of national and regional programmes with regard to the main desertification problem of a strategic significance have been developed and implemented in Armenia since the last presentation of the Second National Report to the UNCCD Secretariat:

1. *“Action Programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia for the Period of 2003-2007”* adopted on June 17, 2003
2. *“Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper”* was approved by the Government Decree of RA, N: 994-P, dated 08.08.2003;
3. *“Anti-Corruption Strategy and Measures for Implementation Thereof”* Project approved by the Government Decree of RA, №1522-P, dated 06.11.2003;
4. *“Interim State Expenditures Programme of RA for 2005-2007”* approved by the Government Decree of RA, № 985-P, dated 17.06.2004;
5. The following *environmental* programmes of strategic importance have been developed and/or implemented:
  - Lists of measures for implementation of Armenia’s obligations derived from international environmental conventions, including UN Convention to Combat Desertification for the period of 2005-2010, which were approved by the Government Decree of RA №1840-P, dated 02.12.2004 and № 880-P, dated 16.03.2005.
  - Development of “Rehabilitation of Lake Gili” project was completed in 2003;
  - “National Strategy and Action Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas in Armenia” was approved by the Government Decree of RA, № 54, dated 26.12.2002
  - «National Forest Policy and Strategy Paper» was approved by the Government Decree of RA № 38, dated 30.09.2004
  - «National Forest Programme» was approved by the Government Decree of RA, № 1232-P, dated 21.07.2005
  - «Development Trends of Information Dissemination Process on Biodiversity Conservation and Specially Protected Natural Areas» was approved by the Order of the Minister of Nature Protection № 226-A, dated 10.08.2004;
  - «National Water Programme» was developed in 2005-2006, currently is under discussion in the framework of stakeholders;
  - PDF A phase of «Development of Institutional and Legal Potential in Armenia to Optimize the Information and Monitoring Systems of Global Environmental Management» project is completed, and the GEF national coordinator has sent a written request for MSF financial support.
6. The following *Agricultural* programmes of strategic importance have been developed and/or implemented.
  - «Measures for Development of Agricultural Reclamation in RA for the Period of 2002-2005» project was adopted by Government Decree № 1115-P, dated 2002;
  - A concept paper on «Development of Animal Husbandry in Armenia» was adopted by RA Government Protocol Decree in 2002;
  - «Sustainable Agriculture Development Strategy of Armenia» was adopted by Government Decree of RA, № 682-P, dated 14.04.2004;
  - The Government of RA has approved the project on «Provision of Food Policy in RA» in 2005.

Institutional reforms promoting desertification control have been carried out for conservation and use of water, land and forest resources, and for management of protected areas from 2002 to 2006 in accordance with NAP provisions.

According to Government Decree of RA, № 1372-P, dated 28.11.2002, a State Hydro-Meteorological and Monitoring Service was established under the Ministry of Nature Protection. Activities mainstreamed to empowerment of infrastructure and enrichment of logistical framework have been carried out in the framework of “Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction Project”.

From 2002 to 2006 a considerable number of activities coherent with NAP strategy have been taken for perfection of legislation regulating public relations in environmental conservation and economic development sectors, which can contribute to expedient desertification control. 13 codes and laws were adopted by the National Assembly of RA within the mentioned period, regarding Lake Sevan, management of land, water, forest resources and waste, as well as food safety, seismic safety, state environmental supervision, etc. Direct linkages to settlement of desertification control problems have the 18 legislative acts, adopted by the Government of RA, related to the use of fertile soil layers, land zoning and usage schemes, specially protected natural areas, improvement of forest areas, efficient use of water resources, etc.

Of the main principles of NAP implementation to combat desertification in Armenia is to ensure stakeholders’ participation. In this respect special priority is given to the implementation of four primary pilot projects developed in the framework of NAP. In 2003-2005 two primary pilot projects were implemented financed based on the discussions between the Ministry of Nature Protection of RA and UNCCD Secretariat. “Sustainable Development Paper of the Republic of Armenia” was developed in 2002 by public and scientific layers of RA. “Environment Protection Local Action Plan” has been developed for city Ararat in the framework of REC Caucasus project. NGOs participated actively in development and discussion of “*Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*” and currently are involved in implementation process. “Forest Recovery and Development Fund of RA” is functioning since 2004 under the direction of the Prime Minister, and “Inter-ministerial Task Force of Monitoring and Assessment of Raising Lake Sevan Water Level” with involvement of a number of NGOs since 2005. In 2006, Friendly Associations of RA organized a “Consolidated Tree Planting” on the entire territory of the country with active participation of all public layers. For conservation of green coverage and water surface of city Yerevan, several NGOs established “Protection of Green Coverage of City Yerevan” Union, associating 39 NGOs. Preconditions to ensure participation in expedient implementation of NAP are measures undertaken for training the stakeholders and raising public awareness of the main problems. A great number of relevant measures are inscribed in Armenia through 2002-2006: an Aarhus-Center was established within the Ministry of Nature Protection and 4 Aarhus-Centers in different regions of Armenia with the support from OSCE, reference materials have been published and freely distributed to the population; a number of video films have been produced, mass media has actively been functioning.

Support from Donor Countries and International Organizations is important for NAP implementation in Armenia. Relevant negotiations are taking place between UNCCD Secretariat and “Global Mechanism” aiming at developing international cooperation. ‘A Round Table’ is planned to be organized in Armenia involving potential donors and all interested entities. During the 5 European Environmental Taskforce Congress, held in Kiev, in May 2003, the Ministers approved Environmental Strategy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Implementation of the strategy was discussed during the Ministerial Congress, held in Tbilisi, in October, 2004. GEF has initiated «National Conversation» since 2004, anticipating also Armenia’s participation. National Dialogue between GEF and the Republic of Armenia was held through October 14-15, in Yerevan. GEF national dialogue decision was developed, stating further cooperation sectors, outcomes of the held seminar, and ways of support. Upon becoming the 64-th member of Asian Development Bank (ADB) in September, 2005, Armenia initiated

development of strategic directions for obtaining the Bank's support. The trends of «Economic Report and Midterm Action Strategy» (ERMAS) were discussed in 2005, and existing environmental challenges and sectors requiring financial support were revealed. The Work Plan with its two components: «Efficient Energy Usage» and «Sustainable Conservation and Management of Natural Resources» was signed between UNDP Armenia and Ministry of Nature Protection of RA in March, 2006, in the framework of which modernization of EPNAP is anticipated for 2006-2007.

The following technical programmes and operational projects were developed through 2002-2006, the implementation of which will significantly contribute to efficient desertification control:

1. «Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction project» which is currently under implementation;
2. Urban development project documents were developed within 2001-2005 on the account of the state budget of RA, aimed at regulating spatial planning, and simultaneously integrating environmental and sustainable land tenure strategic problems;
3. Projects for zoning and usage of 20 community lands for Ararat marz of RA have been developed in the framework of pilot projects on the account of savings of State Cadastre of Real Estate under the Government of RA, as a support to local self-administration bodies;
4. The main layout of city Gyumri and territorial scheme of Shirak marz have been developed and approved by RA Government;
5. The main layouts of Ararat, Artashat, Arzni, Jermuk, Hankavan, Arzakan, Goris, Martuni, Vardenis Nyuvadi and Agarak communities were developed in 2004, which are under concordance and approval phases;
6. The main layouts of Talin, Vedi, Echmiatsin, Gavar, Stepanavan, Charencavan, Artik, Kapan, Yeghegnadzor, Dilijan, Ijevan, Berd communities were developed in 2005. Simultaneously the main layout of Vanadzor city is in the development process on the account of the local budget.

A number of projects consistent with NAP are being implemented through 2002-2006.

1. «Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction project» launched on December 27, 2002, which should be completed in 2008;
2. During the reporting period state supervision over the chemical substances used for plant protection was strengthened, activities for regulation of collection, transportation, processing, neutralization and eradication of poisonous waste are carried out in the framework of «National Action Programme in the Sphere of Environmental Hygiene» adopted by the Government of RA in 2001;
3. Activities for cleaning and re-equipping collector-drainage systems were implemented in the country through 2002-2004, particularly 30 km of drainage system was recovered which helped to eradicate water coverage of 8,0-9,0 ha each year and organize sustainable farming;
4. «Irrigation Rehabilitation» Project is currently under implementation, due to which 260 km of water pipeline, tertiary channels, four pumping stations, four dams, 238 wells have been rehabilitated and<sup>1</sup> constructed; 310 operating drainage systems have been cleaned and put in place;
5. GEF financed «Armenia National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment (NCSA) for Global Environmental Management.» UNDP/GEF project initiated by common efforts of UNDP and the Ministry of Nature Protection was implemented in 2003-2004. It was called to identify the potential needs of the country for implementation of the three global

environmental conventions: Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Climate Change, and Convention to Combat Desertification.

A proper early draught warning system is currently missing in Armenia, but several organizations are carrying out certain activities for establishment of such a system. Activities are undertaken to strengthen the warning system in the framework of “Information on Food Safety” EC/UN FAO project. “Armstatehydromet” is collaborating with Draught Monitoring Center of CIS Inter-governmental Hydro-meteorological Board. This cooperation enables to issue a ten-days bulletin on monitoring of draught warning, and participate in establishment of agro-climatic characteristics’ fund for draught and draught phenomena.

The main trends of regional cooperation in Armenia are: harmonization of legislation; application of unified approaches for implementation of conventions; full participation in international processes; establishment of global environmental management in Armenia; etc. Trans-boundary problems are of a special concern. According to the Prime Minister’s decision a Trans-boundary Water Resources Commission was established on October 10, 2002. Together with relevant Commissions of bordering counties it settles down operatives problems related to conservation and usage of trans-boundary water resources. Armenia is involved in implementation of “Modification of Risk into Cooperation” project proposed in the framework of UNEP/UNDP/OSCE “Environment and Security” regional initiative. National coordinators are assigned by the Ministry of Nature Protection and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RA to coordinate the activities of the initiative. A proposal for establishment of “Zikatar” regional forest training center is submitted to the UNCCD Secretariat. “Zikatar” forest center is planned to be used as a regional training center for UNCCD Central and Eastern countries.

Appropriate allocations were estimated for implementation of measures in 2002-2005 and for 2006 to combat desertification both by the state budget of RA and donor organizations. Besides, additional expenditures are made from the reserve fund of the Government of RA mainly for measures requiring operative interactions and contingencies for elimination of results of natural disasters (deluge, floods, devastation of littoral zones, abundant snow, strong winds, hail, draught, channels, plugging of irrigation and collector-drainage systems, landslides). Currently 36 science-research activities are in place financed by the RA state budget on contractual basis in the framework of UNCCD. A number of credit and grant projects are currently under implementation: «Irrigation Rehabilitation Project» - 24,8 million USD, «Natural Resources Management Poverty Reduction Project» - 16 million USD, «Dam Safety Project» - 26,6 million USD, «Millennium Challenges» Project - 235,6 million USD, etc.

A list of ecological benchmarks is developed as a mechanism for monitoring, survey, collection, analysis and exchange of information on environment, including desertification processes, which has been submitted to the approval of RA Government. Benchmarks of EECCA and benchmarks recommended by UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology were considered for selection of benchmarks.

## BASIC INFORMATION

### 1. Focal point institution:

Name of focal point	Ministry of Nature Protection
Address including e-mail address	Republic of Armenia, Yerevan, 375010, 3 building of Government House, 5-floor e-mail: interdpt@rambler.ru fax: (374-10)-58-53-49 Tel. (+374-10) 521099
Websites relating to desertification	<a href="http://www.mnpiacnam">www.mnpiacnam</a> <a href="http://www.nature-ic.com">www.nature-ic.com</a> <a href="http://www.mnp.am">www.mnp.am</a> - in development process

### 2. Status of NAP

Approval Date	Protocol Decision of RA Government 28.03.2002. № 13
Development of NAP	1999-2001
National Action Programme (NAP) has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy (PRSP)	Yes 2003
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	No (currently not adopted)
NAP implementation commenced with or without existence of partnership agreements	No (commenced without existence of cooperation agreement)

### 3. STRAP/RAP is not developed

### 4. Composition of the NCB

	Name of institution	Government	NGO	M / F
	Coordination Body (CB) under the Ministry of Nature Protection (MoNP)	+	----	12/9
1.	MoNP, First Deputy Minister, Char of (CB)	+		m
2.	MoNP, Convention Focal Point, Deputy of CB	+		m
3.	Office of Ministry of Healthcare of RA	+		m
4.	Office of the Ministry of Urban Development of RA	+		m
5.	Office of the Ministry of Agriculture of RA	+		m
6.	The staff of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of RA	+		m
7.	The staff of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of RA	+		f
8.	The staff of the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development of RA	+		m

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