

Other International Activities

CIDA estimates that it invests approximately \$32 million annually in directly combating desertification worldwide. Below are some examples of CIDA programming related to soil management and desertification.

Soil Conservation in Coastal Senegal—The objective of this \$5 million project is to prevent the encroachment of sand dunes from the coast onto the interior lands of Senegal. CIDA is assisting Senegal in undertaking reforestation and soil rehabilitation to prevent and reverse desertification in agriculturally productive areas.

Salinity Control Reclamation Project—CIDA is assisting the government of Pakistan to respond to the problems of waterlogging and salinization of agricultural land resulting from poor drainage of irrigated soil.

Zero-Tillage—CIDA is providing funding for Canadian technical experts to work with farmers in the Passo Fundo region of Brazil to develop appropriate techniques to minimize soil erosion.

Another form of programming that has proven effective in addressing desertification is funding of institutions in support of networks, training, and capacity building. For example, CIDA has provided institutional support to the CILSS and the National Environmental Council in Zambia, and has supported capacity development in environmental impact assessment in Zimbabwe.

IDRC has many regional initiatives concerning desertification. These include a program improving community management of fragile ecosystems in West Africa, which will cover resource management models, research on the regeneration of degraded land resources, and capacity building targeted at self-development community organizations. Others, which relate to the arid and semi-arid lands of eastern and southern Africa, range from building the East African Network on Arid Lands and Resource Management into the Pan-African network to work on the environment and people-friendly commodities.

Challenges and Next Steps

At present, the reporting for anti-desertification activities tends to be anecdotal. There is no commonly accepted methodology. Canada believes a firmer means of assessment is needed. It must be quantitative and qualitative to provide a baseline for future action. Canada has encouraged the donor community to co-operate to establish a methodology that would take into account internationally agreed priorities.

Canada has signed the Desertification Convention and will ratify it as soon as possible. Through CIDA, Canada has already committed \$100 million over the next five years to undertake anti-desertification programming in Africa. This is part of the Urgent Action for Africa initiative under the Convention. Details were discussed at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in January 1995. Canada will continue to take part in these meetings to develop the financial mechanisms for the Convention and the elaboration of rules of procedure for the COP.