

**THIRD NATIONAL REPORT ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATION
CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION [UNCCD]**

REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS

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**PREPARED BY
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TABLE OF CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
UNCCD COUNTRY PROFILE	6
1. STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES.	11
1.1 NATIONAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES AVAILABLE IN OTHER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AREAS	11
1.2 NATIONAL PLANS OR STRATEGIES IN THE FIELD OF COMBATING DESERTIFICATION DEVELOPED SINCE TO THE UNCCD	15
1.3 SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL DESERTIFICATION CONTROL ACTIVITIES	25
2. INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION.	30
2.1 ESTABLISHED AND FUNCTIONAL NATIONAL COORDINATION BODY (NCB)	30
2.2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COHERENT AND FUNCTIONAL DESERTIFICATION CONTROL.	30
2.3 NAP AS PART OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NSDP)	30
2.4 COHERENT AND FUNCTIONAL LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.	31
3 PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES.	32
3.1 EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF ACTORS IN DEFINING NATIONAL PRIORITIES	32
4 CONSULTATIVE PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES AND OTHER INTERESTED ENTITIES.	32
4.1 EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS FOR COOPERATION	32
5 MEASURES TAKEN OR PLANNED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES, IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION, IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF DESERTIFICATION AND MONITOR AND ASSESS THE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT.	32
5.1 ADEQUATE DIAGNOSIS OF THE PAST EXPERIENCES	32
5.2 ACTION PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH PRIORITY FIELDS SET OUT IN THE CONVENTION.	32
5.3 LINKAGE ACHIEVED WITH SUB-REGIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMS (SPRAP AND RAP) ..	32
5.4 DEVELOPMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL OF PROGRAMS OF THE SUB-REGIONAL OR REGIONAL CHARACTER.	33
6 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FROM NATIONAL BUDGETS IN SUPPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AS WELL AS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION INCLUDING THEIR INFLOWS. PROCESSES TO IDENTIFY THEIR REQUIREMENTS, AREAS OF FUNDING AND PRIORITIES.	33
6.1 ADOPTED FINANCIAL MECHANISMS	33
6.2 NAP FINANCING	33
7 REVIEW OF BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS UTILISED TO MEASURE PROGRESS AND AN ASSESSMENT THEREOF.	33

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Focal point institution:

Name of focal point	Osea Bolawaqatabu
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Country specific website relating to desertification	1. ... 2. ... 3. ...

2. Status of NAP (please provide information relevant to the status in your country only):

Date of validation	National Steering Committee on the NAP
NAP review(s)	Every 3 years.
NAP has been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy (PRSP)	Currently underway.
NAP has been integrated into the national development strategy	Currently underway
NAP implementation has started with or without the conclusions of partnership agreements	Yes
Expected NAP validation	Interim - December/2006
Final draft of a NAP exists	No
Formulation of a draft NAP is under way	Yes
Basic guidelines for a NAP have been established	No
Process has only been initiated	Yes
Process has not yet started	-

3. Member of SRAP/RAP (please provide information where appropriate)

	Name of subregional and/or regional cooperation framework	Involvement specifically in topics such as water harvesting techniques, soil erosion etc.
1.	Pacific sub-regional / Asian Region	

2.		
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4. Composition of the NCB (indicate whether it is a Government or civil society organization, and provide information on the representatives' gender):

	Name of institution	Government (√)	NGO (√)	Male/female
1.	Ministry of Agriculture	√		Male
2	Ministry of Lands	√		Male
3	Ministry of Environment	√		Male/Female
4	Ministry for Works	√		Male
5	Ministry of Forests	√		Male
6	Disaster Management Department	√		Male
7	Fiji Sugar Commission			Male
8	NGO representative		√	Female
9	Native Lands Trust Board			Male

5. Total number of NGOs accredited to the process: 7

Has an NGO National Coordinating Committee on desertification been established; if yes, how many NGOs or civil society organizations participate in it?	Yes. Almost all.
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6. Total number of acts and laws passed relating to the UNCCD <u>25</u>

Name up to five most relevant acts and laws and/or regulations

	Title of the law	Date of adoption
1.	Land Conservation & Improvement Act	1953
2	Forestry Act	1953
3.	Agricultural Landlord & Tenant Act	1967
4.	Environment Management Act	2005
5	Drainage Act	1961

7. The consultative process

Number of partnership agreements that have been concluded and/or are being initiated within the framework of the UNCCD (please provide information where appropriate):

	Official title of partnership	Donor(s), international organization(s), and/or agencies of the UN system involved	Date of (expected) conclusion
1.			
2.			

List of consultative meetings on UNCCD implementation (please provide information where appropriate):

	Name of consultative meeting	Date/year	Donor countries involved	International organizations or agencies of the UN system involved
1.				
2.				

Name of country which has taken over the role of *Chef de file*

(please provide information where appropriate): _____

8. Name up to 10 projects currently under implementation which are directly or indirectly related to the UNCCD.

	Name of project	Project implemented within the framework of the NAP/SRAP/RAP? (Yes/No)	Project implemented within the framework of	Timeframe	Partners involved	Overall budget
1.	Sustainable Land Management	Yes	NAP	Ongoing	Fiji Government	\$100,000.00
2	Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific (DSAP)	Yes	SRAP	2004 - 2007	SPC/Fiji Government	\$600,000.00
3	Development of Intergrated Farming Approaches (CROPPRO)	Yes	RAP	2002 - 2007	EU/Fiji Government	\$500,000.00
4	Intergrated Coastal Management (ICM)	Yes	SRAP	Ongoing	USP/Fiji Government	
5	Watershed Management	Yes	NAP	Ongoing	Fiji Government	\$1,000,000.00
6	Climate Change & Vulnerability Adaptation program	Yes	SRAP	2003 - 2009	SPREP/Fiji Government	\$120,000.00
7	Slopeland Farming program	Yes	NAP	Ongoing	Fiji Government	\$100,000.00

8	Tikina Based Profile	Yes	NAP	Ongoing	Fiji Government	\$250,000.00
9	Alternative Livelihood Program	Yes	NAP	2006 - 2011	ADB/Fiji Government	\$6,000,000.00
10	Farming Assistance Scheme	Yes	NAP	Ongoing	Fiji Government	\$4,000,000.00
11	Sustainable Forest Management	Yes	SRAP	1994 - 2007	SPC/GTZ/Fiji Government	\$2,000,000.00

UNCCD Country Profile

(Fiji)

This UNCCD country profile has been provided by: **Mr Osea Bolawaqatabu**

Name of focal point institution/ministry/office: **Ministry of Agriculture**

Date: **4th July, 2006.**

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Biophysical indicators relating to desertification and drought

1. Climate

1.1 Index of aridity¹

1.2 Normal rainfall

Av : 1500 – 3000mm

1.3 Rainfall standard deviation

± 500mm

Sub-national areas	mm
1.Suva (Wet Zone)	2800
2.Sigatoka (Intermediate Zone)	2000
3.Labasa (Dry Zone)	1500

2. Vegetation and land use

2.1 NDVI (normalized difference vegetation index)

2.2 Vegetation cover (% of total land area)

50%

2.3 Land use (percent of total land)

30%

Land use	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2005
Arable crop land	550,000ha	550,000ha
	Irrigated	
	Rainfed	550,000ha
Pasture	173,000ha	150,000ha
Forest and woodland	858,000ha	518,227ha
Other land	249,000ha	517,097ha

2.4 Surface albedo²

¹ The index of aridity is the ratio P/PET; P=precipitation, PET=potential evapotranspiration.

Climatic zone maps to be annexed if available in a scale of 1/million
² Surface albedo map to be annexed if available.

3. Water resources

3.1 Fresh water availability (million m³)

3.2 Fresh water resources per capita (m³)

3.3 Agricultural water use (million m³)

3.4 Industrial water use (million m³)

4. Energy

4.1 Consumption

Industrial	169,107,500 kwh
Commercial	261,987,691kwh
Domestic	172,794,212kwh
Other	97,339,796kwh

Energy use per capita 876 kwh

4.2 Agricultural energy use per hectare (millions of BTU)

Production

4.3 Industry (% of total renewables excluding combustible renewables and waste (% of total supply))

Renewables – Consumption by sector

4.4 Industry (% of total renewable consumption)

4.5 Residential (% of total renewable consumption)

4.6 Agriculture (% of total renewable consumption)

5. Types of land degradation

Type of degradation	1990 - 1999		2000 - 2005	
	Million Ha	Percent of total area	Ha	Percent of total area
Soil Erosion				
Deforestation				
Nutrient Loss	No scientific analysis done			

Note:

Data available only is soil loss in the four major watersheds in tonnes/ha/yr

Rewa - 32.2

Ba, - 69
 Nadi - 81.4
 Sigatoka - 76.9

Source (JICA Study Team 1998)

6. Rehabilitation

Lands under rehabilitation	1990 – 1999	2000 - 2005
Rehabilitation of degraded crop land (km ²)		
Rehabilitation of degraded range land (km ²)		
Rehabilitation of degraded forest (km ²)		

7. People and economy

7.1	Population (total)	840000 _____
	▪ Population: urban (percent of total)	50% _____
	▪ Population: rural (percent of total)	50% _____
7.2	Population growth (annual %)	2% _____
7.3	Life expectancy (years)	66 _____
7.4	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	25.3 _____
7.5	GDP (current US\$)	1.53billion _____
7.6	GNI per capita (current US\$)	4.25 _____
7.7	National poverty rate (% of population)	25% _____
7.8	Crop production (metric tons)	587,156t _____
7.9	Livestock production (metric tons)	429,060 _____

8. Human development

8.1	Primary education completion rate (% age group)	_____ 98% _____
8.2	Number of women in rural development (total number)	_____ 150000 _____
8.3	Unemployment (% of total)	_____ 12.1% _____
8.4	Youth unemployment rate (age 15 – 24)	_____ 80% _____
8.5	Illiteracy total (% age 15 and above)	_____ 5% _____
8.6	Illiteracy male (% age 15 and above)	_____ 5% _____
8.7	Illiteracy female (% age 15 and above)	_____ 5% _____

9. Science and technology

9.1 Number of scientific institutions engaged in desertification-related work (total number) 10

10. Please specify the data sources

Key Statistics by Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics,
 Fiji Meteorological Services.
 IBSRAM Pacificland Publication
 Department of Forestry's publication

Ministry of Agriculture's publication
National Agricultural Census Report, 1991.
Review of Rural Land Use in Fiji Report.
UNDP Report 1998

A new multi-part Government was formed after the May, 2006 elections. The National Strategic Development Plan for the medium term is being drawn up for the period 2006-2008. This is based on the portfolio approach. Not only the government's sustainable development policies and strategies but other sectoral policies, objectives and strategies are also encompassed into it. It gives recognition to three key outcomes related to the Convention in the form of addressing Policy advice, Legislation Changes and Secretariat Services, Environmental Degradation and Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land and Water Resources Management.

The implementation of sustainable integrated development policies are an integral part of it in the true spirit of building partnerships for cooperation between all the appropriate sectors. It reinforces Fiji's commitment as a signatory to the United Nation Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nation Framework for Climate Change (UNFCCC) and United Nation Convention for Bio-Diversity (UNCBD).

Fiji has also mainstreamed sustainable land management issues into most of the key sectors in the National Strategic Development Plan. The unsustainable uses of the resources due to increase in population and demand for land has led to encroachment on marginal to steep lands not only for agriculture but almost all other uses have caused land degradation. There is evidence of increased deforestation, logging, intensive sloping land cultivation and livestock farming. The consequences of these unsustainable practices will be addressed through government's endorsement of several policies and consequently legislation changes as well. Since the government does not have the capability to fund all related activities it has also sought donors for technical and financial assistance for the formulation and implementations of plans and strategies in these areas.

Even though Fiji had ratified the UNCCD in 1998 its first draft of the National Action Program (NAP) was only submitted in 2006. Several multilateral, bilateral and nationally funded scientific and technical activities or initiatives are being undertaken to create synergies in the formulation and implementation of the NAP. But these initiatives and activities can only be successful through financial and technical support by the national government and international partners.

A number of legislations related to the convention are being reviewed and will be amended in due course to meet its objectives. These include the Land Conservation & Improvement Act, Agricultural Landlord & Tenant Act, Forestry Act, Tourism Development Act, Environment Management Act and the Town Planning Act to name a few.

The Land Conservation Board (LCB) of Fiji which is the National Coordinating Body (NCB) charged to exercise general supervision over land and water resources in Fiji is within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture which is also the National Focal Point.

The Environment Management Act will coordinate and facilitate collaboration among all agencies responsible for different legislations related to the use, development and

management of land resources which are administered by different government agencies and have overlapping function.

Fiji realizes the importance of national capacity building across all sectors as this is below a critical mass. Promotion of better education and training and creation of public awareness will be an ongoing activity for quite some. Local and national level Government, non government agencies, civil societies and other stakeholders are all targeted in these programs. Technical and financial assistance to realise these challenges welcome from all partners.

To ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the formulation and implementation of sustainable land management policies, strategies, the participatory and integrated approaches with multi-stakeholders consultation are always promoted.

Fiji has fully supported and participated in initiatives for sustainable land development and management for the region. As such it has participated in numerous national, regional and international projects.

The availability of reliable resource based information is an integral part of all decisions related to sustainable land development and management is vital and Fiji is always striving to improve on it.

1. STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES.

Sustainable development is a strategic choice that must be made by both developing and developed countries. Fiji, like any other developing country, perhaps a precondition for sustainable development is development itself i.e. the path of economic growth must be taken first in order to satisfy citizens' desire for higher living standards, etc...before the conditions for supporting sustainable development can be fully provided. While Fiji's economy develops, it will be necessary to ensure rational utilization of natural resources and protection of the environment.

Although the social and economic development has improved dramatically over the last three decades, considerable disparity still exists in the distribution of the benefits and the demands for land resources use continues to increase. But if the ongoing encroachment of marginal to steep and fragile land continues without conservation measures, Fiji will experience further land degradation, lower yields and increase poverty.

A multi-sectoral planning approach was used to formulate and implement the National Strategic Development Plan for the medium term and it will be the basis for formulating a long-term plan. These efforts will also promote the integration of the three components of sustainable development: economic growth, social development and environment protection, as mutually reinforcing pillars. Poverty eradication and changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are the overarching objectives of sustainable development and essential requirements for promoting environmental protection.

Fiji is part of the global community and has made commitments to global bodies such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation and the European Union as well as to regional bodies such as the Pacific Islands Forum. Of particular importance is the commitment of government to UN Millenium Declaration that was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000. The declaration establishes the millennium development goals to which the Fiji government is committed to achieving as well as the Plan of Implementation of Sustainable Development adopted in Johannesburg in 2002.

1.1 NATIONAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES AVAILABLE IN OTHER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AREAS

1.1.1 National Strategic Development Plan

After the General Election of September, 2001 the elected Government continued to build on the platform to address not only medium term development strategies but also consider the long term strategies in the process. The outcomes of which is the formulation and implementation of the National Strategic Development Plan for 2003 to 2005 and its revision for 2005 to 2007.

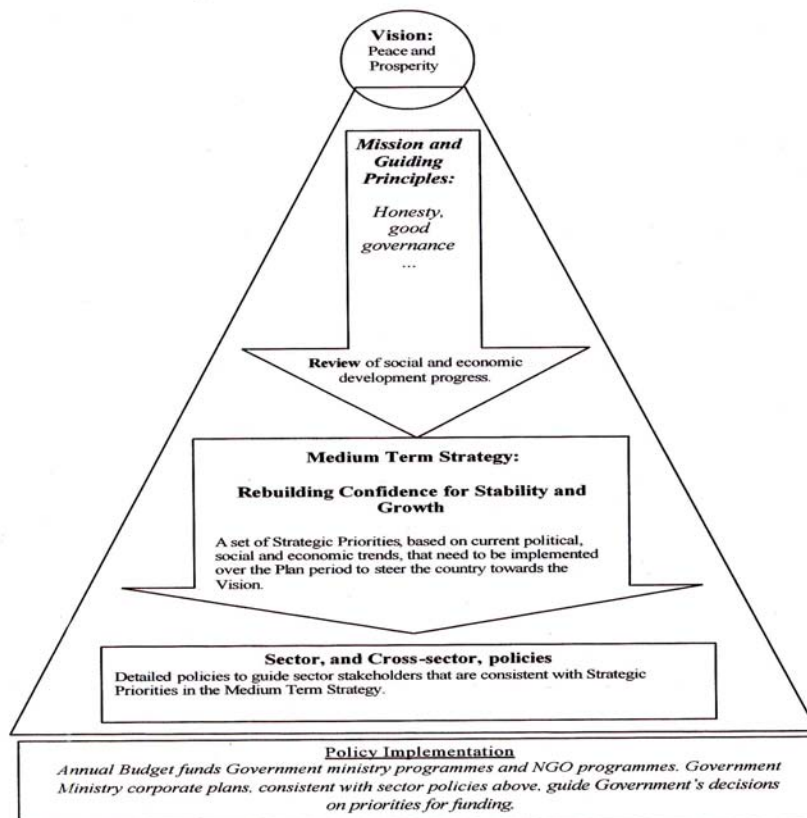
The NSD Plan sets the stage for the future investments in infrastructure, capacity building and resources management which needs to be in place to take advantage of the opportunities while improving quality of life and avoiding degradation of the environment over the long term.

The Plan is a manifestation of policies and strategies assembled together by the Government through participatory dialogue and consultations with relevant private sectors and civil societies in the country. Providing a holistic approach on the key economic, social, environment and political fundamentals that are required by any Government to safeguard and promote.

The National Strategic Development Plan shows the government’s commitment to advancing the country socially and economically. It ensures that development serves the needs of this generation while conserving resources for the future. One of the Guiding principles of the NSDP is environmental sustainability.

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The strategic plan covers the planning pyramid down to the sector policy level. The follow chart shows how government’s policies and plans are linked to it vision. The vision, mission and guiding principles provide the long term direction and the method government will adapt to move the country. The review of social and economic development progress pinpoints the main issues that government needs to address in the medium term. Policies at the sector level and policies for critical cross-sector issues are consistent with the strategic priorities in the medium term strategy.



Policies to address social economic development challenges

Law and Order

The preservation of law and order is a pre-requisite for sustained socio-economic development. Respect for law and order creates an environment conducive for investment by ensuring the protection of rights to physical and intellectual property rights, personal safety and security for all. The government is committed to strengthening law and order.

Good governance

The importance of good governance, public accountability and transparency of actions is a critical foundation for sustainable growth and development.

Good governance requires the basis institutions of the State to execute their functions in the line with their constitutional provisions, and to be seen to be doing so. To this end, Government has endeavored to ensure the independence of the legislature and judiciary in keeping the principle of the separation of powers. It recognizes its independence and its responsibility in executing its functions impartially and transparently to establish clearer rules and regulations to limit the influence of special vested interest.

Poverty Alleviation

Both Government and NGOs undertake poverty alleviation programs. Recent indications are that poverty has increased significantly. As a response to this, the government has increased its assistance to poverty alleviation in upgrading programs in all areas. The vicious cycle of poverty can easily be inherited by subsequent generations. Breaking that cycle is a challenge for government.

Health and Sanitation

The improvement of people's health is an integral part of the socio-economic development of the country. The quality of life in Fiji, as measured by partial health indicators, compares favorably with other neighboring countries in the region. A health management reform program is being implemented with the aim at decentralizing service administration and is giving more autonomy and responsibility to divisional and sub-divisional hospitals. In the medium term, the undertaking for Government will be and increased commitment to funding health promotion and disease prevention and ensuring basic health services are accessible and affordable to all.

Education

Education and training is a priority in nation building as it is the medium for nurturing a well educated, high skilled, motivated labor force, as well as responsible citizens with high moral and ethical values.

The education sector is faced by one of the highest emigration rates of professionals. There is a marked discrepancy between rural and urban education standards. Fiji needs to improve the quality and delivery of education at all levels. Government is focusing on raising education standards in rural schools to be on par with urban schools. And also education needs to be aligned to technology developments and future skill demands such as Information Technology.

Improving Rural Living Standards

Despite an absolute decline in rural population over the last decade, 54 percent of Fiji's populations still reside in rural areas. Utility services, though available in rural areas, are at a higher cost, which adversely affects rural incomes. There are marked discrepancies in the quality and level of health, education, and infrastructure, including irregular shipping services, inadequate water supply, poor state of rural roads and lack of electricity and telecommunications link. These directly affect rural business development and employment opportunities. The government is concerned about the inequitable distribution of resources amongst the rural and urban community. The challenge for the government is to make rural funding allocations to ensure development is complementary and sustainable.

Affirmative Action Programs

The key goal of Government is to address this need through affirmative action for indigenous as well as other disadvantage communities. The areas that will prominently contribute to their prosperity lie in the development of infrastructure in rural and island communities, access to improvement of skills in business, education, and better health services. The advancement of women's interests and the achievement of gender equality is fully realized.

The government has enacted the Family Law Bill to promote the family environment where love, caring, sharing and other good values and virtues are practiced. More targeted approaches are being made to assist the disadvantage to have a greater involvement in the economy to be able to reap the benefits of economic growth.

Urban Population Growth

The perceived prospects of jobs, income generation, better access to medical facilities and better education has led to an unsustainable high rate of urban migration. The challenge for government in the medium term is to manage the causes of rural-urban drift, promote rural development to address urban social problem.

Employment Opportunities

High levels of emigration after the coup have put the pressure on the country's skill generating institution. This hampers the growth in informal sectors by shortages in managerial, professional and skilled trade occupations. The unemployment rate has risen substantially and one of the major challenges of the government is securing decent jobs for these job seekers.

Environment Vulnerability

Fiji enjoys a tropical climate that allows for the production of a wide range of foods for both local consumption and exports and provides one of the basic attractions for the tourist industry, which to a large extent is attributed to natural resource activities (agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining). Fiji's generally benign climate is, however, interposed by climatic extremes in the form of hurricanes, cyclones, floods and droughts. These extremes have serious economic, social and environmental consequences that require prudent macro economic management, proper land use planning and watershed management.

Fiji faces some serious environmental problems that are exacerbated by the ineffectiveness with which they are being treated. Fiji is too small and vulnerable to ignore such problems for any length of time. Particular problems include the degradation of land resources; climate changes, increasing risk of flooding and inundation to coastal settlements, unsustainable exploitation of marine resources, waste management problems, air and water pollution and the social ills and environmental impact of urbanization which undermines people's quality of life.

The National Strategic Development Plan consists of policy objectives, strategies and performance indicators to guide the government and private sector towards a sustainably developed Fiji.

1.2 NATIONAL PLANS OR STRATEGIES IN THE FIELD OF COMBATING DESERTIFICATION DEVELOPED SINCE TO THE UNCCD

The first and second National Reports on UNCCD Implementation were submitted in 2000 and 2002 respectively, and covers the areas well on plans and strategies prior to the UNCCD but the following plans and strategies have been taken on board since then to supplement all other developments and government commitments.

Land is an important factor in the development of the economy. Previous studies have emphasized the critical role of land tenure system, land use and its management in the development of Fiji's economy. The increasing population over the past 40 years has increased demand for agricultural land and consequently has put a significant amount of pressure on arable land. This has resulted in land degradation, reduced productivity, lower yields, reduced food security and an increase in poverty. Much of Fiji's arable land has been taken up for housing, industrial and commercial developments. With competing demands for limited land resources, the government has now endorsed the Rural Land Use policy to provide framework for the land development in the country.

Government recognizes the important role of land and its targeted outcomes in the SDP are:-

1. Environmental Rehabilitation and Degradation.
2. Creating livelihoods through small and micro enterprise development
3. Sustainable community livelihoods through competitive exports and efficient food security
4. Sustainable Land and Water Resources Management

Sectoral policies include:

Land Resources Development & Management

To ensure sound land development, utilization and management, the following strategies are incorporated in the SDP

- ✓ Promotion of the Rural Land Use Policy at provincial Level.

- ✓ Enforcement of the Land Conservation and Improvement Act
- ✓ Ensuring sustainable land utilization & management practices
- ✓ Promoting sound land use planning.
- ✓ Promote the organization of community groups involving all stakeholders in different localities for resource conservation.
- ✓ Promote strategic partnership.
- ✓ Develop and enhance land resource information system [GIS]
- ✓ Education, training and awareness on Sustainable Land Management
- ✓ Legislation review and amendment

Environment

Government has enacted the Environmental Management Act in 2005 to provide the framework for the management of our environment. The following strategic policies have been adopted;

- ✓ To minimize degradation of natural resources and protect biodiversity
- ✓ To maintain a healthy and clean environment through the reduction and elimination of pollution and proper management of wastes
- ✓ To raise awareness of the importance of sustainable development
- ✓ Forestry: Fiji is a member of the International Tropical Timber Organization, committing Fiji totally to sustainable management and development of exotic and indigenous tropical forests with the certification of tropical timber for trading.
- ✓ Initiate environmental audit in organizations' operations.

Culture and Heritage

Integral to the development of the nation is the conservation, development and promotion of the indigenous identity. Cultural heritage sites and traditional arts should be conserved and protected. There is a need to think culture and its impact on the environment. Local ecological knowledge and traditional management practices, as part of the local systems of values and meanings, have proved to be environmentally sustainable.

The following strategic policies are been addressed;

- ✓ To protect, preserve and manage Fiji's cultural heritage
- ✓ Promote conservation and resource development that emphasizes partnership with local landowners.

Disaster Mitigation and Management

Government policy has shifted away from emphasizing only quick emergency response to disasters. Increasing emphasis is now put on a comprehensive approach to disaster reduction including community preparedness and disaster mitigation, and the integration of the impact of disasters into national development planning.

The following strategies are incorporated and will be addressed in future;

- ✓ To mainstream Disaster Management into the national development decision making process
- ✓ To invest in infrastructure to mitigate the impact of disasters
- ✓ To improve community awareness of risk, preparedness and response

Sugar

The sugar industry is currently facing a period of crisis that could have a major negative effect on macroeconomic and social stability. The industry lacks appropriate incentives to improve production efficiency, which results in low quality of both sugarcane and sugar produced. It is the largest land user with many small uneconomical holdings. The following strategies are been addressed:

- ✓ To review and restructure the sugar industry into commercially viable, efficient and sustainable industry
- ✓ To ensure land access and availability for the industry
- ✓ To diversify the range and production of sugar by products
- ✓ To increase sugarcane production from farms

Non- Sugar Crops and Livestock

The performance of this sector has been poor over the last decade. With the goal of sustainable community livelihoods through competitive exports and efficient food security and improvements to agricultural crop production is planned through;

- ✓ To accelerate agricultural diversification into areas of competitive advantage
- ✓ To promote food security
- ✓ To ensure sustainable development in non-sugar agriculture.

Forestry

Fiji's forest resources cover an area of approximately 870,000 ha or about 47 percent of total land area. Plantation forests, mainly pine and mahogany, account for 13 percent of

total forest area. Deforestation is becoming a threat to Fiji's biodiversity. Increasingly, selective felling of trees will be encouraged through the strict enforcement of the National Code of logging practice and the attainment of "green certification" under the Forest Stewardship Council. Sustainability issues as well as good forest management practices would be addressed through training targeted at landowners.

The following strategies have been taken on board by the Ministry.

- ✓ To provide the appropriate institutional and physical infrastructure to support the development of the sector.
- ✓ To ensure sustainable development and management of forestry resources.
- ✓ Promotion of community-owned and managed forestry processing and value adding facilities based on indigenous forests and community owned plantations.
- ✓ Promotion of the production and export of value added timber products.

Tourism

Government is committed to further developing the sector and tapping its potential to the fullest extent possible. The focus will be on expanding mainstream tourism and on promoting sustainable ecotourism development. Efforts will also be directed at increasing the participation of resource owners in the industry in particular ecotourism. Ecotourism is considered the most viable means of spreading the tourist dollar beyond the industry's traditional areas of concentration and of increasing the retention of the tourist dollar. Ecotourism also provides enormous potential for the involvement of indigenous Fijians and Rotumans.

- ✓ To increase economic contribution and the retention of the tourist dollar.
- ✓ To increase resource owner's participation in the tourism industry.
- ✓ To promote Human Resources Development in tourism.
- ✓ To promote sustainable eco-tourism development and public awareness at all levels of society.

Minerals and Groundwater Resources

Geosciences, particularly its application in the exploration and development of Fiji's mineral and groundwater resources, has the potential to make a significant contribution to economic growth through: i) increased assessment and development of onshore and offshore mineral and energy (hydrocarbons, geothermal energy) resources; ii) development of sustainable water supplies for urban, rural and outlying islands; and iii) the development of additional bottled or "mineral" water projects. Geoscientific information also assists in the mitigation of natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides. Realizing the full potential of the sector means taking measures to address the sector's constraints. In particular, the legislative framework needs to be addressed to cover the risks of land tenure and access, environmental monitoring, health and safety issues, security of tenure for exploration and mining titles and water resources.

- ✓ To ensure security of land tenure and occupational health and safety standards.
- ✓ To increase public awareness of resource exploration and development.
- ✓ To ensure sustainable development of groundwater resources.

1.2.1 Watershed Management Master Plan

Although several studies have been done, none have been implemented due to funding constraints. Only bits and pieces have been taken on board by relevant stakeholders on an adhoc basis. In 2004 the Department of Land and Water Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Resettlement proposed to start a flood and drought control project in one of the watersheds in Fiji. This project is being undertaken in the Nadi watershed under government's capital funding program due to the impact of a drought in extremes dry weather and regular flooding due to sudden heavy rainfalls. However, it is not a complete management plan for the whole watershed but just the building of retention dams for water storage in three sites for flood control and irrigation purposes.

1.2.2 National Natural Disaster Management Plan

There is an urgent need to address the early warning system on disaster preparedness in the National Natural Disaster Management Plan. The plan seeks to strengthen coordination, collaboration and resources mobilization amongst stakeholders in the prevention, mitigation and handling of natural disasters.

The Department of Meteorology Fiji serves on a regional scale providing weather forecasting and tropical cyclone warning services to many other countries and a vast area of the tropical South-west Pacific. National Weather Forecasting Centre is responsible for providing weather forecasting and warning services for **Fiji, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna, and special advisory services for Samoa and Vanuatu**

The Disaster Management Department has adopted Comprehensive Hazard and Risk Management (CHARM) implementation guide after Cabinet endorsement in 2002. It is vigorously promoting education and awareness on disaster mitigation and encourages all stakeholders to incorporate actions to address these strategies in their programs..

1.2.3 Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment and Strategic Plan

Fiji is a signatory to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Program (PICCAP) on this includes information on climate change vulnerability and adaptation implementation policies and strategies.

National Implementation Strategy on the Framework of the Convention has been completed and the Department of Environment is working towards the activities to be incorporated into stakeholder work programs. A number of NGO's are also engaged in the activities but the funding is quite limited.

1.2.4 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)

The FBSAP was prepared through the Department of Environment which is also the National Focal Point for the United Nation Convention for Bio- Diversity in 1999. After consultation with different stakeholders at different levels from local to national, a strategy was formulated on conserving the genetic, species and ecosystem diversity of the country. It focuses on six focal areas;

- ✓ community support-awareness, involvement and ownership
- ✓ improving knowledge
- ✓ developing protected areas
- ✓ species conservation
- ✓ control of invasive species and
- ✓ capacity building and strengthening

The strategy observes that Fiji has only a rudimentary system of protected areas and that it is time to create "site of national significance program" that would provide legal protection and establish management plans. It also identifies institutional and capacity building as a very vital aspect of the commitment.

1.2.5 Mangrove Management Plan

The review of this plan has been taken on the Department of Environment's strategic plan. It is an important document to guide all foreshore developments in the country since it will impact on the decisions taken on applications for foreshore reclamation of mangrove to the Department of Land and Surveys

1.2.6 Fiji Tourism Development Act

The Fiji Tourism Development Plan (FTDP) needed a review due to recent development trends in Fiji. The reviewed FTDP will take into consideration studies carried out on the industry. It looks at the physical and infrastructural needs and the services required for Ministry of Tourism has initiated a multi stakeholder consultation on this and the Draft Tourism Development Bill is undergoing a scrutinizing process by all stakeholders to enact it as a legislation to reform the law applying to the licensing of hotels and to otherwise promote a sound tourism industry in Fiji by the formulation of beneficial policies, the enforcement of industry standards, the sustainable development of tourism activities and the streamlining of regulatory processes applying to tourism businesses, and for related purposes.

The new legislation is aimed at improving socially, environmentally and economically friendly forms of tourism.

1.2.7 Environmental Management Act, 2005

The Department of Environment proposed the Sustainable Development Bill in 1996 but after numerous discussions, and advice of the cabinet it was renamed to the Environment Management Act. The strategy was to enact the less controversial components first and these were reviewed. As a result the Environment Management Act was enacted in 2005. The Department of Environment has been vigorously promoting the Act. Although it is in enforce, the pace is slow and most national administrative departments and experts will continue to use the *de facto* environmental management framework. Furthermore they are now looking at the regulations required for the effective implementation of the Act.

One of the main provisions of the Act is the formation of the National Environment Council and Environmental Units in all relevant stakeholder organisations to carry out environment impact assessments of all development proposals.

It is hoped that this act will improve collaboration and coordination among all environment related legislations for the efficient and effective sustainable development of Fiji's natural resources.

Among the main provisions of the Act are the Pollution Control and Waste Management legislations, The Act stipulates the establishment of a National Environment Council and Environmental Units in all stakeholders' organizations to carry out Environment Impact Assessments. The principles of the UNCCD, UNCBD and UNFCC are all inter-related and the Act wishes to address this. The policies are as follows;

- ✓ Sustainable Coastal Management Policy
- ✓ Sustainable Mineral Resources Development Policy
- ✓ Sustainable Forestry Development Policy
- ✓ Sustainable Agricultural Development Policy
- ✓ National Biodiversity, Conservation and Protected Area Policy and
- ✓ Sustainable Resources Management of Native and State Land.

1.2.8 Amendment of Land Conservation & Improvement Act

This Act was introduced in 1953 and has had five amendments since then. As the name suggests it was intended “**to make provisions for the conservation and improvement of land and water resources**”. The Act had noble intentions but lacked the necessary personnel and financial resources to be effectively enforced. Presently the Land Use Section of Ministry of Agriculture is providing the secretariat functions from its own resources.

Over the years the demand for land from various land uses has led to the use of marginal and unsuitable lands. This is leading to mismanagement and degradation of land leading to desertification.

The Land Conservation Board has proposed amendments aimed at strengthening the Act as well as making it more practical and relevant to today's changing environment. The

intention of the original Act would be truly reflected by renaming it to “Land and Water Resources Management Act”. The composition of the Land Conservation Board needs to be increased to give a wider representation to the growing number of stakeholders. Also recommended is the establishment of full time Secretariat Office with physical financial and human resources. The functions of the Board will be widened to incorporate the formulation and supervision of a National Land Use Plan. Having a plan and knowing what a particular area can be used for will encourage education and effective promotion of environmental conservation.

1.2.9 National Rural Land Use Policy

Fiji did not have an integrated rural land use policy or a national land use plan to ensure wise resource allocation and management in the rural sector. It is of critical importance to have one to cover all land based resources such as forest, agriculture, minerals, rivers and streams. The current administrative and institutional framework responsible for the resources allocation and management is highly sectoralised.

With the assistance of the South Pacific Community/ Pacific German (GTZ) Forestry/Agroforestry Program a review on the rural land use in Fiji began in 1998. This resulted in the formulation of a coherent set of National Rural Land Use Policies which was endorsed by government in 2005. The National Rural Land Use Policies are as follows;

- Increased public awareness that; the land resources, including soil, water and flora are interdependent and must be managed in an integrated way, and individual users and community have responsibility for preventing and mitigating land degradation.
- Increased public recognition of the values of trees and forests
- A regulatory framework for the protection and sustainable development and management of rural land resources that recognizes;
 - ✓ Sound land husbandry practices to maintain and improve soil qualities,
 - ✓ Planning process address causes of land degradation as well as symptoms,
 - ✓ Indigenous forests will be protected and managed for their biodiversity and conservation values,
 - ✓ Plantation forests both hardwoods and pine, will be considered in terms of sustaining site quality and
 - ✓ Protection of the environmental and management of natural resources is carried out in an appropriate and ecologically sustainable manner.
- Appropriate mechanisms to protect farmlands and forests from fires, pest and pathogens.
- Research, training and education to;
 - ✓ improve land assessment an evaluation
 - ✓ land husbandry practices

- ✓ farm and forest productivity and values and
- ✓ land use planning.
- Institutional reform to support and enhance capabilities in all rural sector activities.
- Protection of water and soil values.
- Good governance strategies to expand and diversify sustainable economic activity, increase employment, add value to earnings and promote social development goals.

The awareness on this policy is being pursued and stakeholders are encouraged to incorporate these into their programs

1.2.10 Review of Forestry Policy

Careful planning and management on the use of Fiji's forests are important to ensure that the values supplied by forests are not jeopardized by the equally important need for development. The balancing of the need for environmental protection and economic developments can only be achieved through sustainable forest management principles and practices appropriate for Fiji.

While there is a particular focus on the natural forest resources, the management of man-made plantations of exotic pines and mahogany need to be kept under close scrutiny to ensure that planning and regulations ensure the harvest of this natural resource can be sustained and increased in order to provide Fiji's timber needs and supply exports.

The decline in log production over the past decade from both indigenous and plantation forests has been continual. Fiji's natural forests which once seemed limitless is suffering from obvious consequences of over cutting and this would likely to continue in the absence of detailed forest inventories and the determination of sustainable annual rate of cut for specific forest areas. Due to unclear guidelines and ineffective controls timber has been harvested unwisely.

Within the framework of the Rural Land Use Policy for Fiji, a forest policy needs to be couched. The current Forest Policy was framed by the Legislative Assembly in 1950. A Forest Act was enacted in 1953. Fiji has benefited from this policy for many years, however, the policy is outmoded. The conditions under which it was devised is quite different from those pertaining today. There was a need to redefine the Forest Policy to reflect the adoption of appropriate sustainable forest management systems to ensure the full and successful implementation of current strategic directions and landowner aspirations on the management of their resources.

As a result Fiji's Forest Policy was reviewed in 2004 with the draft being circulated to all stakeholders for comments before being finalized. The principle goal is 'to ensure the sustainable management of Fiji's forests to achieve greater social and economic benefit for current and future generations. Its objectives, policies and activities are directed towards forest management, conservation, development, utilization, research, extension, training, education and administration. The Department of Forestry is awaiting cabinet endorsement before they can start looking at the legislations.

1.2.11 Water Policy

The demand for water is increasing and becoming more complex. The growth of population and the economy is putting pressure on the quality of water resources. Fiji is continuing to develop water sources to provide water for essential domestic needs and water must also be available for agriculture, commercial and industrial, mining and tourism, to promote the growth of economy.

In 2005 Fiji developed its Water Resources Policy in recognition of the increasing threats and competing demands for water resources of Fiji Islands. Water management is important for the social well being of people, its economic development and the continuing quality of the environment. The policy covers all freshwater resources of Fiji, both groundwater and surface water and acknowledges that freshwater can affect the quality of coastal and marine waters. Not only industrial waste and sewage but other widespread sources of pollution can affect the quality of water and thereby damage native fisheries and aquatic life in streams and rivers.

Water resources use and management mechanisms are needed to control the taking of water. The policy states goals and principles to guide water management in Fiji. It also identifies the most important elements of water reform to be considered in the next two years.

1.2.12 Formulation of National Action Plan to Combat Desertification

Although it is long overdue, Fiji's Draft National Action Plan on Combating Desertification was submitted in 2006. The purpose of the national action plan is to identify the factors contributing to desertification / degradation and practical measures needed to combat it. Further it seeks the commitment of the Countries Parties in ensuring the mainstreaming of this into the individual country's strategic plans.

Fiji's Nap provides for the following:-

- Long term strategies to combat desertification / degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought, emphasizing implementation and integration into national policies for sustainable development.
- Allows for modifications in response to changing circumstances and is sufficiently flexible at the local level to cope with different socio-economic, biological and geo-physical conditions.
- Gives particular attention to the implementation of preventative measures affected areas and areas with degradation potential.
- Enhancement of national capabilities in national climatological / meteorological and hydrological monitoring as a means of providing early warning systems for drought.

- Promotion of policies and strengthening of institutional frameworks to promote partnerships, corporation and coordination between the government, donors, local populations and groups and facilitates information and technology access to all.
- Provides for effective participation of government, local populations both men and women, non-government organizations, particularly resource users and their representative organizations in policy planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national action plans.

1.3 SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL DESERTIFICATION CONTROL ACTIVITIES

Fiji has already formulated its National Action Program but it is only a draft. The delays in its finalization will not impede on its partial implementation since the country has already been involved in a number of scientific and technical activities or initiatives in most sectors. In order for NAP to be fully implemented all the activities need to be further reinforced financially from external sources since it is beyond the capacity of the government. Otherwise the implementation will be prolonged further. Some of the activities and initiatives are as follows;

1.3.1 Development of integrated farming approaches for sustainable crop production in environmentally- constrained systems in the Pacific region (CROPPRO Project).

The introduction and objectives of this project has already been given in previous reports. However, due to the difficulties faced during data collection and the unavailability of complete data, the project was extended for another 2 years. In Fiji, only one small watershed was selected in the wet zone. To address this work package objective, the following research tasks were undertaken:

- Installation of flumes at the outlet of the watershed for monitoring of water discharges and collection of water samples
- Determination of sediment collected discharge sample
- Data analysis and interpretation.

The measured data are being used to run and calibrate LISEM, a physically based erosion model. It will be used in this project to predict erosion, calculate total erosion for the whole catchment and identify source areas contributing most to soil losses.

Currently one officer is undergoing training in the use of LISEM program so this projects could be extrapolated in other agro-ecological zones.

1.3.2 Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific(DSAP)

Development of Sustainable Agriculture (DSAP) is a regional project being implemented in 10 Pacific Island Countries. The project is funded by the European Union and its main purpose is to increase sustainable agricultural production on farm families in participating countries. The main strategy for achieving this emphasis is the dissemination of technologies based on the farmer livelihood needs and building national institutional capacity in the use of participatory approaches in sustainable agriculture development.

The key target outputs are as follows;

- Improved systems to identify farmers production problems and solutions
- Appropriate technologies identified.
- Participatory extensional skills upgraded for National Research and Extension staff
- Appropriate technologies scaled up and promoted.
- Enhanced capabilities in extension communications.

1.3.3 Promotion of Land care Concept

The successful implementation of the National Rural Land Use Policy and Plan depends very much on a delivery framework that combines top down and bottom up approach to facilitate communication between communities and government agencies. There is a need for a coordinating mechanism whereby government programs are complemented and strengthened by activities of the groups of stakeholder at community level.

At community levels resources owners and users need to be organized and empowered to plan and manage their resources, in order to provide the bottom up input necessary in the interactive resources management. A mechanism to facilitate this, is through the group based concept where the resources owners and users are organized into local resources management groups, widely known internationally as the Landcare Groups.

The Landcare Concept is based on participatory community development approach. Experience has shown that technology alone has not improved the management of natural resources. The emphasis has therefore been placed on institutional strengthening, local decision making and building the self reliance of the local communities.

Fiji is fortunate that it has a social structure which embrace and enhance the formation of such a movement at settlement, village, district and provincial basis. But for the resources users such as the lease holders, they need a lot of awareness and education to strengthen their participation and supportive role. The need to integrate and work together as a team for the benefit of the country is quite imminent.

After two very successful workshop on “Landcare in Fiji” themed, “Strengthened partnerships for the sustainable management of land resources,” where it was aimed at addressing a long standing concern within government structure, which is the lack of coordination between government agencies, and in this particular case, agencies operating in the land utilization and development arena. There is also poor communication and collaboration between government and non governmental organizations (NGO’s) with understaffed government agencies not fully utilizing the grassroots outreach capacity of NGO’s.

The success of the workshop is reflected in the formation of a National Landcare Working Committee This committee has the important mandate to facilitate consultations for the development of a framework that promotes sustainable land management through the coordination and collaboration of all involved agencies with the participation of the local communities. The committee has met several times with representative from, Native Land

Trust Board, Dept. of Environment, Forestry Dept., Ministry for Agriculture, Sugar and Land Resettlement (MASLR), Ministry of Provincial Development (NDM0), University of the South Pacific, EU/SPC/DSAP and the SPC/GTZ PGRFP, Ministry of Works, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Representative of the NGO Landcare Steering Committee.

A NGO Landcare Steering Committee was also formed with members consisting of the various NGO's such as the World Wide Fund, PCDF, Conservation International, FPSI, Live and Learn and other environmentally based NGO's.

1.3.4 Land Use Capability Classification

As reported earlier the system adopted needs to be reviewed based on the present day land use and land availability problems. Nonetheless, it is being slowly incorporated into all the planning for land development of any sort by any sector or for any land use. As such it has become an ongoing activity of the Land Use Planning Section of Ministry of Agriculture.

1.3.5 Geographical Information Systems

Building resource information databank.

In order to keep ourselves abreast with developments in information technology and to increase the efficiency of information availability for planning and decision making, the section has a GIS unit established to capture all land resource based data digitally. The unit works continuously on data acquisition, capture, conversion, manipulation, integration and building databases on land resource based information to produce quality and timely information. These data will be used to provide better and faster information for decision-making at various levels. The staffs also assist in networking developments for the department. Major Mapping Work

The GIS unit also facilitates mapping requirement from various Divisions within Agriculture and other Institutions. We had been able to provide professional mapping output to all requests given to

1.3.6 Participatory District / Tikina Based Land Use Plan:

Since 1999 the Land Use Section has adopted a participatory land use planning approach as part of all programs. This is done in close consultation and collaboration with the resource owners and the community, and all other stakeholders such as Extension Division of Ministry of Agriculture, Native Land Trust Board, Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Ministry of Fisheries and Forests, civil societies such as the WWF and the Foundation of the People of the South Pacific (USP), etc.

This would be the basis of future integrated or holistic approach to land resources planning, development and management programs. It emphasizes the importance of a bottom up approach to land use planning and one of its main objectives is to establish local land care groups, to empower communities to efficiently and effectively develop and manage their resources and create land stewardship amongst the resources owners and users.

1.3.7 Awareness and Training on Sustainable Land Management.

The Land Use Section of LRPD, the Research and Extension Division of MAFF/MASLR, other Ministries, NGOs and civil society such as the Foundation of the People of the South Pacific, University of the South Pacific, WWF and others have jointly carried out awareness and training on land degradation, disseminating information on sustainable development and transferring of low cost sustainable land management technologies for sloping land farmers as well as for the school children and other stakeholders. The long-term vision is to set up land husbandry/care groups in various communities in Fiji to empower communities to oversee the sustainable development and management of their natural resources.

1.3.8 Transfer of Sustainable Land Management Technologies (SLMT):

Demonstration plots are to be established in different watersheds and districts of Fiji as models and assist in the sections training and awareness activities in promoting sustainable land management practices. These demonstration plots or model farms show the different types of good and adoptable land husbandry practices suitable for Fiji and assist the section in training locality farmers in promoting such practices. The present project will try to establish as many as possible in different locations accessible to farmers. It will publish and distribute a number of brochures, leaflets, posters, user manuals and conduct field days, farmer trainings and workshops for all land users.

The technology identified for Sloping Land Management in Fiji is the use of vetiver grass, pineapples, agro-forestry leguminous tree species, crop rotation and fallow improvement across the slope to minimize soil erosion and improve soil fertility. This will lead to a sustainable agricultural production and minimize land degradation. The section together with extension officers identifies and assists interested farmers in establishing on farm contour hedgerows and for the farmers to carry on from there with extension advice and help.

The Department assists in the setting up of community based nurseries, establish and maintain nurseries at Nacocolevu Research Station, Koronivia Research Station and Seaqaqa Research Station to cater for planting materials required for land conservation work. These nurseries will always have planting materials of citrus seedlings, agro forestry seedlings such as fruit trees and nitrogen fixing trees and pineapples suckers to be used on the demo plots and conservation farms.

1.3.9 Farming Assistance and Land Resettlement Program:

The Department of Land Resources Planning and Development is also involved in a program which assists farmers whose agricultural leases have expired and wish to continue with agriculture within Fiji. .

Here the Department is responsible for :

- ✓ the coordination of sustainable land development and management of Fiji's land resources and the amendment of the Land Conservation and Improvement Act
- ✓ the Farming Assistance Program which was approved by the Fiji Government Cabinet in November,2000. It is aimed at assisting the incoming landowner farmer and outgoing tenants of expired ALTA leases.

A total of 13,140 leases will expire between 1997 and 2028. The exodus of people from the agricultural sector will not only have an adverse effect on this sector but also poses other social and economic problems for the government. There is already evidence of urban squatter problems. If the government does not find a solution to this effect, additional social and economic problems will burden the nation. This will have a drastic effect on the already problematic infrastructure in Fiji's towns and cities and the creation of more new squatter settlements.

The assistance is given in the form of grants of up to F\$10,000.00(US\$5,000.00). The FAS has five different forms of assistance which are as follows;

- ✓ Rural Residential Lease, where the government pays for the lease premium of not more than F\$10,000.00(US\$5,000.00) for the residential sites where the farmer had built his house, in the property he or she had leased for the past 30 years or so before the lease expires.
- ✓ Lease Renewal, where the farmer or ALTA tenant have been given an extension to his or her lease holding for another thirty years, the government pays for the premium of the lease of up to F\$10,000.00(US\$5,000.00).
- ✓ Replacement farmer, where the government gives assistance to the Fijian landowner farmer to develop the reverted property for sugar cane or for other crops.
- ✓ Resettled farmer, where the government gives assistance to ex-ALTA tenant farmer by providing alternative land through its resettlement program. The government has purchased freehold land and had developed infrastructure (roads, electricity and water supply) as well as subdividing the land for each tenant. The land is transferred the State.

The Department of Land Resources Planning and Development also has a land development program to resettle these evicted tenants.

This program is expected to continue until an amicable solution is derived, through the negotiation between the government and the main political parties in the country, to resolve the relevant land tenure legislations.

1.3.10 Integrated Coastal Resources Management

The Institute of Applied Science (IAS) of the University of the South Pacific based in Fiji, the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center, USA and the Government of Fiji are working in partnership and have initiated a program known as the Integrated Coastal Management for Fiji.

The coastal areas of island nations are of vital importance since most of the urban centers and vast majority of villages are located on the shore, along with much of the population, agriculture, industry and commerce are located here. The result of rapid coastal development and increasing utilisation of coastal resources has resulted in various impacts on the coastal environment problems which includes; loss of habitat and biodiversity, inappropriate solid waste management, mismanagement of chemical wastes, pollution of air and water ways, land degradation etc.

The initiative includes the involvement of all government ministries such as the Ministry of National Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Resettlement, Ministries of

Fisheries and Forests, Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Works and Energy, the Non Government Agencies like the Native Land Trust Board, National Trust, Ports Authority of Fiji, Civil Societies such as the World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF), Foundation of the People of the South Pacific (FSP), University of the South Pacific(USP), resources owners and users.

2. INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION.

2.1 Established and Functional National Coordination Body (NCB)

The Land Conservation Board of Fiji has been delegated the role of National Coordinating Body (NCB) which is charged to exercise general supervision over land and water resources in Fiji, under the Land Conservation Improvement Act of 1953. The Land Use Section of Department of Land Resources Planning and Development of MASLR, provides the secretarial services to the Board as well as technical support in the areas of land resources planning, development and management. While the Land and Water Resources Division of MASLR provides technical services on agriculture water management and drought mitigation under the Drainage Act, 1961 and Irrigation Act, 1974. The Division also provides the Secretarial services to the three Drainage Boards (Western Division Drainage Board, Central Division Drainage Board and the Labasa Northern) Drainage Board) in Fiji. The Land Conservation Board meets on a quarterly basis.

2.2 Institutional Framework for Coherent and Functional Desertification Control.

2.2.1 Land Conservation Improvement Act Amendments

The proposed amendment widens the membership of the Land Conservation Board to include the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. The amendment also includes the need to have independent human and financial resources for the Board to be able to be more efficient and effective in carrying out its function independently and more importantly its commitment to the conservation of land and water resources of Fiji.

2.3 NAP as Part of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)

Although the Fiji Government has not officially finalized on the NAP, a number of components have already been mainstreamed into the NSDP based on the government's ability to fund these.

Government understands its obligation to the UNCCD and in its quest for the sustainable development and management of its resources, key sectoral development issues are being incorporated into its National Strategic Development Plans. Fiji has just endorsed its National Rural Land Use Policy to coordinate the optimal utilisation of land for development. The policy includes formulation of a National Rural Land Use Plan or National Land Use Master Plan.

- To promote the consolidation and integration of all land information into database.
- To enhance landowners participation in commercial use of their land resources.

- To encourage foreign and local investment in commercial use of land
- To improve sustainability of land resources use.
- To monitor and control the physical degradation of land.

2.4 Coherent and Functional Legal and Regulatory Framework.

The legal and regulatory framework is already in existence with the numerous legislations in place but the strengthening of the functional capacity is an issue that needs addressing. Land Conservation and Improvement Act still remains the principal legislation governing the use of land resources and it will be complimented by the Environment Management Act 2005.

The LCI Act has been amended to also include the formulation and implementation of the National Land Use Plan as one of its key functions. The enforcement of these regulations requires additional resources which the government can not afford.

There is very poor public understanding particularly in the rural sector about the various legislation's that pertains to land, land use and soil conservation etc. The following twelve (12) pieces of legislation are relevant to the land development and conservation:

- Land Conservation and Improvement Act, 1953
- Drainage Act, 1961
- Irrigation Act, 1974
- Land Development Act, 1961
- Town and Country Planning Act, 1946
- Crown Land ACT, 1946
- Native Land Trust Act, 1946
- Agriculture landlord and tenants Act (ALTA), 1976
- Mining Act, 1966
- National Trust Act, 1970
- Forest Act, 1953
- Forest Decree

3 PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES.

3.1 Effective Participation of Actors in Defining National Priorities

Relevant information had been submitted in the first Fiji National Report submitted in April, 2000.

4 CONSULTATIVE PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES AND OTHER INTERESTED ENTITIES.

Once the Government of Fiji has finalized the draft NAP, it will also look at funding the activities within. Although a number of programs are already in the pipeline, there is no guarantee of these materializing since government funding is limited and priorities are shifted towards the immediate needs of the nation.

4.1 Effective Support From International Partners for Cooperation

Fiji will always need the technical and financial assistance from international and regional partners to be able to fully implementation its National Action Program for the UNCCD.

5 MEASURES TAKEN OR PLANNED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES, IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION, IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF DESERTIFICATION AND MONITOR AND ASSESS THE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT.

5.1 Adequate Diagnosis of the Past Experiences

There has been previous work and recommendation done on the assessment of land degradation in the past and have been adequately reported in the first National Report submitted in April, 2000 and the second report submitted in May 2002.

5.2 Action Programs Implemented in Compliance with Priority Fields Set Out In the Convention.

Fiji has formulated and submitted its draft National Action Plan and also its PDF-A has been approved for the preparation of the Medium Sized Project on Sustainable Land Management. Hopefully will be submitted by September 2006 for approval and anticipate its commencement in 2007.

5.3 Linkage Achieved with Sub-regional and Regional Action Programs (SPRAP and RAP)

Fiji has a very good relationship and network built with the Sub Regional and Regional teams. It is continuously participating in activities organized by these organized by them.

5.4 Development at the National Level of Programs of the Sub-regional or Regional Character.

This has been reported in previous reports.

6 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FROM NATIONAL BUDGETS IN SUPPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AS WELL AS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION INCLUDING THEIR INFLOWS. PROCESSES TO IDENTIFY THEIR REQUIREMENTS, AREAS OF FUNDING AND PRIORITIES.

6.1 Adopted Financial Mechanisms

Direct financial assistance has been provided by the Government to support the UNCCD in a number of activities but these are through capital programs which only run for a few years. In order for projects to be funded, they need to be incorporated into the NSDP and annual project proposal submissions have to be done to the Ministry of Finance.

Fiji is fortunate that the Government has recognised Land Development and Management, Environment, Environment protection and rehabilitation and Sustainable Land and Water Resources Management as some of the key cross sectoral issues needing to be addressed. The NDSP is a basis of budget allocation and therefore a reasonable funding allocation to enhance the current sustainable land management programs and the initiation of other programs is often considered.

6.2 NAP Financing

NAP financing will always be dependent on donors for bilateral or multilateral aid since a development country like Fiji will always put more emphasis on funding its income generation activities to improve the national economy. .

7 REVIEW OF BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS UTILISED TO MEASURE PROGRESS AND AN ASSESSMENT THEREOF.

The review process can only be undertaken once the NAP will be implemented. Existing processes are not consistent with the monitoring and evaluation standards sets by UNCCD. It is anticipated to start this with the implementation of the Medium Sized Proposal on Sustainable Land Management.