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# THE PAKISTAN NATIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY AND THE FORESTRY SECTOR

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The Federal Cabinet of Ministers approved the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy (PNCS) on March 1, 1992 prior to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June, 1992. The PNCS Report was prepared jointly by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and Government of Pakistan over a period of five years and is result of efforts of many experts in governmental and non-governmental organizations working in different sectors of economy. Thus Pakistan has joined 40 other governments worldwide in having a document on environment conservation and sustainable development since World Conservation Strategy was published in 1980. The document identifies by sectors such as agriculture, energy, forests, water, biodiversity, soil, population, industry and human settlements in which interventions are possible for sustainable development. The main objectives of the PNCS are to conserve natural resources, faster sustainable development and improve efficiency in the use and management of resources. The strategy consists of three parts. The first part gives an analysis of state of physical and natural resources of Pakistan and the extent of the environmental problems faced in the country as a result of resource use impacts and linkages. This part also examines existing institutions and present policies and programmes related to environment.

Part 2 of the PNCS discusses the scope for improvement in various sectors of the national economy. Detailed recommendations are made for formulation of policies and measures for development of primary sectors of agriculture,

forestry, rangelands and livestock management, water supplies, marine and coastal resources, wildlife and mining. Secondary and tertiary sectors of economy such as energy supplies, industrialization, urbanization, pollution, and recreation and tourism are also dealt in this part. A number of programmes are proposed which include population planning, participation of women in development activities, educational reforms, research and technology development etc. In the third part of the report, fourteen development areas are identified for implementation. Amongst these, the areas which are of interest to the forestry sector are protecting watersheds, supporting forestry and plantations, restoring rangelands and improving livestock and conserving biodiversity.

## Long-term Goals of Forestry Sector

Long-term goals of the PNCS which are directly or indirectly associated with the forestry sector are:-

- All cultivable soils bordered by appropriate trees (at 100 trees/ha); all cultivable waste protected through plant cover (at 250 trees or shrubs/ha) by 2015;
- All cropland soils to have more than 1.2% organic matter content by 2050 through organic manure application supported by return of crop residues to all croplands by 2030;
- Use of all moderately saline lands for bio-



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- saline agriculture, and all severely saline soils for halophyte plantations by 2100;
- Effective soil conservation in all rainfed and upland croplands;
  - Protection, management and maintenance of all watersheds through an integrated approach by 2060, with priority in the active monsoon areas;
  - Organize communities in all villages in upland watersheds by 2060;
  - 13% of the geographic area of the country comprising good and moderate forestland, poor agriculture land, and the most suitable 10% of poor forest and rangeland under 10% or more tree cover, managed on sustained yield basis by departments, owners and local communities by 2060;
  - Field border trees in cultivated land, on cultivable waste, and as part of the watershed programme;
  - Restoring rangelands to climatically optimum production potential of 75 tonnes total dry nutrient (TDN) by 2090;
  - Dune stabilization adjacent to all civil works and agricultural land by 2090;
  - 30% increase in feed per animal; mix of stall feeding, controlled grazing; rotational range grazing as appropriate to each eco-zone by 2010;
  - Sustained mangroves under reduced freshwater flows;
  - 35 national parks covering all ecosystems;
  - Wetland reserves covering all 27 wetlands of international importance;
  - Management plans for all parks and wetlands;
  - Proper maintenance of all parks;
  - Proper management plans and maintenance of all 74 wildlife sanctuaries in the 6 zones of Pakistan;
  - Network of community game reserves covering all species and ecosystems;
  - Network of private captive breeding farms of managing prize species;
  - Conservation of all species on the endangered list;
  - International biodiversity database in these areas; research and public awareness;
  - Proper database, and preservation of all germplasm and medicinal plants;
  - Efficient and pollution-free cooking;
  - Grassroot institutions in all rural and most urban communities managing local common property resources by 2030;

## GREENING PAKISTAN

It is generally considered that the PNCS is an attempt at greening Pakistan. It is well known that Pakistan is largely an arid country with more than 70% of its area receiving less than 250 mm rainfall per annum. For this reason, forests occupy only 4.2% of the total land area. In spite of small area, the forests play a vital role in Pakistan's economy in protecting watersheds in northern hilly



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regions for sustained supply of water in the rivers which is used for power generation and irrigation of agricultural land. This is besides provision of numerous goods including timber and fuelwood from forests. The role of forests in control of desertification and flood control, for employment generation and conservation of biological diversity is increasing being recognized the world over. So far this aspect of forests has been ignored by the planners and forestry sector has been given low priority in development programmes over the years in Pakistan due to lack of awareness of importance of resource, its long gestation period and limited tangible benefits. Consequently, forestry sector and forests have suffered and the resource has depleted due to increasing pressure of growing population and their cattle. Therefore one would wish that the PNCS could have been more green than it is. However adoption of PNCS has profoundly influenced the general thinking about forestry.

Long terms goals of the PNCS stated above are quite ambitious. However, the important task

ahead is to ensure that these goals are made part of all future plans and are achieved in time. The targets for some of the goals have been fixed in distant future. This may cause depletion of natural forest resources before any improvement is brought out in them. Experience in the past has shown that the governments all too often readily agree to policy statements but are reluctant to allocate sufficient financial resources for development for various reasons. The PNCS may face similar problems during its implementation. But it also strengthens the National Forest Policy announced by Government of Pakistan in 1991. Special efforts will have to be made to overcome these problems by all those who are involved in sustainable development and environment conservation in Pakistan. Implementation of forestry goals of the PNCS will directly benefit millions of people in hilly and plain regions of the country who have been marginalized in the past and are generally poor.