

Ethiopia aggressively working to implement UNCCD

Experience-sharing workshop underway

Addis Ababa, February 22, 2005 (ENA)- Ethiopia has been aggressively working towards implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), which it ratified in June 1997, Director General of the Environmental Protection Authority said.

Ethiopia was in the process of updating and mainstreaming the national action plan into the sustainable development and poverty reduction programme to implement the Convention, Dr. Tewolde-Berhan Gebre- Egzibher said.

Dr. Tewolde-Berhan was speaking at a sub-regional workshop opened here yesterday to exchange experiences on the context of national reports on the implementation of UNCCD.

Ethiopia was also implementing strategies and laws it adopted towards the UNCCD which included among others, environmental policy, conservation strategy, rural development policy and strategy, sustainable development and poverty reduction programme and food security programme, he said.

He said devolution of power to district levels, which he said promotes the proper management of renewable environmental resources, was also being implemented successfully.

A total of 48 national reports and five sub-regional reports have been submitted to the UNCCD Secretariat, Ambassador Hama Arba Diallo told workshop participants.

He said: "The national reports once again manifest that the road to the implementation of the convention has been very long and a difficult undertaking. The issues the countries have had to tackle in the process were many and often crosscutting."

"... It has been exhibited that at the centre of it all are much deeper underlying forces of socio-economic nature, such as poverty and the subsequent total dependency on natural resources for subsistence by the poor," he indicated.

The three-day workshop is expected to be a platform for reviewing, consolidating and sharing experiences, good practices and lessons learnt while implementing the convention.

Some 70 representatives of bilateral and international institutions from Eastern and Southern Africa and other stakeholders are in attendance at the workshop jointly organized by IGAD and SADC Secretariats, in collaboration with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank and UNCCD.

