Desertification in China: Current Status, Cause, and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

China is one of many countries that suffer from desertification. Given the large scale of the problem and insufficient national funding, combating desertification remains an arduous task. Even with a long-standing governmental commitment and numerous successful model projects, land desertification in China has become worse and turned into a major impediment to the economic development in desertified regions. In China, the most serious problem of desertification is to be found in the agro-pastoral transitional zone in northern China and in the oases along inland rivers or in the lower reaches of inland rivers in northwestern China’s arid zone. There are three root causes leading to desertification in China: vulnerable eco-environment, high population pressure, and backward techniques and extensive management. Based on the analysis of the causes of desertification, the author suggests that in China the close combination of prevention, rehabilitation, and exploitation are the basic principle for bringing desertification under effective control and realizing sustainable development of society, economy, and environment over all desertified regions.

Key words: Desertification; prevention; rehabilitation; exploration

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