



## Fast Facts

**Country:** India

**Duration:** October 2001 to November 2002

**Implementing UN Agencies:** UNDP

**Other Implementing Partners:** Janvikas; Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise; Banaskantha DWCRA Mahila SEWA Association

**Budget:** \$1,045,983.27

**Key Words:** Natural disasters; capacity-building; agriculture

## BACKGROUND

By 2001, intensive reliance on agriculture, coupled with frequent lack of rainfall, resulted in extensive environmental degradation, including desertification, salinization and the loss of groundwater supply. Small drought-mitigation and watershed-restoration programmes had begun in many places but were largely destroyed as a result of the earthquake that struck Gujarat in January 2001. The quake killed more than 20,000 people, injured over 165,000 and left 400,000 families homeless. Subsequently, the

immediate priority for humanitarian actors was the restoration of infrastructure destroyed in the quake and the short-term survival of the local population. At the same time, the agricultural sector had suffered a near complete collapse due to recurrent droughts prior to the quake. Accordingly, an integrated strategy for disaster preparedness and drought mitigation was urgently needed if the communities in Gujarat were to reduce their vulnerabilities to future disasters as well as environmental insecurities.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the project was to strengthen disaster preparedness and improve food security for communities in Gujarat. Specifically, the project (i) supported the reconstruction of water harvesting systems; (ii) implemented soil- and water conservation

measures in order to promote environmentally sound agricultural practices; and (iii) improved the capacities of communities to cope with threats from future natural disasters, including droughts, cyclones and earthquakes.

### BENEFICIARIES

The project supported communities in 40 villages in Gujarat and reached about 14,500 vulnerable households.