



***Subject: Invitation to Review the First Drafts of White Papers in Preparation for the First UNCCD/CST Scientific Conference***

Dear Scientific Colleagues and Stakeholders of the UNCCD,

This is an invitation to review the first drafts of scientific analysis papers contributing to the world's fight against desertification and land degradation. To begin the review, please go to the website [www.drylandscience.org](http://www.drylandscience.org) and click the button on the left entitled 'Online Consultation'. You can download and read the papers in PDF format there if you prefer, but all comments must be received via the web feedback system that is accessed through the above path.

**Background**

The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has called for a Scientific Conference on the topic of "Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management." The Conference, popularly known under the shorter title 'Understanding Desertification and Land Degradation Trends', will take place at the UNCCD Conference of Parties in Buenos Aires, Argentina during 22-24 September 2009.

In preparation for that Conference, three Working Groups have drafted 'white papers' summarizing leading scientific knowledge relevant to the topic assigned by the Convention that leads towards recommendations that can support decision-making in land and water management by the Convention and its Parties. Each of the three Working Group white papers is about 80-100 pages long consisting of several chapters. In addition, there is a cross-cutting topic that the Working Groups collectively address (denoted 'S1').

For one month, from 28 May to 28 June 2009, the first drafts of the white papers will be open for review by scientists and stakeholders worldwide. We look forward to your valuable contributions. Please visit the web link mentioned above to participate in the review process. Thank you for helping to enrich these papers with your knowledge, comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

**The Dryland Science for Development Consortium (DSD)**

*Dryland Science for Development is a consortium of the following five partner institutions:*

European DesertNet

International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

Joint Research Centre/Institute for Environment and Sustainability of the European Commission (JRC/IES)

United Nations University – International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)