



COMBATING DESERTIFICATION, LAND DEGRADATION AND DROUGHT FOR POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

the contribution of science, technology,
traditional knowledge and practices

This is the ambitious theme of the **UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference**
to be held in **early 2015** (at the latest by the end of April)

WHY HOLD A SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON THIS THEME?

BECAUSE desertification and poverty are linked together in a vicious circle: by reducing the production capacity of the land, desertification leads to a deterioration in living conditions, causing people to overexploit resources that are already limited in order to survive, which in turn increases the desertification process.

BECAUSE the global changes that are taking place (climate and socio-economic changes) accentuate the process of desertification and land degradation.

BECAUSE traditional practices, which in the past proved to be effective and provide ingenious solutions, may, in certain cases, become inappropriate as a result of changing needs and environmental constraints, whereas "imported" practices may also often be ineffective.

BECAUSE the implementation of effective actions appropriate for local conditions must be based on an understanding not only of the processes and their effects on the life of the communities, but also of the causes of land degradation. On the one hand, how do social dynamics affect ecological systems and, on the other hand, how do ecological systems drive changes in the communities and production systems?

BECAUSE it is essential to consider how communities are organized and governed to anticipate future changes and find new ways of cooperation that can be explored (geopolitical, global governance of the environment, etc).

FACED WITH THESE CHALLENGES, are scientific and technological innovation, the adaptation of traditional knowledge and practices and progress in social organization, combined into good practices, able to drive major changes, reducing the vulnerability of the communities concerned and improving the state of ecosystems and ecosystem services?

BY BRINGING TOGETHER scientists, policy-makers and civil society stakeholders from all parts of the globe, the third UNCCD Scientific Conference aims:

- **TO DRAW UP** a report on the current state of knowledge showing how this can be used to combat desertification and encourage sustainable management in arid regions
- **TO DIRECT** the attention of scientists towards a more global and forward thinking community-based approach for the future to stimulate innovative scientific questioning
- **TO ENCOURAGE** interactions between regional, interregional and international research programs by setting up networks to exchange findings, creating a ground for implementing joint programs on a large scale
- **TO STUDY** how changes in communities and the acquisition of new scientific knowledge can drive change and development of traditional knowledge
- **TO PROVIDE** the UNCCD Conference of Parties with the scientific basis required for defining its agenda and its recommendations for implementing action programmes by member countries

HOW CAN THESE AIMS BE ACHIEVED?

TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS CONFERENCE, there will be an exploratory phase which will be forward-thinking, transverse and cross-disciplinary taking account of environmental issues as well as social change and bringing together research organizations and development policy-makers from many different fields (social sciences, environmental sciences, economics, etc).

THE PROBLEMS OF DESERTIFICATION AND LAND DEGRADATION HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES DEPENDING ON THE PARTICULAR REGION OF THE WORLD, taking account of environmental, social, cultural and economic issues. In preparation for the conference, a panel of experts will consider, for each region defined in the UNCCD annexes (Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, North-Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe), how the range of current research programs is taking account of future changes and contributing towards poverty reduction and how cooperation can be organized between the various stakeholders involved in the fight against desertification – research, innovation, education/training and development. This preliminary study will identify promising initiatives to be presented at the conference.

A SUMMARY OF REGIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS will be produced by the conference Scientific Advisory Committee, identifying problems that are common to all regions and those that are specific to a particular region, in order to:

- **IDENTIFY FIELDS OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION** related to combating land degradation and desertification, which will reduce poverty and encourage sustainable development and which require international, interdisciplinary cooperation now and in the years to come

- **PROPOSE METHODS** to facilitate, on the one hand, the inclusion of traditional knowledge and practices and the needs of local communities in scientific programs and, on the other hand, the appropriation of scientific advances by communities and the use of such advances for sustainable development, in a comprehensive innovation process.

COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS INVOLVED

- Responsible for the overall preparation and organization of the conference, the **Steering Committee** is chaired by the Chair of the UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and includes representatives of the CST Bureau and the UNCCD Secretariat as well as the Chair of the STK4SD Consortium responsible for the organization of the conference.
- Responsible for the scientific quality of the conference and the resulting publications, the **Scientific Advisory Committee** is composed of twelve experts from the various regions of the United Nations with proven expertise in the theme of the conference.
- Responsible for producing a state-of-the-art report on the theme of the conference and making proposal on priority issues, the **Working Groups** will comprise scientists and development stakeholders, recognized for their skills in the field of combating desertification.

WHO IS ORGANIZING THE CONFERENCE?

Together with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UNCCD is one of the three conventions set up after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Like the other two Rio conventions, the UNCCD has a subsidiary body for science and technology (the Committee on Science and Technology –CST). In 2008 the Conference of Parties decided to include a Scientific Conference on topical themes as one of the special sessions of the CST, in order to produce assessments and scientific summaries to form the basis for its political negotiations. So far, two Scientific Conferences have been organized (in 2009 in Buenos Aires and in 2013 in Bonn). In November 2012, the **STK4SD CONSORTIUM** was appointed by the CST Bureau of the UNCCD to organize the 3rd Scientific Conference.

Several other organizations have joined the STK4SD Consortium, as associates, for preparing this Conference: the **JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**, the **DESERTIFICATION RESEARCH CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SASSARI** in Italy and the **CHINESE ACADEMY OF FORESTRY**. Support from other organizations willing to provide substantial assistance in organizing this conference and ensuring its success will be most welcome.



AN INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONSORTIUM FOR ORGANIZING THE CONFERENCE (STK4SD)

The **"Scientific and Traditional Knowledge for Sustainable Development" (STK4SD) Consortium** was appointed by the CST Bureau to organize the 3rd Scientific Conference of the UNCCD. It is composed of five major organizations, bringing together a high level of scientific expertise and practical skills in the organization of international conferences with a long established commitment to the operations of the UNCCD. Its members are actively involved in all the regions concerned by the UNCCD, proof of its capacity to mobilize resources, organizations and stakeholders at all levels:

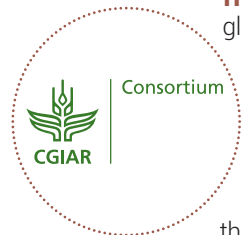


Agropolis International is an association based in Montpellier supported by central and local government. Its members include nearly 30 research centers and higher education establishments in the Languedoc-Roussillon region, with 2,300 scientists, working in the fields of agriculture, food, biodiversity and the environment, much of their work focusing on the Mediterranean and tropical regions. Agropolis International also hosts the French Scientific Committee on Desertification (CSFD).

DesertNet International is an international scientific network for research into desertification that brings together more than 300 experts from 50 countries and provides a platform for international science policy discussion.



The CGIAR Consortium is a global research partnership for a food secure future. The CGIAR aims to reduce rural poverty, improve food security, human health and nutrition and encourage more sustainable management of natural resources. The research is carried out by the 15 centers that are members of the CGIAR Consortium, including the ICARDA and the ICRISAT, and which work closely together with hundreds of partner organizations.



The Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) is an intergovernmental African organization based in Tunisia, focusing on concerted, sustainable management of natural resources in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas in Sahel - Sub Saharan Africa. The OSS members include 22 African countries, 5 non-African countries and 10 international, sub-regional and non-government organizations.



The Argentine Institute for Arid Zone Research (IADIZA) is an institute of the Argentine National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), whose aim is to improve understanding of the structure and functioning of arid zones and the transfer of technology and know-how through education/training and capacity-building.



YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CONFERENCE

SCIENTISTS, POLICY-MAKERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY

who are involved in the combat against desertification and land degradation, you can:

- Take part in the preparatory work for the conference, propose special sessions, etc
- Register to attend the conference and present a paper (pre-registration online will soon be available on the conference website).

MEMBERS OF INSTITUTIONS involved in the combat against desertification, land degradation and poverty, you can:

- Encourage people in your institution and its partners to attend the conference
- Contribute towards the preparation of the conference by financing and hosting a meeting of the Working Group for your region or of the Scientific Advisory Committee

REPRESENTATIVES OF FOUNDATIONS OR FUNDS dealing with social and environmental issues, you can:

- Contribute towards funding the preparation of the conference, the conference itself or the publication and dissemination of conference outputs
- Provide financial support for representatives of developing nations who wish to attend the conference

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS responsible for actions and programs to combat desertification, land degradation and poverty, you can:

- Contribute towards organizing the conference by funding and hosting a meeting of the Working Group for your region or of the Scientific Advisory Committee or the conference itself
- Provide financial support for national experts to attend the conference

✉ CONTACTS

**United Nations Convention
to Combat Desertification**
UNCCD Secretariat
P.O. Box 260129, D-53113 Bonn,
Germany

kmst@unccd.int

Tel: +49 (0)228 815 2800

Fax: +49 (0)228 815 2898 / 99

www.unccd.int

STK4SD Consortium

c/o Agropolis International,
1000 avenue Agropolis,
34394 Montpellier CEDEX 5
France

3sc.unccd@agropolis.fr

Tel: +33 (0)4 67 04 75 50 / 06

Fax: +33 (0)4 67 04 75 99

www.agropolis.org

<http://3sc.unccd.int>