



European DesertNet Newsletter n. 2/2009

Contents:

1. News from the Board of European DesertNet
2. News from the world
3. Account of past events
4. Call of Interest to European DesertNet
5. Important upcoming events
6. Publications 2009
7. Other information

1. News from the Board of European DesertNet

European DesertNet is transforming into the Association of DesertNet International

In order to maneuver more successfully as an independent and international scientific advisory platform, European DesertNet is currently in the process of developing a legal structure by becoming the *Association of the Network for International Research on Desertification* (DesertNet International).

The Association of DesertNet International will be registered at the tribunal of Strasbourg/Illkirch, France. The statutes of the Association of DesertNet clearly reflect the philosophy of European DesertNet. The newly emerging Association underlines the importance of an international interdisciplinary **network of scientists** involved in land degradation/desertification research and provides a **think tank** which strengthens the science policy dialogue on desertification/land degradation and drought. The Steering Committee of the Association of DesertNet International will provide the members of European DesertNet with the Statutes of the Association of DesertNet International and invite all over 300 members of European DesertNet to join the Association.

Carlos San Juan Mesonada, Chair of European DesertNet and Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Co-chair of European DesertNet

UNCCD-CST Conference and Consultation Working Group Deliberations Underway
The COP-9 Scientific Conference, "Understanding Desertification and Land Degradation

Trends" will take place at COP-9 in Buenos Aires, Argentina during 22-24 September 2009. The Consultation that prepares draft recommendations for the Conference is now beginning its writing stage. Three Working Groups have held their initial meetings to brainstorm ideas and form the first draft outlines for their analytical white papers that provide the rationales for the recommendations on ways that countries might improve their monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation. A first draft of these white papers will be placed on the open internet on May 22 for review and comment by any scientist worldwide for one month. The Working Groups will carefully consider all comments received by mid-June, and will revise their drafts by July 31, 2009. That second draft will also be posted on the internet for reading in preparation for the Conference. The Conference in September will be open to all scientists, with prior authorization. A competitive poster session will also be organized. For more details, please see <http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/cstsciconf/menu.php>

Mark Winslow, Co-ordinator of DSD

DSD Working Group 1 on Integrated Methods for Monitoring and Assessment

DSD Working Group 1 on Integrated Methods for Monitoring and Assessment of Desertification Processes and Drivers held its first working meeting on the 2nd and 3rd April 2009 at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Ispra, Italy. With much-appreciated support from the EC, sixteen scientists from South America, USA, Africa, China, and Europe met to discuss a detailed structure and the contents of the White Paper to be prepared for CCD COP9 in Buenos Aires. Lead authors have been selected for the various chapters and the drafting process has been started. In the coming weeks a first draft will be elaborated and contributing authors and reviewers will be assigned. Among other issues, the White Paper will cover the information needs of decision makers, a scientific concept for an integrated analysis of desertification processes, existing and potential monitoring tools, the current practice in monitoring desertification, and potential synergies with the conventions on climate change and biodiversity. It will result in science-based recommendations for policy action to monitor and assess desertification at various scales.

Jürgen Vogt, DSD Consortium, JRC ISPRA

DSD Working Group 2 on Monitoring and assessing land rehabilitation and sustainable land management

WG2 focuses on identifying practical ways that countries can improve their monitoring and assessment (M&A) of land rehabilitation and sustainable land management (SLM). Discussions over the internet and in a meeting in Bonn, Germany last week (made possible by support from IFAD and UNEP) helped crystallize some key concepts. Developing countries have the capacities to M&A o "land use change" e.g. shifts from forests to crops, rangelands to crops, etc. and also on "land management change" e.g. the adoption of reduced tillage, agroforestry, erosion control landforms, perennial crops etc. They can adapt M&A indicators from available high-quality knowledge (WOCAT, LADA, DESIRE, OSS and many others). At the same time, road maps should be developed leading to the capacities and infrastructure needed to M&A underlying drivers of land condition that are more difficult to observe visually, e.g. soil chemical features and socio-economic dynamics. Though difficult, these are essential for quantitative modelling and predictive forecasting, which is crucial to support policy decisions that affect SLM.

Mark Winslow, Co-ordinator of DSD

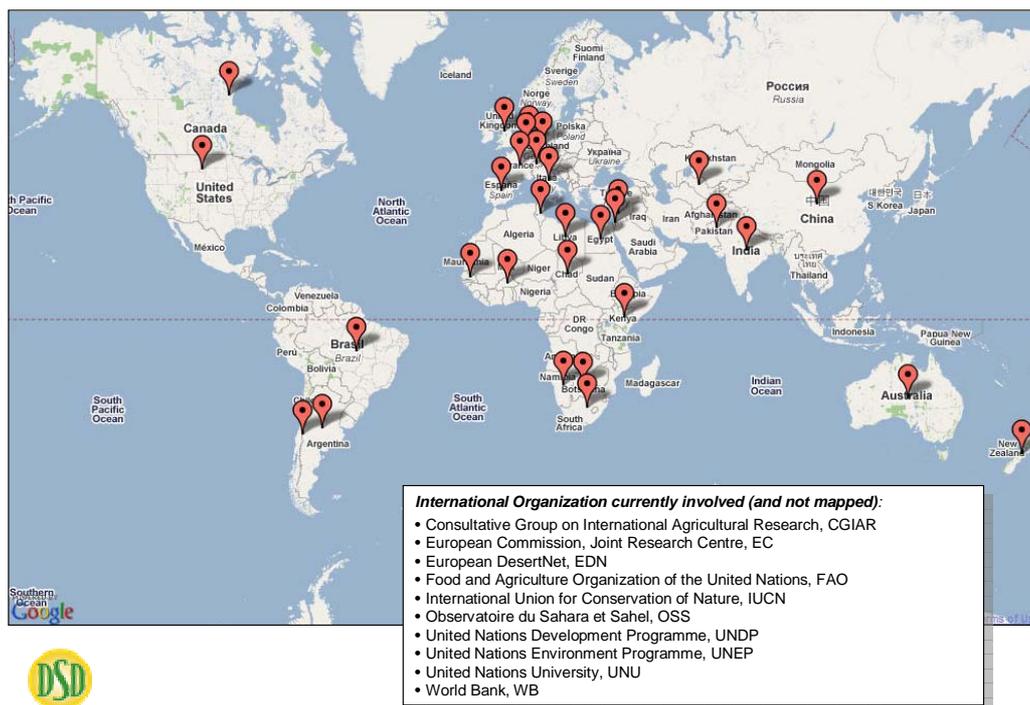
DSD WG3 on Monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation: economic and social drivers and knowledge management

Nineteen invited scientists drawn from a world-wide network met March 12-14th, 2009 to discuss the drafting of a 'white paper' at the Biocentre Klein Flottbek, University of Hamburg, Germany, with financial support from the GTZ CCD Project. The composition of the group attempted to reflect both disciplinary and geographic diversity. The working group is co-lead by UNU-INWEH and the European DesertNet. The group formulated the main chapters of the white paper and determined the lead authors who would expand the contributors list using their own professional networks. The agreed chapters of the White Paper are:

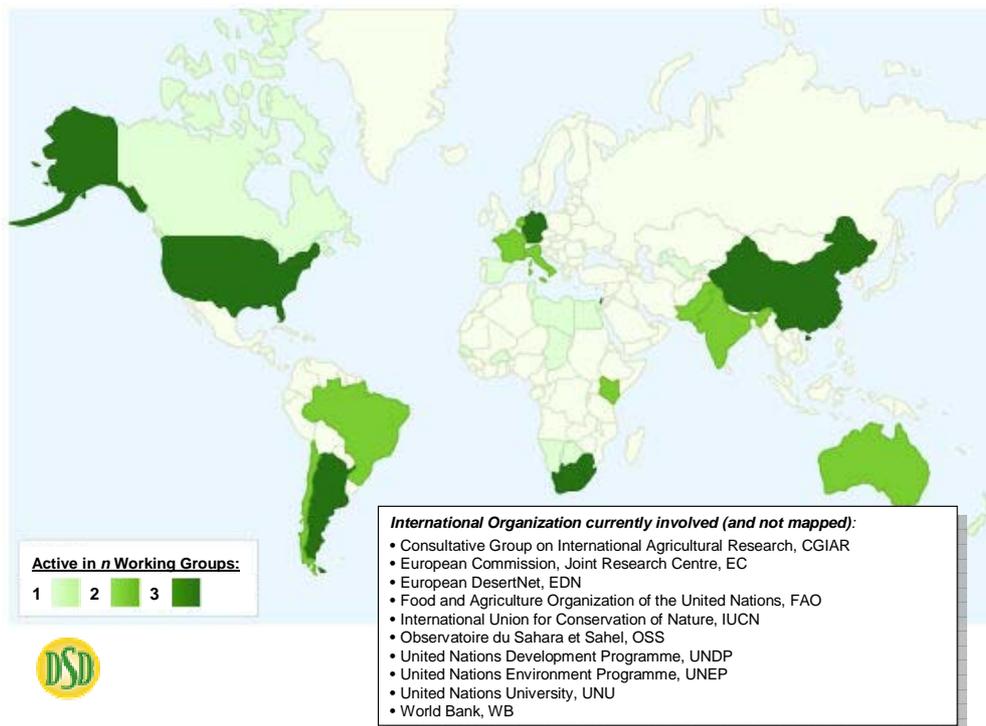
1. Introduction including a typology of drylands
2. Institutional arrangements and capacities including managing knowledge and mainstreaming
3. Economics of land degradation
4. Conclusions and recommendations

Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Co-chair of European DesertNet, Richard Thomas, UNU-INWEH, Chiara Zanolla, European DesertNet

Map displaying the current repartition of members of the three DSD Working Groups by country of origin or affiliation.



Map displaying the repartition of members of the three DSD Working Groups (indicating in how many working groups a country of origin or affiliation is represented) .



2. News from the world

UNEP/MAP Meets Egyptian Authorities in Preparation of Mediterranean Conference on Sustainable Development Meeting Next June

Mediterranean riparian countries are known to be quite sensitive to climate changes. Scenarios exhibit trends to temperature increase and precipitation decrease, thus exacerbating vulnerability to desertification processes and endangering already vulnerable areas. This concern is at the very heart of the Mediterranean Conference on Sustainable Development (MSCD), which will next meet on 22-24 June, 2009 in Cairo, Egypt and will be discussing "Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation - Experience and Strategies in the Mediterranean". Preparatory talks were ongoing in January in Cairo between UNEP/MAP representatives and Egyptian authorities, including the Minister of State for the Environment Ing. Maged George. He invited UNEP/MAP to participate at the international conference on Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean which will be organized next March in Monaco together with the French Ministry for the Environment within the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

For more details, see: <http://www.unepmap.org/index.php?module=news&action=detail&id=46&lang=en>

G rard Begni, Chairman, EDN Science/policy Interface WG

FAO: Climate change talks should include farmers

Alexander Mueller, Assistant Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has urged policy makers to include agriculture in negotiations for a new climate change treaty to replace the 1997 Kyoto protocol. While agriculture is contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, farmers will also become victims of climate change. Agriculture is responsible for about 14 percent of greenhouse gas emissions and improper land use

practices account for another 17 percent. Farmers can play a major role in reducing greenhouse gas emission. By carbon sequestration, the capture and long term storage of carbon in the soil, farmers can help reduce carbon dioxide levels in the air, enhance the soil's resilience and boost crop yields. Current global funding arrangements, like the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol, are inadequate and are not offering sufficient incentives for farmers to get involved in climate change mitigation and adaptation. In particular, such incentives could help farmers in combating land degradation, thus evidencing a link between UNFCCC and UNCCD.

Main source FAO press release: <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/11356/icode/>

Gérard Begni. Chair, Science/Policy Interface WG.

Turkey signs the Kyoto Protocol



Eroded site in Anatolia, Turkey, © Murat Taner/zefa/Corbis

From a climate and environment point of view, Turkey is a quite contrasted country, with high temperature and rainfall gradients and variability. It is considered both as a key water resource reservoir for the Middle-East Region, while some inner regions suffer from erosion, soil degradation and desertification. In agreement with a large part of national scientists and population, the Turkish Parliament made a highly significant, courageous and uniting step towards global climate change mitigation. A large majority of deputies voted for the adhesion to the Kyoto Protocol, in spite of concerns for short-term economic growth. A report from the Planning National Agency estimated the cost of the Protocol to some

40 billion USD, leading to a significant GNP decrease. The emission rate of CO₂ par capita is estimated to 17 tons, about twice the European mean rate. *Gerard Begni, EDN SC & Chair, Science /Policy IF WG & Béatrice ROY.*

3. Account of past events

UN Calls for continued efforts to fight hunger



During the High-Level Meeting on Food Security for all Jacques Diouf (left) shakes hand with Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Miguel Angel Moratinos. (© AFP – Pierre-

Organized by the Spanish Government and co-sponsored by the United Nations, the so-called 'High-Level Meeting on Food Security for all' took place end January 2009 in Madrid

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon warned that the global economic crisis could push more people into poverty and urged rich nations to step up their commitments against hunger and malnutrition. The high commodity prices pushed the total number of hungry people close to one billion last year. FAO Director General Jacques Diouf called for an investment of US \$30 billion per year in agriculture of developing countries to double food production by 2050 and

Philippe Marcou).

ensure the basic right to food for all people.

"The underlying trends show that global agricultural production cannot keep up with rising demand. "Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director of the World Bank shared similar concerns. Millions are malnourished. We need to draw on the experience of governments of the countries concerned.

For more information: <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/9904/icode/>
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sgsm12067.doc.htm>

Gérard Begni, Chair, Science/Policy Interface WG.

Earth Day Video on Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

John Pender, a senior IFPRI Senior Research Fellow, outlines how sustainable land management can reduce the threats of climate change. Video podcast for Earth Day, April 22, 2009:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITKv88ETLqE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ifpri.org%2F&feature=player_embedded

4. Calls of Interest

LIFE+ 2009 Call for proposals

The LIFE+ 2009 call for proposals will be published on 15 May 2009, with a deadline of 15 September for submitting proposals to national authorities. National authorities will then have until 22 October to submit proposals to the European Commission. The evaluation process is expected to be completed by the end of February 2010, with a revision stage scheduled from March to June. The final selection of successful projects will then be announced during the summer of 2010.

In principle, a maximum of EUR 250 million will be available for the 2009 call. For more information please visit <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifepius.htm>

Chiara Zanolla, European DesertNet, NRD University of Sassari, Italy

Call for submissions for the Science and Practice of Ecology and Society Award

The Science and Practice of Ecology & Society Award is an annual award given to the individual or organization that is the most effective in bringing transdisciplinary science of the interactions of ecology and society into practice. The purpose of this award is to recognize the importance of practitioners who translate the scientific findings and insights of the scholarly community to practical applications. The award consists of 1000 Euro and an article in Ecology and Society devoted to this person or organization.

Any person or organization that has succeeded in translating transdisciplinary science theory into practice can be nominated by any academic scholar or group of academic scholars. The deadline for nominations is July 1, 2009. Nomination letters can be sent to Dr. Marco Janssen: Marco.Janssen@asu.edu.

For more information, please visit: www.ecologyandsociety.org or contact Marco Janssen.

Call for proposal for Drynet Research project

Comparing carbon emissions from milk production in peri-urban dairies versus drylands.

Purpose: To collate arguments and convince policy makers of the rationale for investing in milk collection systems in drylands, as a means of alleviating poverty, conserving biodiversity, arresting land degradation and minimizing climate change.

Background: Milk is a product with a bottomless demand in developing countries. In order to support a sufficient supply in urban areas, peri-urban dairies are set up by private entrepreneurs. However, most developing countries continue to be heavily dependent on the import of powdered milk which is then reconstituted. By contrast, collection of milk from pastoralist areas is rarely supported by public funds, although there are examples from Mauritania and from Northern Kenya. The point is often made that production in peri-urban areas would require less expenditure of fossil energy given the need for transportation in arid areas to collect the milk. However, a recent study from New Zealand has refuted the assumption that food transported over long distances has necessarily a larger carbon footprint than that which is locally produced (http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/story_images/2328_rr285_s9760.pdf). A sound scientific study and analysis of this matter could significantly help Drynet partners working with pastoralists as well as other NGOs working on the issue to attract funding for their projects with milk collection in drylands.

Especially interesting for us is the country focus on India and Mauritania. This mini-study is budgeted to a maximum of 5000€, including travel costs and per diems. Please contact the science and technology officer Silke Brehm: silke.brehm@skynet.be

5. Important upcoming events

International Scientific Conference and Consultation

The COP-9 Scientific Conference, "Understanding desertification and land degradation trends. Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management" will take place in Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 22 to 24 September 2009.

Purpose: To analyze and summarize leading scientific knowledge on the Conference topic, in ways that generate practical recommendations for deliberation by the UNCCD Conference of Parties (COP) to more effectively combat desertification in affected States, regions and globally.

How to participate: Several avenues of participation are available to interested scientists:

- Working Groups (by invitation)
- E-comment on the first draft report (open to all interested scientists globally between May 22-June 22)
- Participation in the Conference during COP-9
- Competitive poster session side event

For more information: Full Conference Announcement is available on the website of the UNCCD www.unccd.int

List of links to next meetings regarding desertification, water conservation and land degradation.

2009		
19-24 Apr	Soil erosion and sediment control with vegetation and bioengineering	Vienna,

19-24 Apr	on severely eroded terrain http://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU2009/session/887 Digital soil mapping: novel approaches to the prediction of key soil properties for modelling physical processes http://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU2009/session/907	Austria Vienna, Austria
23-25 Apr	Sustainability conference. http://www.kent.ac.uk/scarr/	Villanova, USA
3-5 May	International plant breeding conference "crop research, technology dissemination and adoption to increase food supply, reducing hunger and poverty in Egypt". http://www.sciencedev.net/Docs/plant_breeding_conference.doc	Ismailia, Egypt
27-28 May	The sustainable development of water Resources (*) gcr@mail.dnttm.ro	Timisoara, Romania
27-30 May	Global Change- Challenges for Soil Management: From Degradation –Through Soil and Water Conservation- To Sustainable Soil Management. www.sfb.bg.ac.yu/erosion2009/	Tara Mountain, Serbia
1 Jun	Rendez-vous international sur la gestion integree de l'eau, www.conferencealerts.com/seeconf.mv?q=k1x38ai	Sherbrooke, Canada
22 Jun	First Open Source GIS UK Conference website will be activated on January 15 (email Suchith.Anand@nottingham.ac.uk)	Nottingham, UK
23-25 Jun	"Protection of THE Ecological and Productivity Functions of Soil in a PAN European Context". www.vumop.cz	Průhonice, Czech Rep.
25 Jun	European Water Resources Association (EWRA) 7th International Conference http://www.eng.ucy.ac.cy/ewra2009/	Limassol, Cyprus
25-27 Jun	Conference on "Challenges and Opportunities of Bioindustrial Watershed Development for the Prosperity of the Farming Community", organized by the Soil Conservation Society of India (*) www.soilcsi.org/	Bengaluru, India
28 Jun- 1 Jul	16th N Workshop: Connecting Different Scales of Nitrogen Use in Agriculture www.nitrogenworkshop2009.org	Turin, Italy
29 Jun-1 Jul	XXVII Reunión Nacional de Suelos www.secs09.org/	Huesca, Spain
2-5 Jul	Earth Charter Day Academic Conference 2009 (EDAC2009) www.ecdac2009.org	Eindhoven, Netherlands
5-8 Jul	15th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management http://www.issrm09.info	Vienna, Austria
11-15 Jul	SWCS (Journal of Soil and Water Conservation) Annual Conference www.swcs.org ; www.jswconline.org/subscriptions/	Dearborn, Michigan, USA
20–24 Jul	11th International Symposium on Soil and Plant Analysis www.isspa2009.com	Santa Rosa, CA, USA
20-24 Jul	First International Undergraduate Conference www.ccb.colorado.edu/shanghal	Shanghai, China
5-7 Aug	5th International SWAT (Soil and Water Assessment Tool) Conference. http://www.brc.tamus.edu/swat/conf_5th.html	Boulder, Colorado
23-28 Aug	Second World Congress of Agroforestry http://worldagroforestry.org/wca2009	Nairobi, Kenya
25-28 Aug	1st IFOAM Conference on Organic Animal and Plant Breeding http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences/2009_Animal_and_Plant_Breeding/animal_plant_breeding.html	Santa Fe; New Mexico
6-9 Sep	International Conference on Land and Water Degradation Processes Management. www.ufz.de/comland2009	Leipzig, Germany
8-10 Sep	2nd World Seed Conference http://worldseedconference.org/en/worldseedconference/home.html	Rome, Italy
16 Sep	World Resources Forum http://www.factor10-institute.org/files/WRF_POSTER_2009.pdf	Davos, Switzerland
16-18 Sep	International Conference on Desertification in memory of	Murcia,

	Professor John B. Thornes http://fobos.bio.um.es/thornes/doku.php	Spain
27 Sep- 2 Oct	XXVI International Population Conference http://www.iussp.org/marrakech2009/index.php	Marrakech, Morocco.
6-8 Oct	Biophysical and Socio-economic Frame Conditions for Sustainable Management of Land Resources and Water Bodies. Tropentag 2009 http://www.tropentag.de	Hamburg, Germany
13- 16 Oct	Biodiversity and Society: understanding connections, adapting to change www.diversitas-osc.org	Cape Town, South Africa
26-29 Oct	International Conference AfricaGIS: "Geo-Spatial Information and Sustainable Development in Africa: Facing Challenges of Global Change." http://www.africagis2009.org/	Kampala, Uganda
12-14 Nov	International Conference The Integration of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in the Context of Climate Change, the Energy Crisis and Food Insecurity. http://2009-international-conference.synthasite.com/index.php	Agadir, Morocco
22-28 Nov	5th Intl. Conf. of ASSS: Soils and New Challenges for Sustainable Development in Africa. www.asssonline.org ; www.asssland.org	Yaoundé, Cameroon
25-27 Nov	3 rd Workshop of the EARSeL Special Interest Group on Land Use and Land Cover http://www.zfl.uni-bonn.de/earsel/earsel.html	Bonn, Germany
2-4 Dec	2009 Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change. www.ac2009.earthsystemgovernance.org	Amsterdam, Netherlands

(*) LANDCON Meetings. See details in "Other Information" section in this Newsletter

Maria José Marqués Pérez, member of the Advisory Board of DesertNet International, IMIDRA, Spain

INTERLINK workshop on the Environment Theme of FP7 in Pretoria, South Africa

The INTERLINK Project has the overall objective to promote and facilitate international cooperation in the Environment Theme of FP7; it focuses on two regions i.e. sub-Saharan Africa and the new independent states (NIS) because it is recognised that enhanced cooperation with these regions would have a high impact on the implementation of both the Research and Sustainable Development policies of the European Union. The workshop on the environment theme of FP7 will be held in Pretoria (South Africa) on 7-8 July 2009. It will be organized into sessions focused on FP7 proposal preparation, consortia development, financial and legal regulations when participating in FP7, and any other issues of relevance. For further information and/or confirm participation, please send an e-mail to the Renee Le Roux (renee@nrf.ac.za) by 30 May 2009.

Chiara Zanolla, European DesertNet, NRD University of Sassari, Italy

ITKnet: Innovative and Traditional Knowledge Network for the proper use of natural resources

The European Commission has organised the meeting "Research Connection 2009: A major event on EU research initiatives" to be held in Prague (7-8 May 2009). In this context, a Forum on "ITKnet: Innovative and Traditional Knowledge network for the proper use of natural resources" (Forum 2) has been scheduled for the morning of 7 May.

In the event the objectives of the International Centre on Traditional Knowledge (Florence, Italy) will be also introduced. To actively participate in this Forum, previous registration to "Research Connection 2009" is needed. For further information, please visit: http://ec.europa.eu/research/conferences/2009/rtd-2009/index_en.cfm

6. Publications 2009

A list of recently published selected paper regarding desertification:

1. Abraham E. 2009. Dryland Development Needs Science and Sustainability. In SciDev Net. Available at: <http://www.scidev.net/en/science-and-innovation-policy/science-policy/opinions/dryland-development-needs-science-and-sustainabili.html>
2. Bordignon, G., 2009. Preventing Desertification, Enhancing Food Security: The Role of the World Food Programme. *Converting Deserts into Oasis*, 5-9.
3. Brauch, H.G., Oswald Spring, U., Grin J., Mesjasz, C., Kameri-Mbote, P., Behera, N. C., Chourou, B., Krummenacher, H. (Eds.), 2009: *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*. Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace, vol. 4 (Berlin – Heidelberg – New York: Springer-Verlag). Detailed information about the book at: http://www.afes-press-books.de/html/hexagon_04.htm
4. Chakeredza, S., Temu, A.B., Yaye, A., Mukingwa, S., Saka, J.D.K. World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Lilongwe (Malawi). SADC-ICRAF Agroforestry Project. 2009. *Mainstreaming climate change into agricultural education: challenges and perspectives*. -- Nairobi, Kenya: World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) ICRAF Working Paper no. 82, 30p. <http://www.worldagroforestry.org/downloads/publications/PDFs/WP15993.PDF>
5. Kok, K., van Delden, H., 2009. Combining two approaches of integrated scenario development to combat desertification in the Guadalentin watershed, Spain. *Environment and Planning B-Planning & Design* 36, 49-66.
6. Lichtfouse, E., Navarrete, M., Debaeke, P., Souchere, V., Alberola, C., Menassieu, J., 2009. Agronomy for sustainable agriculture. A review. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* 29, 1-6.
7. Mung'ong'o, C.G., 2009. Political ecology: a synthesis and search for relevance to today's ecosystems conservation and development. *African Journal of Ecology* 47, 192-197.
8. Myers, N., 2009. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY CONCERNS: SOURCES. *Energy and Environmental Challenges to Security*, 41-53.
9. Nyssen, J., Haile, M., Naudts, J., Munro, N., Poesen, J., Moeyersons, J., Frankl, A., Deckers, J., Pankhurst, R., 2009. Desertification? Northern Ethiopia re-photographed after 140 years. *Sci Total Environ* 407, 2749-2755.
10. Okin, G.S., Parsons, A.J., Wainwright, J., Herrick, J.E., Bestelmeyer, B.T., Peters, D.C., Fredrickson, E.L., 2009. Do Changes in Connectivity Explain Desertification? *Bioscience* 59, 237-244.
11. Popp, A., Domptail, S., Blaum, N., Jeltsch, F., 2009. Landuse experience does qualify for adaptation to climate change. *Ecological Modelling* 220, 694-702.
12. Salvati, L., Zitti, M., 2009a. Assessing the impact of ecological and economic factors on land degradation vulnerability through multiway analysis. *Ecological Indicators* 9, 357-363.

13. Salvati, L., Zitti, M., 2009b. Substitutability and weighting of ecological and economic indicators: Exploring the importance of various components of a synthetic index. *Ecological Economics* 68, 1093-1099.

Maria José Marqués Pérez, member of the Advisory Board of European DesertNet, IMIDRA, Spain

Publication of the report "Land degradation and Desertification"

The European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety has recently published the study "Land degradation and Desertification" that sets out to provide an integrated picture of land degradation issues and actions within the EU.

It is available on the following link:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies/download.do?language=en&file=24833>

Chiara Zanolla, European DesertNet, NRD University of Sassari, Italy

7. Other Information

Launch of the new CSFD website

The French Scientific Committee on Desertification website aims at facilitating access to scientific information on land degradation and desertification, stakeholders and issues. It encloses 7 sections (in French and in English, see "Library"):

1. News on the Committee and desertification
2. CSFD: the Committee, its members and institutional life
3. Stakeholders: Anyone who participates in combating desertification (ministries, CNULD, scientists' international networks, NGOs...)
4. CSFD activities are divided into 3 main categories: 1) National and international decision-makers' adviser; 2) Research & Development; 3) Advocacy
5. Desertification and combating desertification: This section includes thematic pages written by scientists. New themes are regularly proposed.
6. Library: A space of consultation of the on-line questionable bibliographic database including hundreds of references accessible to a broad audience. French and English publications are freely downloadable. Les Dossiers Thématiques du CSFD series is a must-read.
7. Glossary: definitions of scientific concepts and terms used for the study of desertification process.

For more information: www.csf-desertification.org; Web contact: Isabelle Amsallem, amsallem@agropolis.fr; FD chair: Marc Bied-Charretton, csfd@agropolis.fr

Marc Bied-Charretton, President of the French Scientific Committee on Desertification

Biodiversity. Science for policy: the IPBES initiative.

Desertification is well known to be one of the leading causes of biodiversity losses and linkages between biodiversity science and policy makers cannot be ignored by those who address desertification issues worldwide.

The idea of the IMoSEB consultation (International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity) was launched in a Conference held in Paris, 2005. The IMoSEB consultation was launched in February 2006. In April 2008 (Paris, France), a meeting with representatives of the IMoSEB consultation, and of the Global Strategy for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Follow-up process decided to join forces, in an effort to build a single mechanism, referred to as 'an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning' (IPBES). Following up on the final recommendation

of the IMoSEB consultation (Montpellier, Nov 2007), the Executive Director of UNEP convened an ad hoc intergovernmental and multi stakeholder meeting to discuss all aspects of the proposed IPBES (10-12 November 2008, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). At first formal meeting to consider IPBES, countries did not come ready to negotiate on all its aspects. A second meeting which would consider measures "to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services, including consideration of a new science-policy platform" will thus be necessary before IPBES can be fully defined and launched. For more information: <http://www.imoseb.net/> ; <http://ipbes.net/en/index.aspx>
Main source: http://www.diversitas-international.org/?page=science_imoseb

G rard Begni, Chairman, EDN Science/policy Interface WG.

LANDCON Meetings

The World Association of Soil and Water Conservation – WASWC is behind this initiative. The Organizers of these LANDCON conferences have pledged to follow the Guidelines for Successful Meetings (<http://waswc.soil.gd.cn/consti-decentra.html>) that WASWC had deliberated and achieved in 2008, to facilitate the attendance of academics and professionals so that the meetings that we recommend are of high quality. If your meeting will meet at least 7 in 10 points (by self-appraisal) in the Guidelines, you may register the event in the LANDCON series and receive certain technical support from WASWC at no cost.

To register, write to Samran Sombatpanit at sombatpanit@yahoo.com

Maria Jos  Marqu s P rez, member of the Advisory Board of European DesertNet, IMIDRA, Spain

Report Addressing Soil Degradation in EU Agriculture: Relevant Processes, Practices and Policies, 2009

This project was designed by the European Commission's Agriculture and Rural Development Directorate-General and the Joint Research Centre (JRC). It was launched by the European Parliament and the European Commission to improve understanding of soil conservation practices in Europe, and to analyse how policy measures can encourage farmers to adopt such practices. Six of the soil degradation processes recognised by the European Commission are closely linked to agriculture. In Europe, soil erosion is probably the most significant problem, affecting about 12% of European land. Other soil degradation processes are less visible (e.g. soil compaction) or less widespread (e.g. salinisation) but cannot be neglected. Mismanaged intensification of European agriculture over the last 50 years has contributed to soil degradation, increasing the risk of desertification in most vulnerable regions. For more information visit <http://soco.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Maria Jos  Marqu s P rez, member of the Advisory Board of European DesertNet, IMIDRA, Spain

Collaborative competition for solutions for rural environment: Innovation, Social Impact and Sustainability

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/>) funds the launching of "Cultivating Innovation: Solutions for Rural Communities". It is designed to find innovative solutions that help to improve the quality of life in rural and farming communities, the Ashoka's Changemakers. It is open to all types of organizations (charitable organizations, private companies, or public entities) from all countries. Changemakers will consider all entries that demonstrate system-changing solutions in agriculture and in the lives of rural citizens in sub-Saharan Africa, India, and around the world. Entries must indicate growth beyond the stage of idea, concept, or research. The judges are only able to evaluate programs that are beyond the conceptual stage and have demonstrated a proof of impact,

even at small scale. The winners of the competition will be those entries that best demonstrate innovation, social impact, potential for replication, and sustainability. Deadline: May 13, 2009

For more information visit <http://www.changemakers.net/> or contact changemakersla@ashoka.org

Maria José Marqués Pérez, member of the Advisory Board of European DesertNet, IMIDRA, Spain

NSF, Gates Foundation Partner on Agricultural Development Research

The United States National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced that they will provide some USD 48 million to fund research projects that address smallholder agriculture in the developing world. Each organization will provide USD 24 million over five years for the program called BREAD- Basic Research to Enable Agricultural Development. The program will make competitive awards to research projects addressing **drought**, pests, disease and other problems plaguing small farmers who rely on their crops as the source of their food and income, according to a press release.

For more information, see press release:

http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=114493&org=NSF&from=news; and

BREAD project: <http://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8>

Gérard Begni, Chair, Science/Policy Interface WG.

The Directorate General of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) are happy to inform you on the start of:

CoCooN - Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources in Developing Countries: a Knowledge, Research and Innovation Programme

By funding knowledge, research and innovation projects, CoCooN is going to support local initiatives from the South to partner with international scientists and non-scientists to look for contributions to evidence-based policy development, interventions and practices in the field of conflict and cooperation over natural resources, and to adequately manage, resolve and learn from conflicts. You can consult the website for more info: www.nwo.nl/cocoon.

For further information, please contact Han van Dijk under cocoon@nwo.nl

A new digital soil map of the World.

GlobalSoilMap.net is a new global project that aims to make a new digital soil map of the world using state-of-the-art and emerging technologies for soil mapping and predicting soil properties. It was launched in New York in February. The new digital map will consist of primary functional soil properties at a grid resolution of 90 by 90 m. It will be freely available, web-accessible and widely distributed. GlobalSoilMap.net was initiated by the IUSS Working Group on Digital Soil Mapping in 2006. The consortium, which is led by ISRIC - World Soil Information (Wageningen, Netherlands), includes the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (Ispra, Italy), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (Canberra, Australia), the University of Sydney (Sydney, Australia), the Chinese Academy of Sciences (Nanjing, China), the Earth Institute at Columbia University (New York, USA), the US Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (Morgantown, USA), IRD (Montpellier, France), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa, Rio de Janeiro) and CIAT-TSBF (Nairobi, Kenya). For more information visit www.globalsoilmap.net

Maria José Marqués Pérez, member of the Advisory Board of European DesertNet, IMIDRA, Spain

High-level meeting on african agriculture in the 21st century

A High ministerial-level Meeting on African Agriculture in the 21st Century was held in Windhoek, Namibia (9-10 February 2009). The meeting is part of the preparatory process leading to the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in May 2009. The topics of CSD 16 and also CSD 17 focus on agriculture, rural development, drought, desertification and Africa. For more information: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/brief/briefing1801e.html>

Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Co-chair of European DesertNet, University of Hamburg, Germany

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