

DesertNet International



DesertNet International Newsletter n. 2/2012

This quarterly electronic newsletter is intended to inform the scientific community about dryland-relevant research matters. The **deadline** for receipt of material for the next issue is **15.10.2012**. Please send your contributions (1000 characters max, including spaces) to czanolla@uniss.it

Contents:

1. DesertNet updates on DNI elections and General Assembly
2. Information relevant to DesertNet members
3. Researchers' updates
4. Important upcoming events
5. Publications and Special Issues
6. Other information

1. DesertNet updates on DNI elections and General Assembly

Results of the Elections of DesertNet International

The DNI electronic election was successfully held from 4 to 8 June 2012. More than 48% of the DNI members cast their vote. According to the results of the election, the DNI Boards for the next two years are the following:

Steering Committee (alphabetical order):

- Prof. Dr. Elena ABRAHAM (Argentine Institute of Arid Zones, IADIZA-CONICET, Argentina)
- Prof. Pedro BERLINER (Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, Ben Gurion Univ., Israel)
- Dr. Michael CHERLET (European Commission DG Joint Research Centre, Belgium)
- Prof. Dr. Giuseppe ENNE (NRD-UNISS, University of Sassari, Italy)
- Dr. Richard ESCADAFAL (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement - IRD, France)
- Dr Wafa ESSAHLI (Consultant GM, Tunisia)

- Prof. Dr. Donald GABRIELS (UNESCO Chair on Eremology, University of Ghent, Belgium)
- Dr. María José MARQUES (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)
- Prof. Dr. Carlos SAN JUAN MESONADA (Economist, University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain)
- Dr Maurizio SCIORTINO , Natl. Agency for new technology, Energy, Sust. econ. dev., – ENEA, Italy)
- Dr. Mary SEELY (Desert Research Foundation of Namibia - DRFN, Windhoek, Namibia)
- Dr. Fei WANG (Inst. Of Soil & Water Conservation, Northwest A&F University, China)
- Dr. Pandi ZDRULI, (CIHEAM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, Italy)

Advisory Board (alphabetical order):

- Dr. Mariam AKHTAR-SCHUSTER (Secretariat DesertNet International, Hamburg, Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Jorge BATTLE-SALES (Dept, Biología Vegetal, Universidad de Valencia, Spain)
- Dr. Gérard BEGNI (CNES, France)
- Prof. Dr. Mauro CENTRITTO (National Research Council, Italy)
- Dr. Patrick KLINTENBERG (Desert Research Foundation of Namibia)
- Dr. Christopher MARTIUS (Centre for Development Research – ZEF, Univ. of Bonn, Germany)
- Dr Abdul RAZIQ (Soc. of Animal, Veterinary and Environmental Scientists - SAVES, Pakistan)
- Prof. Dr. José L. RUBIO (Centro de Investigaciones sobre Desertificación –CIDE-CSIC, Spain)
- Dr. Stefan SOMMER (European Commission DG Joint Research Centre, Germany)
- Dr. Lindsay STRINGER (Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds, UK)
- Dr. Richard THOMAS (UNU-INWEH, Canada)

Second General Assembly of DesertNet International in Bari, Italy



The Second General Assembly of DesertNet International was held in Bari (Italy) on 5th July 2012, kindly hosted by the CIHEAM IAMB - Agronomic Mediterranean Institute of Bari. It was attended by 13 DNI members. On this occasion, the new DNI Bureau, whose members are elected from among the Steering Committee members, was inaugurated. During the General Assembly, the status of the existing DNI working groups was presented and new proposals for Working Groups and Task Forces were made. Please refer to the enclosed minutes of the General Assembly for more information. The Minutes are also available on the DNI website.

Message from Mariam Akhtar Schuster, former Chair of DNI

At DNI's 2nd General Assembly, on 5th July 2012 in Bari, Italy, the newly elected DNI Steering Committee and Advisory Board were formally inaugurated. It is with great pleasure that I would like to inform you that based on the decision taken by the new Steering Committee and Advisory Board, the following well-known and experienced and members of the new Steering Committee will hold the following positions:

Chair: Prof. Giuseppe Enne, Italy

Co-chair: Prof. Elena Abraham, Argentina

Treasurer: Dr. María José Marques, Spain

Secretary General: Dr. Richard Escadafal, France

With this said and as former DNI Chair, I would like to most warmly thank the former Steering Committee and Advisory Board and all members of DNI for their great support during the past two years, which enabled DNI to accomplish major goals at the science-policy interface and at the cutting edge scientific level. DNI products, which were produced in the period 30.09.2012 to 05.07.2012 show that DNI's mandate was fully implemented by (i) providing a platform for scientifically based discussions, addressing also knowledge gaps and identifying research areas, and (ii) by

communicating as a think tank with all stakeholders and with policy-makers and identifying issues and priorities for them (for details on products delivered in DNI's working phase from 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012 see the full report of DNI's 2nd General Assembly).

Mariam Akhtar-Schuster

Message from Giuseppe Enne, newly elected DNI Chair

Dear members of DesertNet International,

First of all I would like to warmly thank all DNI members who have supported my candidature and given me this precious opportunity to become Chair of this network.

We have new challenges ahead of us in order to consolidate and reinforce the important achievements reached by DNI during the past two years. During the next biennium I believe it is important to reinforce DNI participation from all continents, particularly those where it is least represented, in order to fully implement its role at the science-policy interface. To achieve this goal, I will need your support so that all of us can take advantage from being part of DNI.

Together we will plan and organise high scientific conferences, we will define mechanisms to better transfer scientific information through the network and we will support all DNI members engaged in research and cooperation project submission, starting partnership capabilities offered by the network.

With the support of the Advisory Board, I am convinced that we all can achieve the scientific objectives as reported in the enclosed minutes of the General Assembly (please refer to Annex IV, in particular).

I will be happy to receive your comments and suggestions about the future activities of DNI.

Giuseppe Enne

2. Information relevant to DesertNet members

Invitation to participate in the Task Force on Land and Soil

In the framework of DesertNet International being an independent think tank, to trigger discussions on dryland degradation and to fill gaps of knowledge, we invite DNI members to participate in this Task Force to better grasp the "landscape" of research on Land and Soils issues using bibliometric methods and data mining of publications.

These methods help to extract the hidden information from databases, regarding relationships between scientists, disciplines, organisations, policy makers, and the clusters they form.

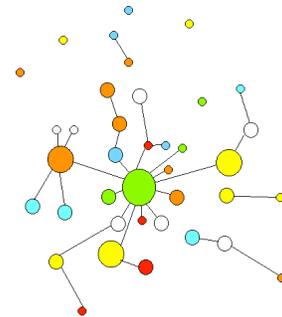
Data collection, extraction and organisation of relevant elements of information, in scientific papers, reports, project documents, etc., is needed first. Then, data mining allow the visualization of links between clusters, their interconnections and their strength. This may be interpreted to analyse the current situation of soil and land degradation research and implementation.

DNI members are invited to participate in:

- An electronic forum, that will be organised to involve motivated participants,
- A session entitled "Soil Science for Land Management" that will be held in April 2013 in the European Geosciences Union (EGU, Vienna) to compile and discuss results.

The results are planned to be published in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal.

For more information, kindly contact Richard Escadafal (richard.escadafal@cesbio.cnes.fr) or Maria Jose Marques (mariajose.marques@uam.es)



3. Researchers Updates

Launch of the Land Matrix

A new report and online database that provides insight into worldwide large-scale land acquisitions was launched by the Land Matrix partnership (Land Coalition, CDE, GIGA, GIZ and CIRAD) at the Land and Poverty Conference on 26th April in Washington (organised by the World Bank).

The online public database shows that large-scale land acquisitions are not a mere “bubble” but rather a long-term trend which already, which already now equals to the size of half of Western Europe.

On the 26th of April in Washington, during the Land and Poverty Conference organised by World Bank, the Land Matrix partnership - composed by the International Land Coalition, CDE, GIGA, GIZ and CIRAD – launched a new report and online database providing important insight into the complex, global phenomenon of large-scale land acquisitions. They confirm this is a lasting trend and not a mere “bubble”. For more information (including press releases) contact:

<http://www.landcoalition.org/news/land-matrix-new-data-large-scale-land-deals-not-%E2%80%9Cbubble%E2%80%9D>
or <http://www.landportal.info/landmatrix>

Information compiled on the basis of website research by: Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Advisory Board DNI

The G8 launches the “New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition”



The G8 recently met in Camp David, Maryland, on 18 May 2012. US President Barack Obama brought food security on the forefront, declaring that a newly formed international partnership should lift 50 million people out of poverty in the next ten years. This “*New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition*” will focus on comprehensive and country-owned plans, developing new tools to mobilize private capital, spurring innovation and engaging partners. The plan will be launched in Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania.

Taking note of an increased level of commitment to food security since its “L’Aquila” G8 summit (July 2009), the G8 issued the following declaration:

Item 18: “Building on this progress, and working with our African and other international partners, today we commit to launch a *New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition* to accelerate the flow of private capital to African agriculture, take to scale new technologies and other innovations that can increase sustainable agricultural productivity, and reduce the risk borne by vulnerable economies and communities. This *New Alliance* will lift 50 million people out of poverty over the next decade, and be guided by a collective commitment to invest in credible, comprehensive and country-owned plans, develop new tools to mobilize private capital, spur and scale innovation, and manage risk; and engage and leverage the capacity of private sector partners – from women and smallholder farmers, entrepreneurs to domestic and international companies”.

More information at:

<http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/2012campdavid/g8-declaration.html>

http://news.global-mechanism.org/archive.php?p=110986870_378294

Information contributed by: Gerard Begni, CNES & CSFD, France (DNI/AB; Head, Science/Policy WG

Internet platform for para-ecologists launched!

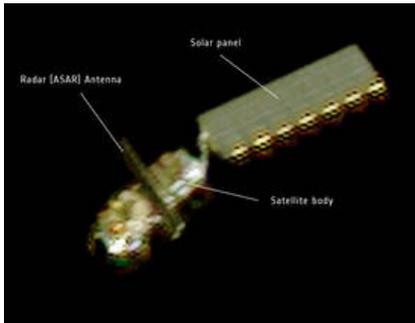
The internet platform for para-ecologists as well as for projects, organisations or individuals that are involved in the capacity development of para-ecologists has been launched at paraecologist.org.

A para-ecologist (in some contexts also called para-taxonomist) is a specialist with extensive local knowledge and being trained largely on-the-job in one or more fields of ecological science. He or she is mutually communicating with the local and scientific communities, contributing to both scientific research and local development.

The platform aims to facilitate the networking and sharing of information within the para-ecologist community but also to inform the public about the concepts, aims and methodology of para-ecologist programmes. Contributions from para-ecologists worldwide and scientists or practitioners that are involved in para-ecologist programmes are very welcome to populate the platform.

Information contributed by: Ute Schmiedel, University of Hamburg, Germany

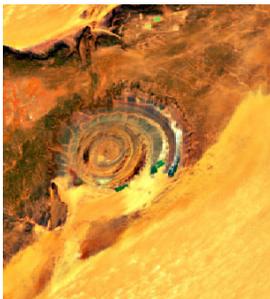
Envisat's obituary



On April 8th 2012 after 10 years of service, the Envisat satellite has stopped sending data to Earth. Further efforts made by ESA teams to restore links with the satellite proved unsuccessful.

Its 8,211 kg weight and 26m * 10m * 5m in-orbit size made Envisat the largest satellite ever built to monitor comprehensively the Earth environment at large.

Envisat had transmitted unique information about the Earth and its environment for some 10 years lifetime. It paved the way to a unique comprehensive understanding and monitoring of many terrestrial processes, including the DPSIR patterns of soil degradation and



desertification. Envisat carried on the following instruments:

- Three Earth surface imaging instruments: MERIS (optical, moderate resolution) and ASAR (high resolution SAR), AATSR (Sea surface temperature)
- Three instruments for atmospheric chemistry analysis: GMOMS, MIPAS, SCHIAMACHY
- Four synergistic instruments for altimetry and precise positioning: RA2; DORIS; LBR, MWR

The EASA/EC Sentinel satellites will ensure follow-on missions as space components of the GMES initiative.

Fig 1 (up): ENVISAT observed by PLEIADES at about 100 km distance (April 15, 2012)

Fig. 2 (down): A part of Mauritania desert observed by ENVISAT/MERIS.

More information at: http://www.esa.int/esaCP/SEM1SXSWT1H_index_0.html and <http://envisat.esa.int/instruments/>

Information contributed by: Gerard Begni, CNES & CSFD, France (DNI/AB; Head, Science/Policy W

IPBES has an official life !!!

IPBES has been officially established in Panama City, at the end of the IPBES plenary (16-21 April, 2012). The first Plenary should take place early 2013.

It was decided to start some intersessional work to prepare the initial work programme, focussing upon four issues:

- An overview of existing assessments with a critical analysis of their policy impact;
- A draft multidisciplinary conceptual framework for IPBES;
- A draft compilation and analysis of capacity building needs for IPBES;
- Draft guidelines for governments and observers to submit requests to the Plenary.

Degradation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in semi-arid and sub humid regions is both one source and one impart of desertification. So, some specific IPBES achievements can be of major interest for DNI.

More information at: www.diversitas-international.org/resources/publications/e-news%20IPBES%20may%202012.pdf
and <http://www.ipbes.net/>

Information contributed by: Gerard Begni, CNES & CSFD, France (DNI/AB; Head, Science/Policy WG)

The Global Earth Observation (GEO) will develop a Global Agricultural Monitoring (GLAM) initiative.

Globalization has transformed the world into a small village. A large part of the “bottom billion” (Collier) of people under the poverty threshold live in remote and isolated areas prone to desertification. Nevertheless, they cannot be considered as “closed cells” protected from global trade shocks. They have to sell cattle and crop and buy products and services to survive. Their food security heavily depends on price volatility in agricultural markets, which in turn depends on global offer, demand and stocks. The GEO-VII Plenary (Global Earth Observation) responded to G20 concerns about these topics by **sting** up the GLAM (Global Agriculture Monitoring) initiative, to build national capacities, strengthen harmonize and connect multi-scale monitoring systems and develop a global “system of systems” for agricultural monitoring.



Fig. The economist Paul COLLIER (Oxford University) is the author of “The bottom billion” (among other books), a reference book addressing combat against poverty in the world.

Source: CEOS newsletter N° 38, March 2012 - <http://www.ceos.org>

Bibliography. Collier, P. The bottom billion

Information contributed by: Gerard Begni, CNES & CSFD, France (DNI/AB; Head, Science/Policy WG)

CASCADE Project

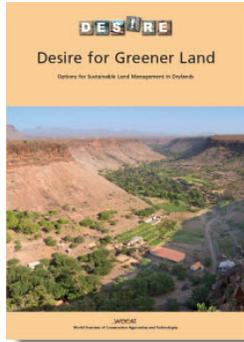
CASCADE
Consistent actions in order to:
How can we prevent ecosystem degradation?

At the end of August some partners from the CASCADE Project will be meeting in southern Italy to discuss the practical aspects of planned experiments. The aim of CASCADE is to obtain a better understanding of sudden ecosystem shifts that may lead to major losses in biodiversity and ecosystem services, and to define measures that can be used to prevent such shifts. These experiments will look at different spatial scales, from small plots to landscapes and the results will be shared with local people and policy makers. Experimental structures and monitoring equipment will be installed at the Italian pilot site. The remaining CASCADE sites, in Portugal, Spain, Crete and Cyprus will then be equipped next year. Data

collection, management and analysis will be a key feature of CASCADE, and therefore the requirements for a database in collaboration with the JRC will also be discussed. For more information about CASCADE research visit: <http://www.cascade-project.eu/>

Information contributed by: Nichola Geeson, CASCADE dissemination

'Desire for Greener Land' compiles options for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in drylands.



The book describes the DESIRE approach and WOCAT methodology for a range of audiences, from local agricultural advisors to scientists and policymakers. Links are provided to manuals and online materials, enabling application of the various tools and methods in similar projects. The book also includes an analysis of the current context of degradation and SLM in the study sites, in addition to analysis of the SLM technologies and approaches trialed in the DESIRE project. Thirty SLM technologies, eight SLM approaches, and several degradation and SLM maps from all the DESIRE study sites are compiled in a concise and well-illustrated format, following the style of this volume's forerunner where the land is greener (WOCAT 2007). Finally, conclusions and policy points are presented for decision makers, the private sector, civil society, donors, and the research community. These are intended to support people's efforts to invest wisely in the sustainable management of land – enabling greener drylands to become a reality, not just a desire.

More information at: <http://www.desire-project.eu/>.

Download the book flyer at:

https://www.wocat.net/uploads/media/ISBN_DESIRE_Book_Flyer_low.pdf

Information contributed by: Gudrun Schwilch, Univ. Bern, Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), Switzerland

Future innovative partnership between the African Union and AUF



Africa is facing a vigorous demographic growth, so its development heavily relies on the ability of young people to create and contribute to development policies, strategies, niches and actions – both for themselves and for the whole population. The education level in Africa is very good in itself, but poverty prevents too many talented young people to have access to a proper education – and whether and how this education actually serves development is still an open question.

In order to face some of this challenges in francophone Africa, M. Bernard Cerquiglini, Dean of the AUF ('*Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*'), and M. Jean Ping, President of the African Union met on June 5, 2012. The objective was to define an innovative framework for actions and projects aiming at supporting the African Universities and high level formation to serve African development in a sustainable way. AUF is bringing together 784 full members in 98 countries.

Fig. On June 5, 2012, M. Bernard Cerquiglini, dean of the AUF and M. Jean Ping, president of the African Union met together to define innovative cooperation for high level African formation serving development.

More information at: AUF Information Letter 81

<http://www.auf.org/actualites/futurs-partenariats-entre-lunion-africaine-et-lauf/>

Information contributed by: Gerard Begni, CNES & CSFD, France (DNI/AB; Head, Science/Policy WG)

Annual Conference of the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists



The 19th Annual Conference of the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists has just been held in Prague on June 27-30, 2012. The conference was jointly organized by the Environment Center of Charles University in Prague and the University of Economics.

Keynote speakers included **Ian J. Bateman** (CSERGE, University of East Anglia), **William D. Nordhaus** (Yale University) and **V. Kerry Smith** (Arizona State University). A plenary panel session on Rio+20 will be chaired by **Sir Partha Dasgupta**, University of Cambridge and will host contributions from **Marianne Fay** (World Bank), **Reyer Gerlagh** (Tilburg University), **Georgina Mace** (Imperial College London) and **Bedrich Moldan** (Charles University in Prague). The conference programme is available on line (see hereunder).

Fig: The famous astronomic clock in Prague.

More information at: <http://www.eaere2012.org/>

Information contributed by: Gerard Begni, CNES & CSFD, France (DNI/AB; Head, Science/Policy WG)

Can brown macroalgae limit harmful extensive biofuel cultivation?



Fuel price rises and volatility, oil reserves long term decrease, CO2 emission limitation concerns, led industrialized countries (USA, EU) to edict directives encouraging the use of biofuels. This created an artificial market which pushed many developed countries to substitute biofuel plants to traditional cultures and/or to create intensive biofuel in semiarid areas, relying on specificities of such species as *Jatropha Curcans*. Such policies have widely acknowledged consequences: increase in international market food prices, recession in local food production, fragile soil exhaustion (hence degradation) – in other words, desertification, decline in food security and

poverty increase. These adverse effects could be softened by second generation biofuel production processes, but also by innovative research on alternate sources, such as algae. Traditionally, macroalgae has been passed over as a candidate for biofuel as its primary sugar content is not easily fermented. Nevertheless, a group of researchers proved recently that brown macroalgae could be cost-effectively used for biofuel production (see ref. hereunder).

Fig. Could brown macroalgae be the next biofuel? © Bio Architecture Lab, Inc

Ref - Wargacki, A. J. et al. (2012) – An engineered microbial platform for direct biofuel production from brown macroalgae – *Science*, Vol. 335, pp. 308-313, 20 January 2012.

More information at: <http://www.practicalfishkeeping.co.uk/content.php?sid=4706>

Information contributed by: Gerard Begni, CNES & CSFD, France (DNI/AB; Head, Science/Policy WG)

ASAL plans to combat crop devastations by locusts using remote sensing tools.



Soil degradation is a primary cause limiting food production, but other factors do exist – among which crop and trees devastation by locusts.

The Algerian Space Agency (“*Agence Spatiale Algérienne*”, ASAL) conducted an analysis of the ecological conditions that lead to the development of migratory locust in several regions with the support of space-based information. To this end ASAL evaluated six satellite images to monitor reproduction of the insect over some 200

000 km². By observing and interpreting the chlorophyll-activities, 68 areas with favourable conditions for proliferation of migratory locusts have been identified by ASAL.

Fig. Locusts devastating trees in Western Africa. © FAO.

Source: UN-SPIDER March 2012 Updates.

Information contributed by: Gerard Begni, CNES & CSFD, France (DNI/AB; Head, Science/Policy WG)

4. Important upcoming events

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

| 2012 | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 15-17 Aug | The Global Summit http://www.theglobalsummit.org/ | London, UK |
| 26-31 Aug | World Water Week. Water and Food Security http://www.worldwaterweek.org/ | Stockholm, Sweden |
| 29-31 Aug | 3rd. International Sustainability Conference http://www.sustainabilityconference.ch/cms/index.php | Basel, Switzerland |
| 3-7 Sept | Second Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change http://www.afconference.com/ | Hanoi, Viet Nam |
| 4-5 Sep | Annual Meeting 2012: Soil Science and Food Security http://www.soils.org.uk/events/event-88/ | Loughborough Leics, UK |
| 12 Sept | Best Practices In College Teaching: Creating An Active Learning Environment http://www.innovativeeducators.org/product_p/168.htm | IE Webinar |
| 12–14 Sep | Annual Conference of the remote Sensing and Photogrammetry Society http://www.rspsoc2012.org/ | London, UK |
| 24–27 Sep | SPIE Remote Sensing. Technologies and Applications Research http://spie.org/x6262.xml | Edinburgh, UK |
| 30 Sep- 5 Oct | EcoSummit 2012 – Ecological Sustainability http://www.ecosummit2012.org/ | Columbus, Ohio, USA |
| 15-18 Oct | ECOHEALTH 2012. The 4th Biennial Conference of the International Association for Ecology and Health: Sustaining Ecosystems, Supporting Health www.ecohealth2012.org/Default.aspx | Kunming City China |
| 22-26 Oct | Symposium of contemporary conservation practice www.kznwildlife.com | KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa |
| 12–15 Nov | 4th International Conference on Dryland, Deserts and Desertification http://in.bgu.ac.il/en/desertification/Pages/default.aspx | Sede Boqe, Israel |
| 22-24 Nov | Global Environmental Change and Human Security: The Need for a New vision for Science, Policy and Leadership (Climate Change as an Opportunity) http://www.nrcc-center.org/scientific-events/gecs-2012/ | Marrakech, Morocco |
| 2013 | | |
| 24-25 Feb | Water Resources and Sustainable Development http://ciredd.ensh.dz/index.php | Algiers, Algeria |
| Feb | 2nd UNCCD Conference. Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas http://2sc.unccd.int | Fortaleza, Brazil |

| | | |
|------------|--|--------------------|
| 7-12 April | European Geosciences Union, General Assembly http://www.egu2013.eu/ | Vienna, Austria |
| June | 5th Conference on Desertification and Land Degradation | Ghent, Belgium |
| 4-6 Sept | Utilization and protection of halophytes and salt-affected landscapes http://members.iif.hu/tot3700/salinityconferencehungary2013.html | Kecskemét, Hungary |
| | | |

Information contributed by: Maria José Marques Perez Univ. Autonoma de Madrid, Spain

UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference – Call for Abstracts Still Open



The call for abstracts for the 2nd Scientific Conference is still open. The three day event, to be held in February 2013, aims to gather a broad range of stakeholders from the academic, public, civil and private sectors to approach the pressing issues of desertification, land degradation and drought from an economic point of view and to raise awareness for the strong effects - costs and benefits - that decisions related to land management and ecosystems have. You are kindly invited to submit an abstract for an oral or a poster presentation, a special session or a workshop by 31 August 2012.

For further information on the specific topics of the call for abstracts, the conference theme and structure or the organizing committees and partnership opportunities please visit the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference website at <http://2sc.unccd.int> or contact us at 2sc.unccd@grforum.org.

Information contributed by: Dr. Walter J. Ammann, President/ CEO Global Risk Forum GRF Davos, Switzerland

NATIONAL GLOBAL CHANGE conference “Global Change Science and Innovation for a Resilient Society”

The National Conference will be held on 26 – 28 November 2012 and it is being organised by the Department of Science and Technology and National Research Foundation, Republic of South Africa

Interested contributors are invited to submit their abstracts to Ms Ntombizini Manana (Ntombizini.manana@nrf.ac.za) on or before 30 September 2012.

Information contributed by: Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Advisory Board DNI

5. Publications and Special Issues

1. Aderghal, Patricia Santos, Mark S. Reed. 2012. A structured multi-stakeholder learning process for Sustainable Land Management, *Journal of Environmental Management*, Volume 107, 30 September 2012, Pages 52-63.
2. Agostino Ferrara, Luca Salvati, Adele Sateriano, Angelo Nolè. 2012. Performance evaluation and cost assessment of a key indicator system to monitor desertification vulnerability, 2012. *Ecological Indicators*, Volume 23, December 2012, Pages 123-129.
3. Amira Fterich, Mosbah Mahdhi, Mohamed Mars. 2012. Impact of grazing on soil microbial communities along a chronosequence of *Acacia tortilis* subsp. *raddiana* in arid soils in Tunisia, *European Journal of Soil Biology*, Volume 50, May–June 2012, Pages 56-63.

4. *Global Drylands: A UN system-wide response* is available at www.unemg.org or can be downloaded at: <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/medialibrary/2011/10/19/3faf1880/Global-Drylands-FINAL-LR.pdf>
5. Gudrun Schwilch, Felicitas Bachmann, Sandra Valente, Celeste Coelho, Jorge Moreira, Abdellah Laouina, Miloud Chaker, Mohamed Aderghal, Patricia Santos, Mark S. Reed. 2012. A structured multi-stakeholder learning process for Sustainable Land Management. *J Environ Management*, Volume 107, Sep 2012, Pages 52-63.
6. Hardtke, L.A., del Valle, H.F. and Sione, W. 2011. Spatial distribution of wildfire risk in the Monte biome (Patagonia, Argentina). *Journal of Maps* 588-599.
7. Jeremy R. Klass, Debra P.C. Peters, Jacqueline M. Trojan, Stephen H. Thomas. 2012. Nematodes as an indicator of plant–soil interactions associated with desertification, *Applied Soil Ecology*, Volume 58, July 2012, Pages 66-77.
8. Jose Damian Ruiz Sinoga, Sarah Pariente, Asuncion Romero Diaz, Juan Francisco Martinez Murillo. 2012. Variability of relationships between soil organic carbon and some soil properties in Mediterranean rangelands under different climatic conditions (South of Spain), *CATENA*, Volume 94, July 2012, Pages 17-25.
9. Lihua Yang, Jianguo Wu. 2012. Knowledge-driven institutional change: An empirical study on combating desertification in northern china from 1949 to 2004, *Journal of Environmental Management*, Volume 110, 15 November 2012, Pages 254-266.
10. Mirmusa Hashemimanesh, Hamidreza Matinfar, Evaluation of desert management and rehabilitation by petroleum mulch base on temporal spectral analysis and field study (case study: Ahvaz, Iran), *Ecological Engineering*, Volume 46, September 2012, Pages 68-74.
11. Nawash O.S. and. Al-Horani A.S. (2011). The most important medicinal plants in Wadi Araba desert in South West Jordan:A review article. *Advances in Environmental Biology*, 5(2): 418-425, 2011. ISSN 1995-0756. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/62094993/Artemisia-Judaica-Medicinal-Plants-Araba-Nawash-2011>
12. Wei Zhang, Xiaoyan Wei, Zheng Jinhai, Zhu Yuliang, Yanjing Zhang. 2012. Estimating suspended sediment loads in the Pearl River Delta region using sediment rating curves, *Continental Shelf Research*, Volume 38, 15 April 2012, Pages 35-46.
13. Yuqiang Li, Xinhua Zhou, James R. Brandle, Tonghui Zhang, Yinping Chen, Juanjuan Han. 2012. Temporal progress in improving carbon and nitrogen storage by grazing exclosure practice in a degraded land area of China's Horqin Sandy Grassland, *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment*, Volume 159, 15 September 2012, Pages 55-61.

“Arab Development Challenges Report 2011 - Towards the Developmental State in the Arab Region”
http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/UNDP-ADCR_En-2012.pdf

6. Other Information

Celebration of the World Day to Combat Desertification in Italy

On the occasion of the celebration of the World Day to Combat Desertification , the national workshop “Development and conservation of the ecosystems services to combat drought and desertification” has been organised jointly by ENEA, INEA, CNR, ISPRA and hosted by ENEA in Rome on 14th and 15th June 2012. The meeting addressed the following topics:

- Scenarios and models to support plan, programme and strategy definition
- Eco-systemic services: state and evolution
- Restoration of eco-systemic services: traditional and innovative practices
- Governance and policy to combat desertification

The workshop outcomes are available at:

<http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Event-and-campaigns/WDCD/Pages/around-the-world.aspx>

and the pdf files of the presentations at:

http://editors.enea.it/it/enea_informa/events/desertificazione_giu2012/desertificazione_giu2012

Information contributed by: M. Sciortino, DNI SC member, ENEA, Italy.

Training Schools

These courses provide understanding of environmental problems and high-quality training for early stage researchers or PhD students.

Ecosystem based approaches in Disaster Risk Reduction

25-26 August, 2012 in Davos, Switzerland

In conjunction with the fourth International Disaster and Risk Conference IDRC Davos the Global Risk Forum Davos offers a two day training course on ecosystem based approaches in disaster risk reduction, which will be held on 25-26 August 2012 in Davos, Switzerland. The training course aims to increase the awareness of environment and disaster linkages, and the multiple benefits provided by ecosystems for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and adaptation to climate-related risks. The course is held in English and open for everyone.

More information at:

http://riskacademy.grforum.org/pages_new.php/PEDRR-Training-Course/748/1/635/

Human induced Soil Degradation

10-14 September, 2012 in Wageningen, the Netherlands

The course is interactive, that means that students present a special soil degradation syndrome that occurs in their home country, its effects on people and environment and work out possible methods for scientific research and practical solutions. Discussions with stakeholders in affected areas in the Netherlands will lead to interdisciplinary visions of the situation and how possible solutions could be implemented in real live.

More information at:

<http://www.pe-rc.nl/database/Courses%20and%20Activities/PE-RC%20postgraduate%20courses/Human%20induced%20soil%20degradation.htm>

Information contributed by: Maria José Marques Perez Univ. Autonoma de Madrid, Spain

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