



World Day to Combat Desertification 2014

- LAND FOR LIFE -

**How Sustainable Land Management Can
Improve People's Livelihoods and Resilience**

SIDE EVENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 149th SESSION OF THE FAO COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2014, RED ROOM (Building A, 1st floor), 18:30 – 19:30

Every year on 17 June, the global community celebrates the World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD). The theme of this year's WDCD is **“Land Belongs to the Future - Let's Climate Proof It”** and focuses on ecosystem-based adaptation in order to i) increase the attention given to land and soil within climate change adaptation; ii) mobilize support for sustainable land management (SLM); and iii) call for the inclusion of land and soil and their significance to food security into national climate change adaptation policies.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding agreement linking environment and development to SLM. Land and soil play a crucial role in mitigating and adapting to climate change. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the UNCCD institutions, as well as the other Rome-based UN Agencies and their host, the Government of Italy, are fully committed to supporting the implementation of the UNCCD in order to increase resilience to climate change and drought through the promotion of SLM practices as a means to improve people's livelihoods.

Taking into account the implications of dwindling natural resources and increasing competition for water and land, including forests and agrosilvopastoral systems, on national and global security, FAO, UNCCD and the Government of Italy joined forces by establishing an Office of the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD at FAO, which is in charge of implementing the GM Programme on **“Liaison – Land, Security and Resilience”**. The office has been functional since 1 April 2014 and aims to improve people's livelihoods and resilience to food insecurity, climate change and drought through increased investments in sustainable land-based practices.

On the occasion of the 2014 WDCD and in the context of the 149th session of the FAO Council, the Government of Italy, FAO and the GM are celebrating the inauguration of the GM's Office at FAO with a side event on **“Land for Life – How Sustainable Land Management can Improve People's Livelihood and Resilience”**. The side event will highlight activities of FAO, UNCCD and the Governments of Italy and Kuwait to combat desertification, land degradation and drought and present the priorities of the newly established GM office at FAO.

Time	Content
18:30	<i>The contribution of sustainable natural resource management to combat desertification and land degradation</i> Maria Helena Semedo , Deputy Director-General, Coordinator Natural Resources, FAO
18:40	<i>Land, security and resilience – three cornerstones for UNCCD implementation</i> Video message of Monique Barbut , Executive Secretary of the UNCCD and Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist , Director of Programmes / Officer in Charge, Global Mechanism of the UNCCD
18:50	<i>Combatting desertification and land degradation in the Near East Region: Achievements and challenges</i> Yousef Jhail , Permanent Representative of Kuwait to FAO, Chair of the FAO's Near East Regional Group
19:00	<i>Fighting desertification, land degradation and droughts to improve people's livelihood – a priority for the Government of Italy</i> Fabio Cassese , Deputy Director General, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy
19:10	<i>Facilitated discussion</i> Moujahed Achouri , Director, Land and Water Division, FAO