



NATO - CCMS AND SCIENCE COMMITTEE WORKSHOP ON DESERTIFICATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION. A SECURITY ISSUE

Valencia (Spain), 2-5 December 2003

<http://www.epa.gov/nerlesd1/land-sci/desert/index.htm>

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Problem Statement: Desertification is defined by the United Nations Environment Programme as *land degradation* in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas of the world resulting from a combination of factors including climatic variations and human activities. Typically, the definition has focused on reduction and loss of the biological and economic productivity caused by land use change. Nowhere is this more apparent in the world today than in the Mediterranean region. Nearly one-half of the world's countries have portions or all of their land in arid, semi-arid, and dry subhumid environments and thus subject to the processes of desertification. These lands account for 45 million km², or approximately one-third of the Earth's surface. Land degradation is occurring at an alarming rate and estimated to affect over 1 billion people or one-fifth of the human population of the world. During the last half of the 20th Century these areas have come under increasing pressure from accelerating human impacts and adverse climate change. Severe conditions such as drought, famine, resource depletion, human migration, and economic disruption have been documented. To begin alleviating these conditions requires long-term solutions based on solid research and accompanied by decision management processes. If people are to sustain themselves in the world's drylands they will especially need to be cognizant of the scarcity and security issues related to water and soil resources. This will require ready-access to the most current knowledge and research information regarding the condition and extent of resources. This also provides the opportunity to enlist new technologies and couple informed regulations and policies with environmental reform to maintain societal sustainability.

Purpose: The purpose of the workshop is to establish an expert working group of NATO member and partner Nations in combination with representative members from the Mediterranean Dialogue countries (i.e. Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia <http://www.nato.int/med-dial/summary.htm>) to exchange information about the issue of desertification in the Mediterranean region. The challenge to the working group is to identify regional causes of desertification and examine the consequences of past and future land use and physical processes. Additionally, it is our interest to explore the interactions between desertification and human migratory processes with a special focus on security issues. This will involve the understanding of the historical development of the problem, through an analysis of the impact of desertification on societies (especially as it applies across different cultures and time-scales). The workshop will provide the opportunity to apply new technologies and integrate both natural and social sciences within a framework for mutual international cooperation. The focus of the workshop is on work accomplished at the regional and national level, which emphasizes community or societal interests and involvement.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Researchers, scientists, land managers, policy makers, government and non-government representatives interested in desertification issues, especially within the Mediterranean region. Representation is encouraged throughout the NATO and Mediterranean Dialogue community.

REGISTRATION FEES

There is no registration fee for this workshop. All transportation, hotel, food, and incidental cost are up to the individual. Online registration is available at <http://www.epa.gov/nerlesd1/land-sci/desert/images/registration-form.pdf> <http://www.epa.gov/nerlesd1/land-sci/desert/images/registration-form.doc> Please visit our workshop website to register for the conference and obtain hotel directions and contact information.



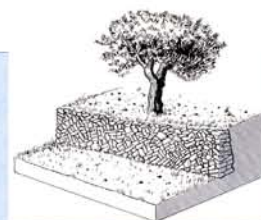
Anticipated Results: A proceedings, book, or special issue journal of the workshop including keynote presentations, thematic papers, and poster papers will be prepared. Secondly, a framework or proactive strategy designed to address land degradation issues including sustainability will be explored. This may include a proposal for a cooperative multi-year pilot study to examine the issue in more detail throughout the region and the establishment of a network of experts.



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

THEMES:

- Soil and Vegetation Monitoring Techniques and Programs
- Land Use and Human Demographic Change
- Water Resources and Management
- Country Reports in the Mediterranean Region. Northern and Southern Perspectives
- Consequences of Degradation on Social, Economic, and Political Issues: Especially on Food Security and Migrations
- Regional Cooperation and Information Sharing Mechanisms
- Forecasting Techniques, Early Warning Systems, and Alternative Futures Analysis
- Advanced Technologies



SUBMISSION OF PAPERS

All interested persons are invited to give oral or poster presentations. Individuals interested in presenting a communication or a poster should submit the title, author(s), and an Abstract in English, of the proposed presentation. For submission of presentations it will be required that at least one of the authors is registered at the Workshop. Additionally, authors should indicate which one of the 8 conference themes best represents their contribution. Please send abstracts by email. The Scientific Committee will screen the abstracts. Acceptance will be based on the quality and relevance to the workshop topics. During the Workshop you will be provided with a publication containing the accepted abstracts, a field trip guide and all the invited communications. Simultaneous translation, LCD Projector, slide projector and overhead projector will be available for speakers. Accommodation will be made, upon request, for video presentations. After the Workshop, a book will be published with a selection of the presentations, invited speeches and the conclusions of the workshop topics.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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ORGANIZING INSTITUTIONS

NATO Science Committee and Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development
Centro de Investigaciones sobre Desertificación-CIDE (CSIC, Universitat de València, Generalitat Valenciana)
Desert Research Institute, Division of Earth and Ecosystem Sciences

COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

Ministry of the Environment, Spain.
Generalitat Valenciana.
European Society for Soil Conservation

