

WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION 2011 Observance event in Spain



Carlos Marchena (left) stands with Massimo Candelori of the UNCCD (right) showing his Drylands Ambassador diploma

Carlos Marchena, new Drylands Ambassador of the UNCCD

The World Cup winning Spanish football defender Carlos Marchena was designated as Drylands Ambassador of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on Friday, 17 June. In this role, he will contribute to raising awareness on the importance of sustainable land management, the fight against desertification and land degradation, and the mitigation of the effects of drought. “There are many human lives at stake. While many countries fight against desertification, we must be all united to support them with all our energies”, Marchena said. “I am very proud to add my humble help to this cause”, he added.

“Marchena’s involvement will also inspire the over 1 billion people that struggle with land degradation today”, said the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Luc Gnacadja, appreciating his solidarity in the fight against desertification. Mr. Marchena received the designation as Drylands Ambassador at the occasion of the observance of the World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD) in Madrid, organized by IPADE Foundation with the support of the UNCCD secretariat. The WDCD was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1994. Since then, states devote the WDCD for promoting awareness of the need for international cooperation to combat desertification and the effects of drought, and on the implementation of the UNCCD.

“We can revert the current situation if we keep united”, the new Drylands Ambassador Marchena said. As the United Nations Secretary-General Ban ki-Moon said in his message for

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this year's WDCD, "Degraded lands can be reclaimed by agroforestry and other sustainable practices. We need to scale up these interventions and disseminate their results widely".

Carlos Marchena currently plays for the Spanish Club Villarreal as central defender and set a world record of 50 successive international appearances without defeat when he played in the 3-2 win against Saudi Arabia in May 2010. On the international front, Marchena first appeared for Spain in the youth squad, winning the 1999 FIFA World Youth Championship. He was also on the roster for the 2000 Olympic U-23 squad, and won the silver medal. As part of the Spanish team, he is now champion of Europe and champion on the World, as winner of the UEFA European Football Championship, held last 2008 in Austria and Switzerland, and the 2010 FIFA World Cup, held last summer in South Africa.