Summary of WDCD2018 celebration in Gorgan-IRAN

Regional observance of the WDCD2018 was held by the Natural Resources and Watershed management General Directorate of Golestan province on 17th June.

Opening ceremony: The Video message from UNCCD Executive Secretary Ms. Monique Barbut.

First lecture: Mr. Ghezelsoflo, General Director of Natural Resources and Watershed management General Directorate of Golestan province; He mentioned to the important causes of desertification in the province. "We have studied 22000 hectares of lands in the province where are affecting by desertification- to manage them not only for recognizing mitigation factors but also for restoring methods" he said. Then he announced we implemented some measures to combat desertification such as 750-hectares rainwater harvesting ponds and 2100-hectares plantation of shrubs in the north of the province.

Second lecture: Mr. Nazari, Head of Golestan Regional Water Authority; he mentioned to over-exploitation of groundwater by illegal wells. "We will face land subsidence soon as a result of too much water exploitation from the earth. In the last 10 years, our groundwater reservoirs were depleted to 14 MCM. So, the continuation of this trend leads to desertification. Nowadays, annual discharge of main rivers in the province was reduced more than 50 percent as a result of drought and climate change. We have to believe this limitation and we need adapt ourselves to the current situation." he said.

Third lecture: Mr. Najafi Nejad, President Gorgan University of agriculture and natural resources sciences; "we all know problems and limitations and in my opinion, the main point is the inefficient management of policymakers. For example, we approved to change steep farmlands to orchard approximately 15 years ago but we just did it less than 10 percent. It is essential to promote the general awareness about achieving to land degradation neutrality" he said.