

**Dear Mr. Executive Secretary,**

Today's World Day to Combat Desertification also marks the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). UNCCD plays a key role in the world's efforts to eradicate poverty, achieve sustainable development and reach the Millennium Development Goals.

In view of the recently concluded Memorandum of Cooperation between UNCCD and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) I am looking forward to a fruitful cooperation between our institutions in order to reach those goals.

The risks of desertification are substantial and clear. Desertification undermines the fertility of the world's land, with fatal consequences for the world's biodiversity. Desertification contributes to food insecurity, famine and poverty, and can give rise to social, economic and political tensions that can cause conflicts, and further aggravates poverty and land degradation. The loss of biodiversity and habitat is but one of the consequences of this vicious circle. Combating desertification means to eliminate one of the main causes of biodiversity loss, and therefore the cooperation between our conventions is one of the main priorities of CMS.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the UNCCD's adoption, I wish to express my congratulations for the achievements of the last decade, ten years of successfully working for a more sustainable development on a global level. I look forward to working with your secretariat on the achievement of our common goals.

Please accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

**Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht**  
Executive Secretary