

MESSAGE TO NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

Dear UNCCD Focal Points and stakeholders,

As you are aware, the World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD) is observed every year on 17 June. We invite you to celebrate with us this year's World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD).

This year, the focus is the attainment of food security for all through sustainable food systems. Some 805 million people in the world lacked sufficient nutritious food between 2012 and 2014. We need to take this into account as we observe the International Year of Soils.

With the slogan, "No such thing as a free lunch. Invest in healthy soil", we are sending a strong message to the general public and decision makers that eradicating hunger and poverty for all are closely tied to the realizing Land Degradation Neutrality. To this end, the concept note, logo and other materials are already available on our web-page for use: <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Event-and-campaigns/WDCD/wdcd%202015/Pages/default.aspx> this page will be updated constantly.

There will be a page publicizing the national observances. Send your plan or weblink for your event to secretariat@unccd.int for posting on that page.

The global observance will be hosted by the Government of Italy and will take place at the Milan Expo. We invite all the countries participating in the Expo to join us or to organize complementary celebratory activities on-site on 17 June.

Let me also take this opportunity to invite you to participate in the UNCCD National Dryland Champions programme. The National Dryland Champions programme is designed to honour activities by individuals and/or organizations and business respectively that make a practical contribution to sustainable land management (SLM) practices in your own country. A number of National Focal Point Ministries run this programme, awarding their SLM contributors on the World Day to Combat Desertification national observance event. Information on the programme can be found at <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Event-and-campaigns/Dryland%20Champions/Pages/default.aspx>

For further inquiries, please contact Ms Yukie Hori (yhori@unccd.int, +49 228 815 2829), Communication team leader/Spokesperson - External Relations, Policy and Advocacy Unit.

We look forward to celebrating the WDCD with you and reaching more people than ever before.

Monique Barbut

Executive Secretary