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**CONSIDERATION OF THE INTERIM REPORT ON THE STATUS OF
CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS
AND DESERTIFICATION**

Report on the status of celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

1. The General Assembly of the United Nations, at its fifty-eighth ordinary session, being concerned at the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and its far-reaching implications for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, those regarding poverty eradication in particular, declared the year 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) as a means of raising public awareness on the issue of desertification and in order to protect the biological diversity and the knowledge and the traditions of those communities affected by desertification.
2. This document provides information on the steps taken by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as the designated focal point for the IYDD, towards implementation of General Assembly resolution 58/211 since the last report to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session (COP 7) and up to the end of the IYDD.
3. Fifty-four country Parties reported to the secretariat on activities organized to celebrate the IYDD.
4. The annex to this document contains a list of official international events agreed with the main governmental and institutional partners for celebration of the IYDD.

* This document was submitted late in order to ensure a full and comprehensive coverage of all activities under the IYDD over the entire year.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In adopting its resolution 58/211, the General Assembly of United Nations decided that the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) would be formally launched on 1 January 2006 with a view to raising global public awareness of the increasing challenges posed by desertification, to safeguarding the biological diversity of the arid lands covering one third of the planet, and to protecting the knowledge and traditions of affected communities.
2. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), by its decision 28/COP.7, paragraph 7, requested the secretariat to prepare an interim report to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) at its fifth session on the status of celebration of the IYDD.

II. CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES AND FOLLOW-UP TO DECISION 28/COP.7

3. Decision 28/COP.7 follows the spirit of General Assembly resolution 58/211 and further introduces important elements into the process, as follows:
 - (a) “Invites those Parties, international and non-governmental organizations that have not yet done so to inform the secretariat of activities envisaged for the observance of the IYDD.” A total of 54 countries reported to the secretariat on activities for the celebration of the IYDD.
 - (b) “Requests the secretariat to make available to the Parties and observers a consolidated list containing all activities reported in order to coordinate the information and avoid overlapping of activities.” After appropriate consultation with diverse institutional partners and members of the IYDD inter-agency steering committee, and following past experience in the celebration of international years, it was agreed that a dedicated IYDD website would be the best option to ensure global outreach, effective information flow and constant update. Accordingly, the website <www.iydd.org> was set up to provide background information on the UNCCD and IYDD, relevant news for the media, access to the national committees established in some countries, and a list of activities. The website included a system to facilitate the submission of activities online.
 - (c) “Encourages ... country Parties to make voluntary contributions to the Supplementary Fund in order to ensure adequate implementation of General Assembly resolution 58/211.” The Governments of Germany, Finland, Italy, Spain and Switzerland have effectively contributed to the Fund, as a way to support major international events planned in 2006.

4. In addition, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) concluded agreements with the secretariat with a view to supporting targeted public information activities, including the production of joint publications, a photographic exhibition, media and parliamentary alerts, and the training of journalists.

III. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5. The UNCCD secretariat, in cooperation with the Government of Italy and two of the honorary spokespersons for the IYDD, organized a side-event on the occasion of the presentation to the General Assembly of the report of the Secretary-General on the status of preparation of the IYDD (November 2005). The presentation was further supported by public information activities such as an exhibition in the General Assembly Hall and the distribution of information material in support of the IYDD.

6. Furthermore, the General Assembly, at its sixtieth session, adopted resolution 60/200 on the IYDD which, while adhering to the spirit of resolution 58/211, further defined the scope of the process by:

(a) Requesting the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD “to make available to the Parties to the Convention and to observers a consolidated list of all activities reported, including lessons learned and best practices”;

(b) Inviting the Global Environment Facility (GEF) “to support, within its mandate, activities undertaken by affected developing countries Parties to the Convention within the framework of the Year”.

IV. HONORARY SPOKESPERSONS

7. The Honorary Spokespersons for the IYDD are: Ms. Wangari Maathai of Kenya, 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate; H.E. Mr. Cherif Rahmani, Minister of Environment of Algeria and President of the Foundation “Déserts du Monde”; and Mr. Hristo Stoitchkov, Bulgarian international football star and winner of the Golden Boot in Europe in 1990.

8. H.E. Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, former Prime Minister of Japan, also accepted the title of Honorary Spokesperson in January 2006, despite his fragile health. He demonstrated great resolve and commitment in this role, as he had done during 10 years of outstanding effort on behalf of the UNCCD. Mr. Hashimoto passed away on 1 July 2006.

9. Each Honorary Spokesperson has taken every opportunity to raise awareness of the message of the IYDD.

V. PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION

10. With the support of Italy and Switzerland, a state-of-the-art exhibition stand was designed to be used at public events and meetings relating to the UNCCD. The stand was shown for the first time at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and was used at major events throughout the year.

11. A set of postcards was prepared for display on the exhibition stand. The postcards show striking pictures submitted to the UNCCD photographic competition organized in 2005. They convey a powerful pictorial message on one side, supplemented by information relating to the UNCCD on the reverse. An extra postcard was produced with the assistance of the Argentine non-governmental organization (NGO) Fundación Agreste targeting spectators at the 2006 FIFA (Fédération internationale de Football Association) World Cup.

12. In collaboration with the NGO EarthAction, a long-time institutional partner, the UNCCD secretariat produced the campaign “This Land is Your Land” targeting decision makers, citizens, legislators and media outlets worldwide, with a view to informing them and encouraging them to take constructive and decisive action on the issue of desertification. The campaign received very positive feedback from all the stakeholders, including Heads of State and Government.

13. Coinciding with the presentation of the Secretary-General’s Report to the General Assembly, the UNCCD secretariat, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Environment and IFAD, organized a major photographic exhibit at the United Nations Headquarters in New York during November and December 2006. The exhibit, entitled “The Beauty of Deserts – The Challenge of Desertification”, displayed photographs by the acclaimed German photographer Michael Martin, and was open to the public.

VI. WORLD DAYS

14. In order to promote the theme of the IYDD the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity decided that World Biological Day (22 May) would be observed under the theme “Protection of the biological diversity of the drylands”. In addition, UNEP, together with the Government of Algeria, decided that World Environment Day, celebrated in Algiers on 5 June, would be devoted to the protection of the environment in the drylands under the slogan “Don’t desert the drylands”.

15. Furthermore, the World Day to Combat Desertification on 17 June 2006 was celebrated worldwide under the theme “The beauty of deserts – the challenge of desertification”. A list of activities undertaken by the country Parties and observers is posted on the UNCCD and IYDD websites.

VII. COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

16. Following the joint circular sent by the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD and the Director General of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), encouraging the issuance of commemorative stamps on the occasion of the IYDD, the postal administrations of Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Egypt, China, El Salvador, the Holy See, Portugal, Spain and Turkey issued such stamps. The stamps were posted on the IYDD website to stimulate other countries to follow suit.

VIII. SOME MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

17. *Workshop on combating desertification and poverty in drylands (19–20 January 2006, Rome, Italy)*. This workshop was organized by the UNCCD secretariat and Italian NGOs to promote the participation of civil society and decentralized cooperation within the framework of UNCCD implementation. As a result of the meeting, the Italian NGOs started discussing with the Government of Italy the possibility of establishing a trust fund for the benefit of civil society during the IYDD to finance actions aimed at combating desertification.

18. *International exhibition “The deserts” (30 March to 8 October 2006, Rosenheim, Germany)*. This exhibition was part of the Bavarian contribution to the celebration of the IYDD. By the time the exhibition closed, more than 200,000 people had visited it. In addition to replicating desert ecosystems and showing how societies live in deserts, the exhibition informed visitors about causes and consequences of desertification and gave examples of ways in which the problem can be tackled.

19. *Seminar on desertification and environmental security: consequences and prevention (9–11 March 2006, Madrid, Spain)*. The seminar, organized by the private Foundation Caixa (CosmoCaixa) and the Centro de Investigaciones sobre Desertificación, benefited from the participation of high-level individuals, including the Minister of Environment of Spain. It addressed issues relating to environmental security and desertification, such as migration, forest fires, early warning systems and the need to raise awareness of the desertification problem.

20. *International Geneva conference: “Combating desertification, hunger and poverty” (11–12 April 2006, Geneva, Switzerland)*. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, in partnership with the secretariat of the UNCCD, organized an international conference on desertification, hunger and poverty. It was attended by international organizations, diplomatic missions, academic institutes, researchers and NGOs working on issues of environment, development and humanitarian aid. The Geneva conference, the report of which is available on the UNCCD website <www.unccd.int>, addressed two strategic policy and programmatic considerations:

- Combating desertification to reduce poverty and hunger: policy framework
- Livelihoods and coping strategies in the face of uncertainty.

21. *IYDD and the Caribbean (8–10 May 2006, Havana, Cuba)*. This meeting highlighted the importance of the IYDD and at the same time facilitated consideration of a major project proposal for the establishment of an environmental rehabilitation programme with the

participation of youth in the Caribbean States. Also considered at this meeting was the development of a subregional action programme for the implementation of the UNCCD in the Caribbean region.

22. *Beijing international conference on women and desertification (29 May to 1 June 2006, Beijing, China).* The UNCCD secretariat, together with the Governments of Algeria, China and Italy, held an international meeting on the role of women in combating desertification. The UNCCD broke new ground by enshrining a bottom-up approach in tackling desertification, which specifically underlines the important role played by women. The importance of the issue was also highlighted by the choice of “Women and desertification” as the theme to celebrate the 2005 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. High-level country representatives, heads of United Nations agencies, experts in the fields of gender issues and sustainable development, and representatives of civil society came together with other eminent personalities to share experiences and seek ways of empowering women as a means to counter land degradation and rural poverty. More than 100 participants from about 50 countries discussed the challenges and opportunities for women in drylands. The conference adopted the Beijing statement, which addresses main priorities for action, including water and resource management, food security, health and education.

23. *Scientific conference: “The future of the drylands” (19–21 June 2006, Tunis, Tunisia).* The conference focused on drylands research, conservation, policy and sustainable drylands development. The participants recognized that the fight against desertification and the development of drylands remains a major priority for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The scientific community was requested to ensure that its findings are made available and understandable to decision makers and local dryland communities with the view to integrating modern technologies and traditional knowledge into project development. Scientists further identified priority issues in dryland research, such as interdependence and conservation of cultural and biological diversity, agriculture and pastoralism, management of natural and man-made disasters, education for sustainable development, renewable energies and the evaluation of dryland ecosystem services and their trade-offs.

24. *International conference on youth and desertification (4–6 September 2006, Bamako, Mali).* The conference was organized with the support of the Governments of Finland, Germany, Italy and Mali. Governments were called upon to ensure full involvement of young people in the management of natural resources and to give priority to the creation of youth employment as a matter of urgency. Furthermore, youth representatives made a series of recommendations and suggestions to country Parties, international cooperation partners and other stakeholders covering:

- (a) Environmental education (facilitation of educational resources, capacity-building, and appropriate training, as well as fellowship programmes);
- (b) Raising awareness of the UNCCD;
- (c) Participation and empowerment of young people (defining areas of participation for young people, support existing youth networks, developing an outreach strategy on youth for consideration by the COP);

(d) The social implications of desertification, including migration and security (developing activities in areas affected by desertification as a way to prevent forced migration instead of investing in the protection and security of borders to prevent illegal immigration;

(e) Promotion of volunteerism among young people;

(f) Establishment of mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of experiences between young people);

(g) Economic opportunities for young people (consideration of the needs of young people with respect to land tenure and access to micro-credits; promotion and establishment of youth institutes in order to enhance the capacity and skills of young people; encouraging the GEF to apply the next resources allocation in a fair and equitable manner with regard to land degradation).

25. *International conference on civil society and desertification (21–23 September 2006, Montpellier, France)*. The Government of France supported the organization of this conference in collaboration with the NGO Groupe de travail désertification, the European Network Initiative on Desertification and the UNCCD secretariat. The civil society representatives present at the conference issued the Montpellier Call to Combat Desertification where the participants committed themselves to disseminate information, to promote the capacity-building of the NGOs and to develop non-agricultural activities in order to generate complementary income in the drylands. They further requested the country Parties to give clear objectives to the Convention, and more substance to the CRIC and COP sessions, in order to ensure the effective functioning of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), to coordinate the actions undertaken by donors to combat desertification, and to create an enabling regulatory framework to facilitate the participation of the civil society in the policymaking process. Finally they requested the scientific community to take into consideration the needs of the local population and involve them in the scientific research.

26. *International symposium on desertification and migrations (25–27 October 2006, Almeria, Spain)*. The Government of Spain supported this second international symposium in collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat. Representatives from country Parties, including four Ministers of Environment from countries affected by desertification, civil society organizations and experts, analysed the interrelations and links between desertification and migration. Participants addressed the consequences of poverty and desertification and their social implications in terms of migration. The conclusions of the symposium reflected the interest of the participants in promoting an interdisciplinary study of the links between desertification and migration, the need to identify international initiatives to fight against desertification and migration, and the desire to develop a multidisciplinary research centre to create policies on the relations between desertification and migration. The region of Andalusia and the University of Almeria may host this international and multidisciplinary research centre.

27. *Round-table discussion: “Assessing the UNCCD process and identifying challenges ahead” (1–2 November 2006, New York, United States of America)*. The objective of this event was to engage the debate along the lines of the emerging challenges within the context of the UNCCD (climate change, the disruptive effect of desertification in social and economic terms such as forced migrations, conflicts, health, etc), taking into account the results achieved over the

past decade, and to identify innovative solutions and new approaches to enhance implementation of the Convention in a rapidly evolving world. The meeting was held at the United Nations Headquarters and gathered high-level participants, chosen on an *intuitu personae* basis, and encompassing recognized expertise relevant to the objectives of the meeting. The meeting adopted a document titled the “Outcome of the Round Table”, which made concrete proposals in three main areas:

- Lessons learned and new concerns: 10 years of combating drought and desertification (December 1996 to December 2006)
- Priorities for the next decade (2007–2016)
- Tools and mechanisms to improve implementation of the UNCCD

28. *Deserts and desertification – challenges and opportunities (6–9 November 2006, Sede Boqer, Israel)*. International experts, representatives from international institutions and NGOs and practitioners participated in this international conference and presented recent findings on a range of issues associated with desertification. The conference examined the effectiveness of different initiatives employed to combat desertification and to share potential opportunities for ensuring the quality of life and sustainable livelihoods in the drylands. In addition, the conference assessed different domestic policies and strategies in countries affected by desertification. The conference integrated a rich variety of cultural and ecological activities associated with deserts. In addition to the opportunities and challenges for the deserts and areas affected by desertification, the conference addressed the drivers of desertification and the policy interventions, and presented innovative case studies designed to achieve sustainable development in drylands.

29. *International film festival “Desert Nights: Tales from the Desert” (1–7 December 2006, Rome, Italy)*. The aim of this international film festival was to raise awareness and inform the public at large, through the magic of cinema, about the daily lives, the stories, the struggles and the dreams of the people of the drylands. The festival was realized through the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environment, Territory and Sea, with the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the City of Rome. International personalities such as Italian legend Bernardo Bertolucci, Afghan director Siddiq Barmark, Nobel Laureates Gabriel García Márquez and Wole Soyinka, and Indian novelist Amitav Gosh were members of the Honour Committee for the Film Festival. More than 80 movies, including fiction films and documentaries from countries affected by desertification within the five regions covered by the Convention – Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Northern Mediterranean, and Central and Eastern Europe – portrayed real-life stories of people and communities in the drylands. The screenings were organized throughout the week and were punctuated by thematic panels organized on an interactive basis with the public. The festival received excellent press coverage throughout the period and had a very high attendance with more than 90 per cent of seats taken over the entire period, an average of 700 spectators per day. The festival concluded with a gala soirée attended by representatives of international authorities, film directors and well-known personalities in the world of arts and culture.

30. *International workshop on climate and land degradation (11–15 December 2006, Arusha, Tanzania)*. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the UNCCD secretariat and the Tanzania Meteorological Agency gathered 60 experts from 29 countries to discuss the

effects of climatic variations and human activities on land degradation: assessment, field experience gained, and integration of mitigation and adaptation practices for livelihood improvement. The workshop was organized following a proposal made by WMO at COP 7 and contained in decision 20/COP.7. The final workshop statement adopted by the experts emphasized the links between climate variability, climate change and land degradation that would need to be further explored. More specifically it highlighted the need to strengthen the study of thresholds, resilience and dynamic equilibria of terrestrial ecosystems, the need to develop networks of climatological and agrometeorological stations to provide data on rainfall intensities, soil temperature and soil moisture for land degradation monitoring, and the need for direct interactions between national meteorological and hydrological services and land users to enhance the communication of weather and climate information.

31. *Joint international conference: “Desertification and the international policy imperative” (17–19 December 2006, Algiers, Algeria).* This conference, organized by the United Nations University (UNU) and the Ministry of Environment of Algeria with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency, the Flemish Government of Belgium and the GEF, was used as a platform for 200 experts from 25 countries to advise shifts in world policies needed to cope with the causes and growing consequences of desertification, including its global health, economic and migration impacts. The conference facilitated the exchange of information and success stories to combat desertification and the search for successful new approaches while preserving traditional knowledge. At the end of the meeting an agreement was signed by the Ministry of Environment of Algeria, UNU, UNEP, and the secretariats of the UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to strengthen the collaboration of these institutions to combat desertification. The agreement also refers to the proposed Decade of Deserts and Desertification (2010–2020), promoted by the conference.

IX. NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

32. Before the beginning of the IYDD the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD contacted all Parties to inform them of the decision taken by the General Assembly and to request information on how the IYDD would be commemorated at the national level. At the same time, country Parties were encouraged to do everything possible to provide high visibility for the activities forming part of the celebration of the IYDD, and in so doing to ensure the greatest possible impact at the national, regional and international levels. In this regard, all Parties were asked to identify the person and/or institution that would be responsible for coordinating these activities at the national level.

33. During 2006 the secretariat received 54 confirmations from Parties. Activities foreseen by those countries which replied to the request included a wide range of events to help raise the visibility of the IYDD at the country level. The events were grouped as follows:

- Conferences/workshops/seminars (academic lectures, scientific meetings, press conferences)
- Cultural events (museum exhibitions, musical events, film festivals)
- Awareness-raising activities (production of literature, recognition coins, stamps, organization of campaigns and competitions).

34. The first report of an activity for the celebration of the year came from Portugal, where authorities used the opportunity offered by the launch of the Lisbon–Dakar rally to organize a tree planting involving the participants in the race. Photographs and press clippings of the activity are available on the IYDD website.

35. At the completion of the IYDD, the UNCCD secretariat requested all the Parties and observers to provide a succinct report on the activities undertaken to celebrate the year with the aim of including this information in the Secretary-General's report to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

36. The secretariat further requested Parties and observers to send samples of all publications, documents, posters and memorabilia produced during the year. The secretariat is planning to organize an exhibition of such material on the World Day to Combat Desertification on 17 June 2007.

X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

37. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification provided a unique opportunity for awareness rising on a truly global scale and through a variety of stakeholders, including Parties, observers, international organizations and NGOs.

38. As such, it made a substantial contribution to ongoing efforts to raise the profile and visibility of the land degradation issue in the international sustainable development agenda, and confirmed the active commitment of numerous institutional partners to fully integrate and mainstream the desertification agenda in their respective areas of intervention and programme of work.

39. The secretariat will assess and analyse the numerous outputs produced during the IYDD with the view to listing the different recommendations made and submitted for consideration and eventual action, for consideration at COP 8.

Annex

ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	DATE
Publication of the second edition of the book <i>Deserts of the World</i>	Several countries	January
Workshop on combating desertification and poverty in drylands	Rome (Italy)	19–20 January
Launch of the book <i>365 pictures for the IYDD</i>	Several countries	February
Standing on Solid Ground: Tackling Degraded Lands to Ensure Future Food Production: World Bank Rural Days 2006: Agricultural and Rural Development Sessions: Session on land management organized by the World Bank	Washington D.C. (United States of America)	27 February
Global Ministerial Environment Forum	Dubai (United Arab Emirates)	7–9 February
Deserts through photography: I. Exhibition of photographs by Jacques Durou, “Agadez: Gates of the Desert” II. Exhibition of photographs by Michel Martin, “Deserts of the World” III. Exhibition of photographs by Arthus Bertrand	France Germany France	March March March
Seminar on desertification and environmental security: consequences and prevention	Madrid (Spain)	9–11 March
Press conference for the launch of the international exhibition “The deserts”	Berlin (Germany)	29 March
International exhibition “The deserts”	Rosenheim (Germany)	30 March to 8 October
International Geneva conference “Combating desertification, hunger and poverty”	Geneva (Switzerland)	11–12 April
IYDD and the Caribbean	Havana (Cuba)	8–10 May

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	DATE
Fourteenth conference of the International Soil Conservation Organization (ISCO)	Marrakesh (Morocco)	14–19 May
International biodiversity day “Achieving the 2010 biodiversity target: protecting biodiversity in the drylands”	Global	22 May
Beijing international conference on women and desertification	Beijing (China)	29 May to 1 June
International symposium “Desertification and global change”	Bern (Switzerland)	31 May
Celebration of World Environment Day: deserts and desertification: “Don’t desert drylands”	Algiers (Algeria)	5 June
Launching by UNEP of two publications: <i>Global Environment Outlook for Deserts (GEO-Deserts)</i> and <i>Our Planet</i> magazine (an issue focusing on deserts and drylands)	Global	5 June
World Day to Combat Desertification	Global	17 June
(a) Launch of the international observatory on the environment and the combat against desertification	Ghardaïa (Algeria)	17 June
(b) Launch of the Park and Museum of the World Deserts: Opening of the International Institute of the World Deserts		
(c) Opening of the Centre to Combat Desertification		
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conference “The future of drylands”	Tunis (Tunisia)	19–21 June
Living with deserts II: Linkages between dryland science and on-the-ground practice	Tokyo (Japan)	25 August
International conference “Dryland studies and combating desertification”	Tottori (Japan)	27 August
International conference on youth and desertification	Bamako (Mali)	4–6 September
International conference on civil society and desertification	Montpellier (France)	21–23 September
From desert to oasis: a symposium/workshop on the role of science and research in combating desertification in semi-arid sub-Saharan Africa	Niamey (Niger)	23–25 September

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	DATE
International symposium on desertification and migrations	Almeria (Spain)	25–27 October
IYDD photographic exhibition at United Nations Headquarters in New York	New York (United States of America)	29 October to 30 November
Round-table discussion: “Assessing the UNCCD process and identifying challenges ahead” at United Nations Headquarters in New York	New York (United States of America)	1–2 November
Presentation of the report on the celebration of the IYDD to the United Nations General Assembly	New York (United States of America)	2 November
International seminar on aromatic and medicinal plants	Djerba (Tunisia)	2–4 November
Deserts and desertification – challenges and opportunities	Sdeh Boker (Israel)	6–9 November
International film festival: “Desert Nights: Tales from the Desert”	Rome (Italy)	1–7 December
International workshop on climate and land degradation	Arusha (Tanzania)	11–15 December
United Nations University (UNU) international conference “Desertification and the international policy imperative”	Algiers (Algeria)	17–19 December