



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2007/WG.5
30 October 2007
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Regional Conference on Land Degradation Issues
in the Arab Region
Cairo, 30 October - 1 November 2007



Presentation on

**Regional Cooperation for Combating
Land Degradation in the Arab Region**

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REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR COMBATING LAND DEGRADATION IN THE ARAB REGION

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BASIC DEFINITIONS

DRYLANDS:

- ❑ Terrestrial regions where water shortage is a dominant factor limiting crop production, forage, wood and other ecosystem services. They include dry sub-humid, semi-arid, arid and hyper arid lands (classified based on Aridity Index (AI): *The long-term mean of the ratio of an area's mean annual precipitation to its mean annual potential evapotranspiration*)

LAND DEGRADATION

- ❑ Deterioration of land/ soil conditions leading to reduced ecosystem services/ productivity. *(Drylands are the most vulnerable due to harsh climates and water shortage)*





DRYLANDS GLOBAL PROFILE

Dryland Types	Aridity Index	Current Area (1)		Population (2)	
		Mkm ²	% global	X 1000	% global
Hyper-arid	<0.05	9.78	6.6	101,615	1.7
Arid	0.05– 0.20	15.66	10.6	222,204	3.7
Semiarid	0.20– 0.50	22.59	15.2	828,341	13.9
Dry sub-humid	0.50– 0.65	12.87	8.7	909,273	15.3
Total		60.90	41.3	2,061,433	34.7

(1) UNEP Geo Data Portal (<http://geodata.grid.unep.ch/>) Global area based on Digital Chart of the World data (147,573,196.6 square km); (2) From the MA core database for year 2000.

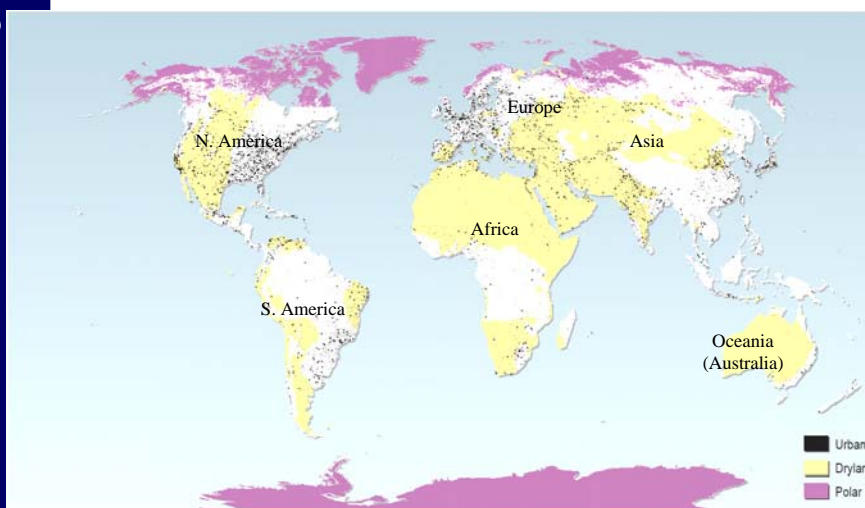
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3



DRYLANDS ON THE GLOBAL MAP



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4



GLOBAL IMPACTS OF LAND DEGRADATION

- ❑ 3.6 B ha. (25% of earth's land) are affected by land degradation, including many least developed countries
- ❑ Land degradation cost: USD 52 B, (UNCCD, 2002)
- ❑ In 2001, over 1 B survived on less than \$1/day, 70% of them depend on agriculture, grazing and hunting.
- ❑ Dryland population (90% in developing countries) have lowest GDP/capita (\$US4,930)

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5



LAND DEGRADATION: REGIONAL PROFILE

Subregion	Degraded (%)	Threatened (%)
GCC	89.6	9.0
Magrib	77.7	16.5
Mashriq	35.6	48.6
Nile Basin & African Horn	44.5	28.6
Arab Region total	68.4	20.6

79.3% of WA is degraded; 16.3% threatened by Degradation

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6



UNEP Modules of Cooperation in Combating Land Degradation in the Arab Region

- ❑ **Governments of the region (particularly West Asia)**
- ❑ **Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment (CAMRE/ LAS).** Through active involvement/ support to CAMRE's:
 - Technical Secretariat
 - Technical Team on Desertification and Biodiversity.
 - Joint Committee on Environment and Development for the Arab Region (JCEDAR) which formulates plan of work .
- ❑ The ministerial fora of the GCC and the GCC Secretariat
- ❑ The UNCCD Subregional Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought in West Asia UNCCD SRAP-WA
- ❑ Partnerships with concerned UN sister organizations, and international, regional and subregional organizations

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7



UNCCD SRAP-WA: A COLLECTIVE REGIONAL EFFORT TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

SRAP was developed through an extensive/ thorough process. The process started in 1995 and was completed in 2000. It involved: West Asia Member States, UNCCD, UNEP, GM, ACSAD, ICARDA, ICBA, among other partners

Two Thematic Networks:

1. **Water:** (water harvesting, surface and groundwater, treated waste water, low quality water)
2. **Vegetation cover** (rangeland, forests & orchards, mountainous areas, cropped land areas, oasis)

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8



SRAP Implementation Responsibilities

- ❑ **Management Committee (MC)** composed of **WA countries**
Chaired by a **WA country**. A **Vice chair**, will also be elected.
- ❑ **UNEP/ ROWA** coordinates the implementation of SRAP thru a regional coordinator (RC) and provides technical/administrative backstopping to RC.
- ❑ **ICARDA & ACSAD** responsible for TN1 and TN2.
- ❑ **GM** mobilizes financial resources and lead SRAP to the point where its implementation is assumed by MC.
- ❑ **Mainstreaming/ Streamlining** of SRAP Activities through a wider forum of Concerned specialized organizations/ stakeholders are key strategic directives of SRAP to avoid duplication and to have higher impacts for SRAP interventions

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9



SRAP PROJECTS (1)

1. **Inventory Study and Regional Database on Sustainable Water Resources and Vegetation Cover Management in West Asia. (completed 2002).** Funded by GM (\$150,000)

Outcomes:

- ✓ Inventories/ Databases on institutions, projects, personnel and related bodies concerned with the development & management of water resources & vegetation cover in WA.

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10



SRAP PROJECTS (2)

2. Integrated Natural Resources Management for Combating Desertification in West Asia: Pilot Projects: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria & Yemen (2003-06);

- Funded by OPEC International Fund through the GM (\$350,000); ACSAD: Yemen and Syria; ICARDA: Lebanon & Jordan)
- Scope: Mountainous areas (Lebanon & Yemen); Rangelands (Syria & Jordan)

Outcomes:

- ✓ Improved livelihood of local communities.
- ✓ Demonstration of successful measures to combat land degradation and to rehabilitate degraded lands.
- ✓ Guidelines, recommendations on optimal management of natural resources (water, soil and vegetation) to reverse land degradation.

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11



SRAP IMPLEMENTATION: LESSONS LEARNED

- ☐ SRAP interventions were effective in mobilizing manifold national resources/ investments.
- ☐ Replicating and upscaling of similar interventions is highly recommended for more felt impacts.
- ☐ Sustainability of SRAP requires more commitment from member states, particularly in playing a more effective role in soliciting sustainable financial support for SRAP implementation from regional and international donors
- ☐ Sustainability of SRAP also requires more commitment from UNCCD Secretariat and its fund mobilization/ funding instruments (GM, GEF, etc...) as well as concerned UN and regional organizations and intergovernmental bodies.

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12



Options for Enhancing Regional Cooperation:

- ☐ Strengthen the capacity of CAMRE's Technical Secretariat and CAMRE's other instruments (JCEDAR, Technical Teams)
- ☐ More country commitment to the participation of concerned focal points in the meetings of Arab Team on desertification and biodiversity
- ☐ A more coordinated role/ input of concerned regional/ international Organizations in the intergovernmental forums/ instruments. through collective and/or bilateral arrangements.
- ☐ Better coordination and interaction among concerned Organizations the establishment of a Regional forum of concerned organizations for joint planning and streamlining of activities in support of combating
- ☐ A more effective role by the national governments, intergovernmental bodies and international organization supporting and/ or encourage regional donors to support and provide at least seed feeding or regional programmes and initiatives connected with combating land degradation in the region (e.g.: UNCCD SRAP, ADI, AISD)

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13



Some Steps on the Road

- ☐ Efforts to regain the momentum of UNCCD SRAP are on going (FP meeting was held in Madrid at the margins of UNCCD COP8 3-14 September 2007, a side meeting at the margins of this conference will be also held to discuss the revised SRAP document and the way forward)
- ☐ A couple of projects under SRAP are in preparation by UNEP/ ROWA for potential funding under GEF MENARID programme.
- ☐ A coordination meeting among concerned organizations will be held on 23 November at the margins of the 6th meeting of the CAMRE's Arab Team on Desertification and Biodiversity

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14



THANK YOU