



"From Thoughts to Action"

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PRESS RELEASE

Worldwide increasing loss of arable land

Desertification, land degradation and drought DLDD are major global challenges for the environmental and development policy.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification UNCCD and the Foundation Global Risk Forum GRF Davos invite to a Special Side Event on occasion of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum on 26 January 2011 at 2pm in the "Grosse Stube" at the City Hall of Davos Platz. After key notes and a panel discussion on "the socio-economic impact of desertification, land degradation and drought" UNCCD and GRF Davos will reaffirm their cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding.

A recent study found that land degradation has reduced the productivity of the world's terrestrial surface area by about 25% over the period 1981-2003. Such a setting challenges the global environmental and developmental objectives. According to FAO, to provide food to an increasing world population, agricultural production must increase by 50% by 2030. At the same time, increasing demand for agro fuels is intensifying competition for the scarce resources of soil and water, and climate change is threatening productive systems. OECD has calculated that an annual investment of US\$80 billion would be needed to replace the loss in developing countries' agricultural production. However, many decision-makers in both developing and developed countries continue to discount these economic impacts on productive ecosystems. There is an evident need to draw attention to the global economic benefits of healthy and productive land and soil.

On Wednesday, 26 January 2011 the UNCCD and GRF Davos are inviting to the Special Event "The Economics of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought" (E-DLDD) to respond to this need, by calculating and communicating the cost of desertification, land degradation and drought, assessing the cost - and benefit - of action vs. the cost of inaction, and providing practical guidance for effective decision-making

Following the technical part of the event Luc Gnacadja, UNCCD Executive Secretary General, and Walter J. Ammann, President GRF Davos will sign a Memorandum of Understanding for intensified cooperation in the fight against desertification, land degradation and drought.

Please find the detailed programme attached.

For further information please contact:

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Walter J. Ammann, President GRF Davos

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