

Land for Life Award

WINNER OF 2017 LAND FOR LIFE CHINA AWARD – MS. YINGZHEN PAN

Ms. Yingzhen Pan, the Director of the National Bureau to Combat Desertification of State Forestry Administration started her journey to combat desertification in 1984 in the Bureau of Construction of Shelter Forests in three northern regions in China.



Restoration of desertified land in Xuanhua County, Hebei Province China



Under her leadership, the restoration of the Three North Regions Shelterbelts has achieved:

- afforestation of 29.2 million hectares of degraded land, generating forest resources worth 17 billion US dollar, helping to alleviate poverty for 15 million people
- counteraction of sand encroachment over 336,200 km²
- restoring nearly 450,000 km² of land affected by soil erosion.

“As the China National Focal Point of Combating Desertification, I will continue together with my colleagues to lead and realize the work of rehabilitating degraded land. Let our land be alive again, giving more hopes and opportunities.” Ms. Yingzhen Pan

More information State Forestry Administration of the People’s Republic of China: <http://bit.ly/2ulhgmW>

Ms. Pan pursued continuous innovation and support for rehabilitation initiatives for areas affected by land degradation and desertification by:

- coordinating the National Plan for Development of Desert Parks (2016– 2025) encompassing 70 desert parks
- supervising regulations for the protection and development of desertified areas that cover 1.3 million hectares across 71 counties in China
- managing two key national projects that aim to combat desertification and restore degraded land.



Ms. Pan discussing desertification issues with local authorities

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SPECIAL MENTION – FLORENCIA ESCUDERO FONSECA

In a town of a thousand inhabitants, this organization led by a 75-year old lady, has succeeded in sowing hope not only in the fields but also in the lives of people that now feel they are part of a community.



Engaging young people to restore land

More information: <https://www.facebook.com/EIColletero>
YouTube video: El Colletero



Florescia Escudero Fonseca, through her inspiring work and dedication, has mobilized a whole community from all ages and backgrounds to get involved in protecting the environment and preserving its resources by:

- restoring abandoned and degraded land through sustainable agricultural practices and re-forestation
- planting 2000 trees in 40 ha of land. 1000 more trees will be planted each year in the future
- providing employment also for people with disabilities and others who have social difficulties.

For more information on Land for Life Programme, email L4L@unccd.int
The Land for Life Programme is made possible by the following partners:



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2017 Land for Life Award

Land and Human Security



LAND AND HUMAN SECURITY

It is estimated that in the last 40 years one third of the world's arable land has been lost to erosion and continues to be lost at a rate of more than 12 million hectares per year. Around 135 million people may be displaced by 2045 as a result of desertification.

We must keep our land and its resources healthy and productive so that it provides for everyone's wellbeing and sustenance. Land, if well managed, can increase productivity, create employment opportunities, build resilience to weather extremes and climate change.

ABOUT LAND FOR LIFE

Land for Life Programme launched at the UNCCD COP10 in the Republic of Korea as part of the Changwon Initiative, seeks to confront the challenges of land degradation and desertification.



It creates pathways to more responsible land management and practices through recognizing successful cases of sustainable land management (SLM).

By promoting awareness campaigns and sharing information on sustainable land practices, land related issues and the importance of achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), the Programme showcases how our environment can be protected, restored and regenerated.

Land for Life Award recognizes the excellence and innovation of individuals, groups, institutions and businesses whose work and initiatives have made a significant contribution in achieving Land Degradation Neutrality.

With the theme "Land and Human Security", the 2017 Land for Life Award has been awarded to nominees whose work has demonstrated tangible evidence of transforming the lives of communities suffering from the impacts of land degradation.

"The winners show that restoration of degraded land can halt distress migration that is driven by unproductive land resources. Families and communities are transformed and become more resilient towards climate change when job opportunities are created."

When practices like these are amplified globally, sustainability, stability and security of all is possible. It only requires political will and decisive action against losing more productive land to desertification."

Monique Barbut, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

WINNER OF 2017 LAND FOR LIFE AWARD - WATERSHED ORGANIZATION TRUST (WOTR)

WOTR is a non-profit organization established in 1993. The organization is active in 7 states across India. Its work has focused on restoring degraded land through sustainable water practices and SLM strategies.

Participatory watershed development (WSD)

Optimization of water usage using WSD practices across 1,509 villages has:

- strengthened resilience to drought,
- restored 8,913 km² of degraded lands, positively impacting 1.38 million people in the area.

System for Crop Intensification (SCI) - improving soil health and biodiversity

The implementation of SCI has:

- benefited approximately 38,000 households in 380 villages
- increased production of agriculture crops e.g. cereals, pulses and vegetables by 18% and 20.5% respectively
- decreased cost of cultivation approximately 10% to 15%
- increased number of farmers that adopted this practice from 544 to 2,048 in three years.



Empowering communities through trainings



Water harvesting structures e.g. check dams were built in agriculture rain-fed areas

Building drought and climate change resilience

More efficient water management became available through water budgeting and micro-irrigation, which resulted in:

- land under perennial irrigation increased from 0 to 50 hectares
- 51.15 billion liters of water were harvested.

Reducing Poverty and Migration

The projects and activities of WOTR have:

- reduced poverty and migration by 90%
- raised the average household income in the areas up to 4 times
- created employment of 620,395 person days in two years.

Community Engagement

WOTR also empowered communities through:

- trainings which benefited over 380,000 people
- establishing Women Self Help Groups that helped approximately 95,000 women.

More information: <http://www.wotr.org/>
See video on YouTube: WOTR A new beginning.

WINNER OF 2017 LAND FOR LIFE AWARD – UN ENVIRONMENT/PRACTICAL ACTION SUDAN

The Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (ECO-DRR) programme in North Darfur, implemented in 2012 to 2015 as a pilot project by the UN Environment and its partner Practical Action Sudan to improve food security and disaster resilience.



Agricultural yields are higher in the irrigated Wadi land

Water management

Rehabilitation of the water retention structures that increased water retention by 17.5 times has:

- irrigated and cultivated land expanded from 364 ha to an approximate 6,300 ha annually
- increased agricultural production which benefited 30,000 inhabitants
- 4,500 farmers gained access to more land to cultivate
- reduced vulnerability of 17,500 people to drought
- decreased grazing pressures on degraded lands.

Resource Governance

In order to manage the scarce resources sustainably, SLM practices were adopted through:

- establishment of community-based revolving funds to sustain livelihoods and provide long-term services
- demarkation of a 10 km migratory pastoralist route to reduce conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in the area. The route will be expanded up to 120 km in near future
- grazing ban at newly rehabilitated 1,200 ha rangeland.

Promoting Environmental Regeneration

Various activities were carried out to empower and engage community to promote agro-forestry, for example:

- setting up of local community tree seedling nursery that is managed by Women Development Association Network
- rehabilitating 24.3 ha of degraded forest areas through establishment of 5 community forests
- producing 17,000 acacia and 1,000 fruit tree seedlings and distributing them to local communities, schools, private farmlands.

More information: <http://bit.ly/2ulC9hE>

YouTube video: UN Wadi Partners



Community nursery in Wad Kota village