

## **2017 World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD)**

### **Our land. Our home. Our future.**

**The 2017 World Day to Combat Desertification (#2017WDCD)** celebrations mark the power the land holds in giving people an opportunity and a future to stay resilient on their home ground.

The number of international migrants worldwide has grown rapidly over the past fifteen years, reaching 244 million in 2015, up from 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000.<sup>1</sup> Behind these numbers is a link between migration and development challenges, in particular, the consequences of environmental degradation, political instability, food insecurity and poverty.

Losing productive land is driving people to make risky life choices. In rural areas where people depend on scarce productive land resources, land degradation is a driver of forced migration. Africa is particularly susceptible because more than 90% of the economy depends on a climate-sensitive natural resource base such as rain-fed, subsistence agriculture. Unless we change the way we manage our land, in the next 30 years we may leave a billion or more vulnerable poor people with little choice but to fight or flee.

Improving yields and land productivity will increase the food security and incomes of land users and the poorest farmers. This, in turn, could preempt unnecessary movements of people, and reduce current and potential conflicts over scarce resources in degrading areas. Sustainable land management offers young people vast opportunities for income generation in sectors such as agriculture, food processing and tourism.

The slogan, "Our land. Our home. Our Future", underlines the central role productive land can play in turning the growing tide of migrants abandoning their unproductive land into communities and nations that are stable, secure and sustainable, into the future.

#### **About the World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD)**

The World Day to Combat Desertification has been observed since 1995 to promote public awareness about international efforts to combat desertification and the effects of drought collectively.

In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly declared (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/49/115) June 17 the "World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought" to promote public awareness of the issue, and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa.

It is a unique occasion to remind everybody that desertification can be effectively tackled, that solutions are possible, and that the key tools to this aim lie in strengthened community participation and co-operation at all levels.

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<sup>1</sup> International migration report (2015)

For more information about the World Day, visit: <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Event-and-campaigns/WDCD/Pages/default.aspx>

### **About UNCCD**

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the only legally binding international agreement on land issues. The Convention promotes good land stewardship. Its 195 Parties aim, through partnerships, to implement the Convention and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The end goal is to protect our land from over-use and drought, so it can continue to provide us all with food, water and energy. By sustainably managing land and striving to achieve land degradation neutrality, now and in the future, we will reduce the impact of climate change, avoid conflict over natural resources and help communities to thrive.