

CALL FOR PROJECTS

JULY 2007



**Desertification, poverty
and food security**



***'Desertification is basically
a problem of a lack of development'.***

***Youba Sokona,
Observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel, Tunis.***

Introduction

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was created ten years ago (1994 - UNCCD). The international community was already broadly aware of global problems connected with this particular phenomenon, and wanted to find ways of taking action, taking note of the findings of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), in Rio de Janeiro (1992).

More than 10 years after the convention came into effect, one year after the 'international year of the desert and desertification 2006', 190 parties have agreed to sign. Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, China, India, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Rumania, countries connected with the Foundation have already drawn up a national implementation report, summarizing the current situation and suggesting a strategy for combating the problem. (www.unccd.int/main.php)

But the figures are still alarming and the extent of the task is considerable. Desertification is still one of the prime causes of poverty in the world. It is the most important aspect we have to deal with.

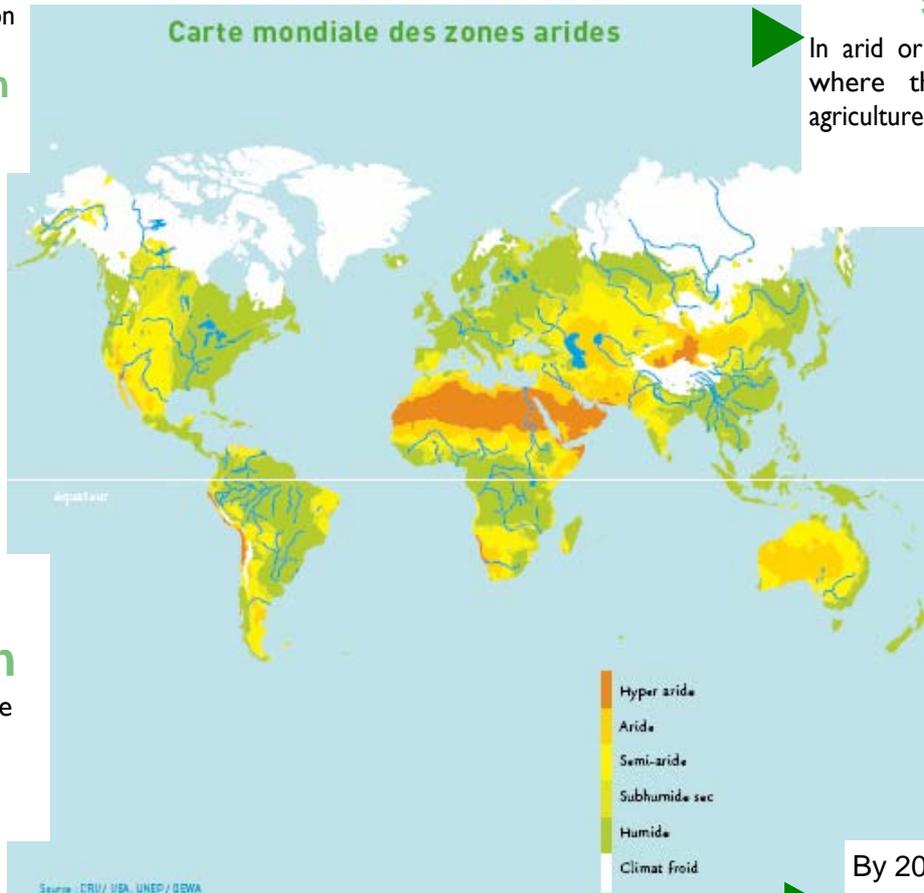
Already involved in 51 programmes promoting methods of human development that incorporate environmental protection, the Fondation Ensemble (Together Foundation) is now looking to launch an appeal that is aimed specifically at **'Desertification, poverty and food security'**.

Index:

-  Indisputable figures 
-  Desertification-poverty: a vicious circle 
-  Eligible projects 
-  Selection procedures 

Rappel du Contexte

Out of
▶ **130 million**
hectares seriously
affected
by desertification
in the world,
▶ **50 million**
are in Africa.



▶ **853 millions**
people suffer from hunger
worldwide.

▶ **75%**
live in rural areas, of
whom at least

▶ **50%**
In arid or semi-arid regions
where they depend on
agriculture and cattle grazing.

▶ Every year
10 million
hectares of arable
land are lost.

In Africa, nearly
▶ **50%**
of the continent is
situated inside arid
regions where hunger
and malnutrition are rife

▶ Desertification as a phenomenon
directly affects
250 million
people worldwide. It could spread to all
the arid parts of the world, or one third
of the surface of the globe and 1.2 thousand
people living in 100 countries.

▶ By 2020,
135 million
risk being chased off their
land by the desertification
that is in progress, of
whom

▶ **60 million**
In sub-Saharan Africa
alone.

'Agriculture and rural Development are driving factors behind growth in developing countries; it is vital to invest in the sustainable use of the land and water, which are the key elements'

(Parviz Koohafkan, FAO)

The causal relation between desertification and poverty produces a vicious circle

Desertification has a harmful effect on a wide range of services that the ecosystems provide to humans: on products such as food and water, on natural processes such as climate control, but also on support services such as soil conservation.

Population growth also intensifies desertification, as a result of deforestation (cutting down trees) which lays the soil bare, making it highly vulnerable to wind and rain (erosion).

When they are confronted by desertification, local populations often react by exploiting land that is even less productive, transforming plots of pastureland into cultivated land.



Desertification in Africa. (Photo FAO).
Desertification is the expansion of arid land due to poor agricultural practices (overgrazing, poor soil management, salinisation, erosion, deforestation...)

▶ Direct consequence of this non rational use of natural resources:

Soil erosion is responsible for around 40 % of all damage to land worldwide, mainly due to over-working.

Around 1/5th of irrigated land in the developing world has already been damaged to varying degrees by flooding or salinity.

Consequence of poor water management: only 30 to 50 per cent of the resources used for irrigation are actually used by the crops.

The causality link between desertification and poverty produces a vicious circle: the needs of poor populations result in excessive use, causing damage to the land and the depletion of natural resources. This triggers the well-documented phenomena of a drop in income, migration and an increase in the population of shantytowns.

The optimum use of more efficient management techniques and technologies in relation to irrigated or rainwater agriculture can have a beneficial effect on water productivity.

▶ Sources of information:
Desertification, hunger and poverty,
conference in April 2006 (DDC, IUED)
FAO (COAG/200 7/ 7)
The sustainability review n°23
'Desertification can be combated more effectively' FAO 'Water and food security'
FAO 'Food security and the environment'
Green facts

Eligible projects



India: women transplanting rice
in an experimental field
Photo FAQ by G. Bizzarri

Action should be aimed at **making best use of available land and water resources**.

Preference will be given to those projects that propose **small scale solutions**, at moderate cost, associated with the collection and conservation of water, irrigation and drainage.

Accepted techniques are those which permit the rationalization of the use of water, which contribute towards the struggle against soil erosion (compost, slurry pits, dykes, living hedges, stone embankments, mulching, etc.) and/or which introduce methods of intensifying cultivation that respect the environment.

Action will have to take account of **a programme of integrated development that is specific** to the zones that are to be the beneficiaries.

Participation of the local population is to be encouraged.

The projects must seek to have **a real and lasting impact** on reducing poverty and securing local food supplies in rural and/or semi-urban communities.

By impact, we mean an increase in efficiency and productivity that is liable to be achieved by improving agriculture using irrigation or rainwater, whilst halting damage to the environment.

Selection procedures



Senegal: dead trees no longer protect
the dried out ground
Photo FAQ by H. Chazine

- ▶ Projects submitted in response to this appeal will follow the current procedure which is described on the foundation website: www.fondationensemble.org, on the page titled 'selection procedures'.
- ▶ The website also lists those **countries currently involved** with the foundation.
- ▶ The contents of the **three pages** remains open. At this stage, the foundation wants to know the objectives and duration of the project, the targeted population, the partners on the ground, the means envisaged for obtaining the desired results and the parties involved in financing the project.
- ▶ The projects can be sent by email to (info@fondationensemble.org) or by post to the following address: Fondation Ensemble / 45 rue de Babylone / 75007 Paris.

The closing date for applications is **14 September 2007**.