



United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification

---

## Colorado State University to Host UN's North American Launch of Anti-Desertification Decade on 11 November

**Fort Collins, USA/Bonn, Germany, 9 November 2010** –Colorado State University will host the United Nations North American launch of a global initiative specifically designed to address land degradation that threatens the world's drylands and could affect the livelihoods of more than 2 billion people in about 100 countries.

Luc Gnacadja, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), will formally launch the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification at 10 a.m. in the Cherokee Park Ballroom in CSU's Lory Student Center. Following the announcement, short seminars will be held addressing land degradation issues and topics in North America. CSU also will sign a letter of intent to work closely with the UNCCD on future desertification research. The event is free and open to the public.

"The decision to hold the North America launch at Fort Collins is the result of high-level discussion and collaboration between CSU and the UNCCD over the past two years. The launch has significance in that it builds upon shared common international interests in desertification and to bring the expertise of CSU in fields such as soil erosion, water conservation and drought management into the forefront of the global debate on the environment," Gnacadja said.

Desertification is not just about deserts. It is about protecting productive drylands that can support agriculture and land for grazing. But through poor land practices, combined with a lack of sufficient rain, these productive lands can deteriorate, a process that is taking place all across the globe. Sometimes, as in Colorado and other dustbowl regions of the world, sand spreads into these landscapes, turning them desert-like. But desertified land can be restored.

CSU is the first university in the world to Host one of the UN's Decade announcements. Ceará, Brazil, was the host state for the global launch of the decade in August 2010. The UN is completing the launch of the decade in regional locations. The African regional launch took place in Nairobi, Kenya; the Asian regional launch was in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The European regional launch is planned in London on 16 December. The regional launches mark the official start of the annual observance of the decade declared in 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly.

The UNCCD, established in 1994, is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment, development and the promotion of healthy soil. The Convention's 194 signatory Parties, work to alleviate poverty in the drylands, maintain and restore the land's productivity and mitigate the effects of drought.





## United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification

The Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification runs from January 2010 to December 2020.

The full program of the launch and seminars follows.

- 10 – 10:05 a.m. Introduction and Commitment to Providing Science to Deal with Desertification**  
Bill Farland  
Vice President for Research  
Colorado State University
- 10:05 – 10:15 a.m. The Importance of Combating Desertification: A Call to Action**  
Luc Gnacadja  
Executive Secretary  
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- 10:15 – 10:20 a.m. Signing of Declaration and Letter of Intent for an MOU**  
Bill Farland; Vice President for Research, CSU  
Luc Gnacadja; Executive Secretary, UNCCD  
Other Distinguished Guests
- 10:20 – 10:30 a.m. Intermission**
- 10:30 – 10:35 a.m. Introduction of Seminar**  
Joyce Berry  
Dean, Warner College of Natural Resources  
Colorado State University
- 10:35 – 10:50 a.m. Opening Statement: The Importance of Desertification in the USA**  
Thomas Reinsch  
Soil Scientist  
Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- 10:50 – 11:05 a.m. A Half Century of Commitment to Understanding Soils Issues in Colorado**  
Gary Peterson  
Professor and Department Chair, Soil and Crop Sciences  
Colorado State University
- 11:05 – 11:20 a.m. Success Stories and Affected Populations**  
Shannon Horst  
CEO and Co-Founder, Savory Institute
- 11:20 – 11:35 a.m. Success Stories and Affected Populations**  
Dennis Ojima





## United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification

---

Senior Research Scientist, NREL/CSU and Senior Scholar  
John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics and the Environment

**11:35 – 11:50 a.m. Desertification in Mexico and Responses in the Chihuahuan Desert**

Jurgen Hoth  
World Wildlife Fund  
Chihuahuan Desert Program

**11:50 – 12:05 p.m. Challenges of implementing the UNCCD**

Evisa Abolina  
Former UNCCD National Focal Point of Latvia

**12:05 – 12:15 p.m. Q & A Session**

**12:15 – 12:20 p.m. Closing**

Joyce Berry  
Dean, Warner College of Natural Resources  
Colorado State University

The Decade to Combat Desertification is spearheaded by United Nations agencies. They include the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other relevant bodies of the United Nations including the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is the focal point of this inter-agency task force.

For more information about the Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification, visit <http://unddd.unccd.int/index.htm>.

### Contacts:

Kimberly Sorensen  
Colorado State University  
Tel: +1 (970) 491-0757  
Email: [Kimberly.Sorensen@colostate.edu](mailto:Kimberly.Sorensen@colostate.edu)

Yukie Hori  
UNCCD  
Tel: +49 228 815 2829  
Email: [yhori@unccd.int](mailto:yhori@unccd.int)

