



## Media Alert

### Launch of the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification

Desertification, defined as land degradation in the drylands, threatens the livelihoods of more than 1 billion people in some 100 countries. It will also lead to disruption of up to 44% of all the world's cultivated systems.

Recent studies indicate that drylands not only take up 41.3% of the land surface but are also home to 2.1 billion people; that's one in every three people worldwide. Moreover, one in every three crops under cultivation today has its origins in the drylands. Drylands also support 50% of the world's livestock, serve as rich wildlife habitats and account for nearly half of all cultivated systems.

To promote actions that will protect the world's drylands from further deterioration and degradation into deserts, the United Nations will launch the Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification on 16 August 2010 and it will run from January 2010 to December 2020.

The Decade will be launched in the city of Fortaleza in the dryland State of Ceará, Brazil, during the opening of the 2nd International Conference on Climate, Sustainability and Development in Semi-arid Regions.

The launch in Brazil will be complemented by regional launches from September to November this year. In Africa, UNEP in collaboration with UNDP will hold a simultaneous launch and a press conference in Nairobi, Kenya, on 16 August.

The Decade of events are spearheaded by the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in collaboration with the Department of Public Information (DPI) of the UN Secretariat in New York, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and other relevant UN bodies

**Where:** [Brazil] Ceará Convention Center, Fortaleza / [Kenya] UNEP Press Room, UNEP, Nairobi

**When:** Monday, 16 August 2010 (local time: 10:00 Fortaleza, Brazil /11:30 Nairobi, Kenya)

**For more information and to confirm attendance, please contact:**

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