

**Memorandum of Understanding
between
the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
and
the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat
Desertification**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, hereinafter referred to as 'UNESCO' and the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, hereinafter referred to as the 'UNCCD Secretariat',

Recalling that:

1. the UNCCD preamble recognizes "the urgent need to improve the effectiveness and coordination of international cooperation to facilitate the implementation of national plans and priorities",
2. Article 23 of UNCCD paragraph, 2 (d), empowers the UNCCD Secretariat "to coordinate its activities with the secretariats of other relevant international bodies and conventions",
3. the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for the period 1996 to 2001 envisages to address the major issues *inter alia* of desertification in arid and semi-arid zones (within the framework of the Convention on Desertification), with special emphasis on responses based on rigorous scientific knowledge and assessment and capacity-building,

Recognizing that:

4. UNESCO's mandate is the promotion of education, science, culture, and communication,
5. In its fields of competence, UNESCO has, within the framework of its former Major Project on Scientific Research on Arid Lands, the current Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the International Geological Correlation Programme (IGCP), the programmes of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the World Solar Programme, the World Heritage Convention, the Division of Cultural Heritage, and the Transdisciplinary Project: Educating for a Sustainable Future (EPD), and in collaboration with the



Sahara-Sahel Observatory (SSO), carried out a number of projects and activities and established networks relevant to the implementation of the UNCCD, and dealing in particular with research, monitoring, *in situ* conservation, training and education, culture, as well as sustainable use of natural resources;

6. The Chairpersons of IGCP, IHP, IOC, MAB and MOST in their Joint Statement at the 29th session of the General Conference of UNESCO have stressed the importance of their programmes to contribute jointly to the implementation of the UNCCD;

Have agreed as follows:

I. Purpose

a. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to establish a framework for collaboration between UNESCO and the UNCCD Secretariat in the field of combating desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, including through the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and in particular those aspects of relevance to science, education and training, culture, and communication, with a view to avoiding overlaps and duplication of efforts and ensuring effective co-operation in joint activities.

b. This Memorandum of Understanding covers all aspects of relevance to UNESCO, including activities of IOC and the World Heritage Centre. Within the general framework provided by this Memorandum, specific co-operation arrangements may be subsequently concluded.

II. Institutional aspects of co-operation

Aspects of institutional co-operation include:

a. Mutual participation of the representatives of the UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO in their respective meetings of relevance to one another;

b. Joint notification of national level focal points, in respective Member States and Contracting Parties, of the co-operative activity between the UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO, in the general pursuit of promoting the consultation and co-operation among such focal points, and in particular in those Member States and Contracting Parties where the focal points are different.

III. Access to and dissemination of information

- a. The UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO will co-operate in the production, exchange and dissemination of scientifically sound environmental information and education materials beneficial to the implementation of the UNCCD, for which both Parties have official mandates and institutional commitments,
- b. The UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO will establish an appropriate mechanism, technical methods and necessary procedures for the effective exchange of knowledge on environmental education and data on the state of environmental degradation and preservation. Such knowledge and data include those obtained through their international, regional and national programmes and networks, such as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring database (BRIM), the IOC's database, the database on World Heritage sites, the UNCCD Secretariat's databases and the network to be established pursuant to Article 25 of the UNCCD,
- c. The UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO will co-operate in the development of environmental education and information materials, in particular focusing on the scientific, educational and cultural aspects of desertification and drought. Their co-operation could also address topics such as policy issues related to data exchange and management,
- d. The UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO will use, and encourage their relevant constituencies to use, their respective rosters of experts on desertification and restoration of degraded areas.
- e. The UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO will co-operate in building up the required scientific and technical capacity in countries for the effective development of the Convention.

IV. Co-ordination of activities

- a. The UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO will, to the extent possible, co-ordinate their programme activities to ensure that their implementation is complementary and mutually supportive.
- b. Joint activities may include, *inter alia*, but shall not be limited to:
 - elaboration of environmental education material;
 - education and public awareness programmes on desertification;

- capacity building (training courses and workshops, University Chairs and other activities);
- programmes to support the identification, preservation, maintenance and application of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities;
- promoting participatory research on relevant traditional and local technology, know-how and practices to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;
- exploring the interactions between culture and the prevention and/or reduction of land degradation;
- promoting co-operative and comparative research between regions with different cultural and socio-economic circumstances;
- inventorying, assessment and monitoring of desertification;
- *in situ* conservation and integrated ecosystem management, in particular in areas adjacent to protected areas, such as buffer and transition zones of Biosphere Reserves and sites inscribed on the list of the World Heritage Convention;

V. Consultation, communication and guidance

- a. The UNCCD Secretariat and UNESCO will arrange regular consultations as required for the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding.
- b. They will also report on the measures taken under this Memorandum of Understanding to their respective governing bodies and seek further guidance on new areas of co-operation.

VI. Focal points

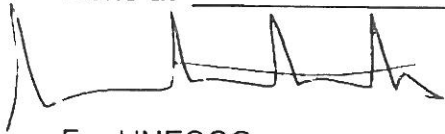
The Executive Secretary of UNCCD and the Director-General of UNESCO will designate focal points for the purposes of this Memorandum of Understanding and, in particular, regarding official communication and exchange of information.

VII. Review, amendment and termination

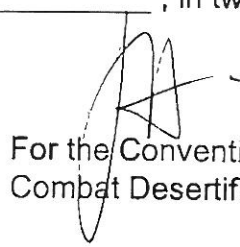
- a. This Memorandum of Understanding may be reviewed to assess its effectiveness and may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the parties.
- b. This Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated by either party giving notice in writing to the other not less than six months in advance of the effective date of termination.

2011 10 10 2011

Done at _____ on _____, in two original copies.



For UNESCO:



For the Convention to
Combat Desertification: