



UNIVERSAL  
POSTAL UNION

Berne, 30 May 2005

International Bureau Circular

**170**

2006: International Year of Deserts and  
Desertification – Issue of Commemorative  
Postage Stamps

Dear Sir/Madam

We are pleased to lend our support to the following request received from the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), who informs us that the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/Res/58/211, declaring 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. The text of this resolution is attached.

Worldwide concern at the startling spread of desertification, and the need to tackle this problem, has been discussed at the United Nations since 1977. In 1992, the United Nations Conference for Environment and Development called on the United Nations General Assembly to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INCD) to prepare, negotiate and adopt a Convention to Combat Desertification. The Convention entered into force in 1996 and to date 191 countries are party to it.

It is felt that the issue of a postage stamp or series of postage stamps to mark the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006 will help to highlight the importance of combating the spread of desertification, which is affecting more and more countries and an ever larger land mass. The most heavily affected continent is Africa, followed by Asia and America. The additional awareness and publicity that will be generated by the various stamp designs will serve to highlight the cause even further and give added value to the UNCCD's mission.

Building upon the approach promoted by the United Nations General Assembly, the stamp should try to portray the duality of the issues at stake. While deserts, which have constituted a unique natural habitat for mankind, call for specific conservation policies, desertification on the other hand threatens the survival of concerned populations and urgently requires effective counter-measures.

The stamps should therefore try to demonstrate to the general public the beauty of the dry lands and the arid or semi-arid ecosystems as well as the importance of their protection and the prevention of further damage. The UNCCD Secretariat is developing a special logo and can provide examples of photographs that show the

brehtaking aesthetics of these fragile ecological zones as well as samples of satirical comics that were published in the UNCCD's *Comics to Combat Desertification–1997*. The eye-catching and potent images of these comics can help to further increase the awareness and interest of the public in protecting the biological diversity, community and traditions of the threatened world.

The UNCCD Secretariat plans to prepare an exhibition of various awareness materials and would like to include a sample of any stamps and philatelic products your postal administration is able to produce. This material, together with any additional queries and requests, should be addressed directly to the UNCCD Focal Point Coordinator at the following address:

Mr. Rajeb Boulharouf  
Focal Point Coordinator for the Year 2006  
UNCCD Secretariat  
P.O. Box 260129  
Haus Carstanjen  
D–53153 BONN  
GERMANY

Tel: +49 228 8152810  
E-mail: [iyddstamp@unccd.int](mailto:iyddstamp@unccd.int)

Contact details for national focal points and more information on national activities are also available at the following website: [www.unccd.int](http://www.unccd.int).

For any further clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact the Markets Directorate at the UPU International Bureau, on +41 31 350 3111, e-mail: [philately@upu.int](mailto:philately@upu.int).

We thank you in advance for your attention and cooperation.

Hama Arba DIALLO  
Executive Secretary  
United Nations Convention  
to Combat Desertification

Edouard DAYAN  
Director General  
International Bureau of the  
Universal Postal Union



## General Assembly

Distr.: General  
9 February 2004

**Fifty-eighth session**  
Agenda item 94 (b)

### Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.2)]

#### **58/211. International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* chapter 12 of Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,<sup>1</sup>

*Recalling also* the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,<sup>2</sup>

*Recalling further* the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)<sup>3</sup> and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,<sup>4</sup>

*Having considered* decision 22/15 of 7 February 2003 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on an international year of deserts and desertification,<sup>5</sup>

*Deeply concerned* by the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and its far-reaching implications for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular on poverty eradication,

*Recalling* the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development,<sup>6</sup>

*Conscious* of the need to raise public awareness and to protect the biological diversity of deserts as well as indigenous and local communities and the traditional knowledge of those affected by this phenomenon,

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. 1, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>5</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/58/25)*, annex.

<sup>6</sup> A/57/304, annex, paras. 138-142.

1. *Decides* to declare 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification;
2. *Designates* the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, as focal point of the Year, in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other relevant bodies of the United Nations;
3. *Invites* all countries to establish national committees or focal points and to celebrate the Year by arranging appropriate activities;
4. *Calls upon* all relevant international organizations and Member States to support the activities related to desertification, including land degradation, to be organized by affected countries, in particular African countries and the least developed countries;
5. *Encourages* countries to contribute, as they are able, to the Convention and to undertake special initiatives in observance of the Year with the goal of enhancing the implementation of the Convention;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the status of preparations for the Year.

*78th plenary meeting  
23 December 2003*