



**Bamako International Conference on Youth and Desertification**  
**Challenges and opportunities for the youth in the drylands**  
**Bamako, Mali 4-6 September 2006**

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to recall resolution A/Res/58/211 through which the United Nations General Assembly declared "2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD)".

The IYDD has been considered as a major opportunity to strengthen the visibility and importance of the drylands issue on the international environmental agenda as well as to reinforce the need to implement the UNCCD in order to achieve the millennium development goals. In this context, and as part of the initiatives envisaged to celebrate the International Year, the UNCCD Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Government of Mali and with the support of the Governments of Finland, Germany and Italy is organizing an International Conference in Bamako, Mali, from 4 to 6 September 2006, focusing on "Youth and Desertification", a theme that is placed high on the agenda of the Convention within the context of participatory approaches.

This conference is one of three major international events to be organized within the framework of the IYDD, together with the International Conference on "Women and Desertification" to be held in Beijing, China and the International Conference on "Global Assessment and the Way forward in the implementation of the UNCCD" to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Continuing environmental degradation and the related effects, such as unemployment, poverty and migration, often directly affect the youth. The impact of land degradation thus represents a serious threat to the security and stability of affected countries, where vast numbers of young people are unemployed. In some of the most affected regions, current demographic and urbanization trends that compound this negative impact are expected to increase dramatically, thereby exacerbating the situation.

The main objective of the conference is to encourage countries most affected by desertification and land degradation to give priority to creating youth employment as a matter of national urgency, with job creation mainstreamed into macroeconomic and sectoral (agriculture, industry, services and labour) policies, by offering concrete cases of challenges and opportunities for youth in drylands.

Delegates from across the world, ranging from youth representatives, NGOs, policy makers, subregional, regional and international organizations and institutions, development partners will be invited to participate in the meeting.

In this respect, and considering the nature of this event, NGOs involved in the UNCCD implementation, are invited to identify and nominate representatives who can offer their personal experience and success stories to the Conference, thus bringing added value to its deliberations. The nominee could also be a recognized expert in issues related to youth and sustainable economic development, employment, soil conservation.

To ensure equitable and balanced participation, the United Nations attaches great importance to the nomination of female representatives, as well as representatives of community-based organizations and youth associations.

We would highly appreciate it if you could send your suggestion no later than 5 June 2006, indicating:

- a) The details of the nominee (name, surname, nationality, date of birth, contact address, telephone, fax and e-mail);
- b) His/her field of expertise, and
- c) Title and short summary of case studies, which he/she would like to present at the Conference.

Please note that given the limited resources available, only a limited number of participants will receive financial support to attend the conference.

The duration of the conference will be three days and the working languages of the plenary session will be English and French. The tentative Agenda of the conference, and the logistic information for participants will be posted shortly on the official website of the IYDD (<http://www.iydd.org>).

Please send the nomination and the case study to the UNCCD Secretariat at:  
Fax: (49-228) 815 2898 / 99  
Or through the e-mail: [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int)