

REPORT OF THE WORLD DESERTIFICATION DAY AS MARKED BY WOMEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME AT WEP CONFERENCE HALL, ABUJA ON THE 17TH JUNE, 2011.



WEP NIGERIA

WOMEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME - NIGERIA

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The World Day to Combat Decertification is observed every year on 17 June all over the world. The aim of the United Nations in designating a day of observance is to sensitize the public and policy makers to the increasing dangers of desertification, land degradation and drought.

This year (2011) the world focuses her attention on Dry lands and Forests with the theme: Forests keep Dry lands working.

The effects of decertification on the Nigeria Nation cannot be over emphasized as it is the most pressing environmental problem facing the Northern part of the country.

To mark the World Desertification Day, Women Environmental Programme (WEP) organized a discussion forum on the 17th June, 2011 at her conference hall to chat a way forward for the ravaging desert encroaching at a pervasive rate into the hinterlands of the North Part of the country. The forum had in attendance a total of 30 persons from across the media, civil society organizations, government representatives, community dwellers as well as environmentalists. Two papers were presented by the Executive Director of WEP, Priscilla Achakpa while Mr. Ochuko Odibo made another presentation. The Deputy Director Drought and Desertification Amelioration Department of the Federal Ministry of Environment Mrs. Oju Okoye enlightened participants of governmental efforts and programs towards combating drought and decertification.

The forum however recognized the fact that no fewer than 40 million people within the northern part of the country are faced with the threats of hunger and extreme weather conditions due to desert encroachment on arable lands and grazing lands.

Furthermore, the forum observed that the Sahara desert is moving southwards at a rate of 0.6 kilometers per annum with the rate of 0.6 kilometers per annum and the rate of deforestation been at 350,000 hectares per annum.

The forum therefore recommended that the following measures be taken:

1. More researches to optimize yields in dry areas be conducted
2. Afforestation programs be implemented across the 11 front line states and beyond so as to curb decertification and it's concurrent effects
3. There should be an improvement of early warning systems to predict the occurrence and security o drought.
4. Shared information and access to new knowledge
5. Innovative financing schemes for women to expand their access to energy
6. Technical training for women
7. Increase access to land



Group Picture of Participants at the Forum



Ms. Priscilla Achakpa making her presentation



Cross Section of Participants



Mrs. Oju Okoye making her remarks



Mr. Ochuko Odibo making his presentation