

International Workshop on Establishing **Resistant Ecosystems to Global**  
**Changes** in  
Dry Lands,

Speech Text

28- 31 May 2012

Konya, Turkey

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before starting my speech, I greet you with love and respect on behalf of myself and my ministry. I would like to welcome all of you to the Workshop on Establishing **Resistant Ecosystems to Global Changes** in Dry Lands”, which is jointly organized with the Republic of Turkish Ministry of Forests and Water Affairs, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, and United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization.

Dear Guests,

Management of dry lands, their rehabilitation and putting those lands into service of people is of great importance. One-fifth of the world’s population is living in dry lands. “Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought are some of the major problems faced in the Middle East, Central Asia, and particularly in Africa.

While there is not a full consensus on “climate change”, which intensely occupies the international agenda, Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought phenomenon is a problem, which affects humankind and the world as a whole.

It is envisaged that in the coming decade, 50 million people will be forced to move from their own homelands due to the Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought. According to data provided by UN, 12 million hectares of arable land is transformed into man-made deserts per year. It is impossible to fight with rural poverty, climate change, biological diversity loss, and drought and food scarcity without conserving soil, which is one of the basic elements of human life.

Similarly, according to the figures by UN, it is stated that approximately 900 million hectares of land all over the world, a land 12 times bigger than our country, can be gained again, rehabilitated and put into the service of people through the use of appropriate methods.

A great portion of these lands to be rehabilitated is comprised of forest ecosystems in dry lands. Those lands produce a variety of goods and services including:

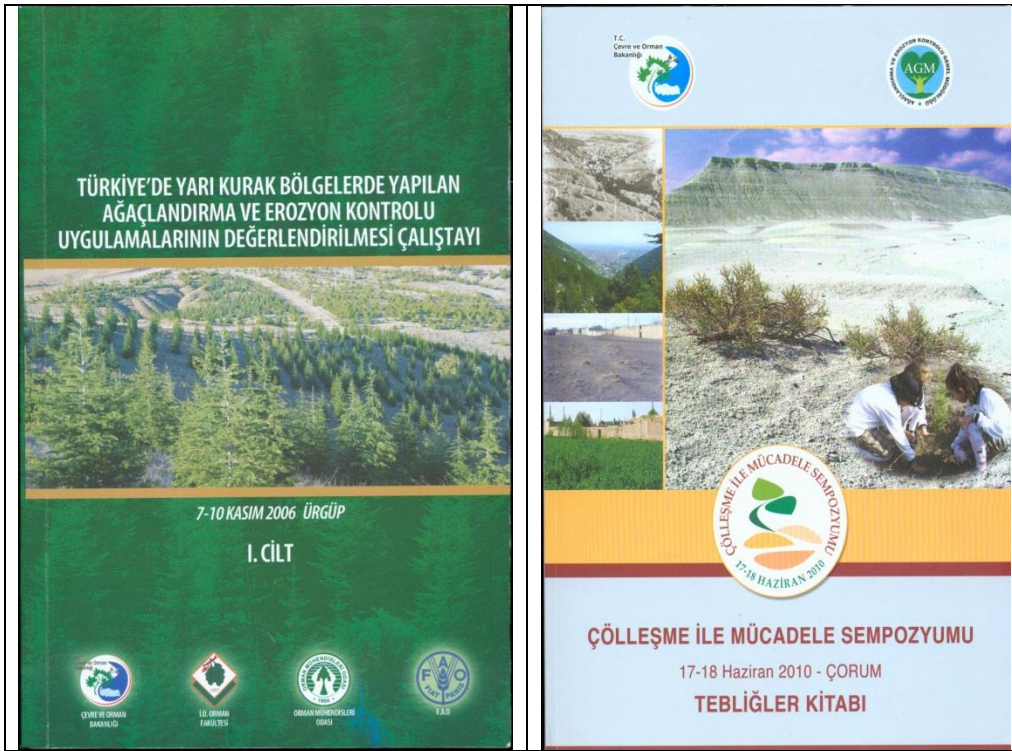
- Protection of biodiversity,
- Climate Change adaption,
- Combat desertification, prevention of water and wind erosion,
- Food security,
- Cattle grazing,
- **Meeting the needs of wood for cooking.**

You may know that in order to manage these lands as good as possible, FAO has started preparations for a guideline.

A number of activities have been carried out in our country in line with FAO's aforementioned effort.

1. Workshop on Evaluation of Afforestation and Erosion Control Practices in Semi-arid Lands in Turkey was held **on 7- 10 November 2006** in Ürgüp in cooperation with FAO, Chamber of Forest Engineers and Istanbul University. Declarations were published as a book.

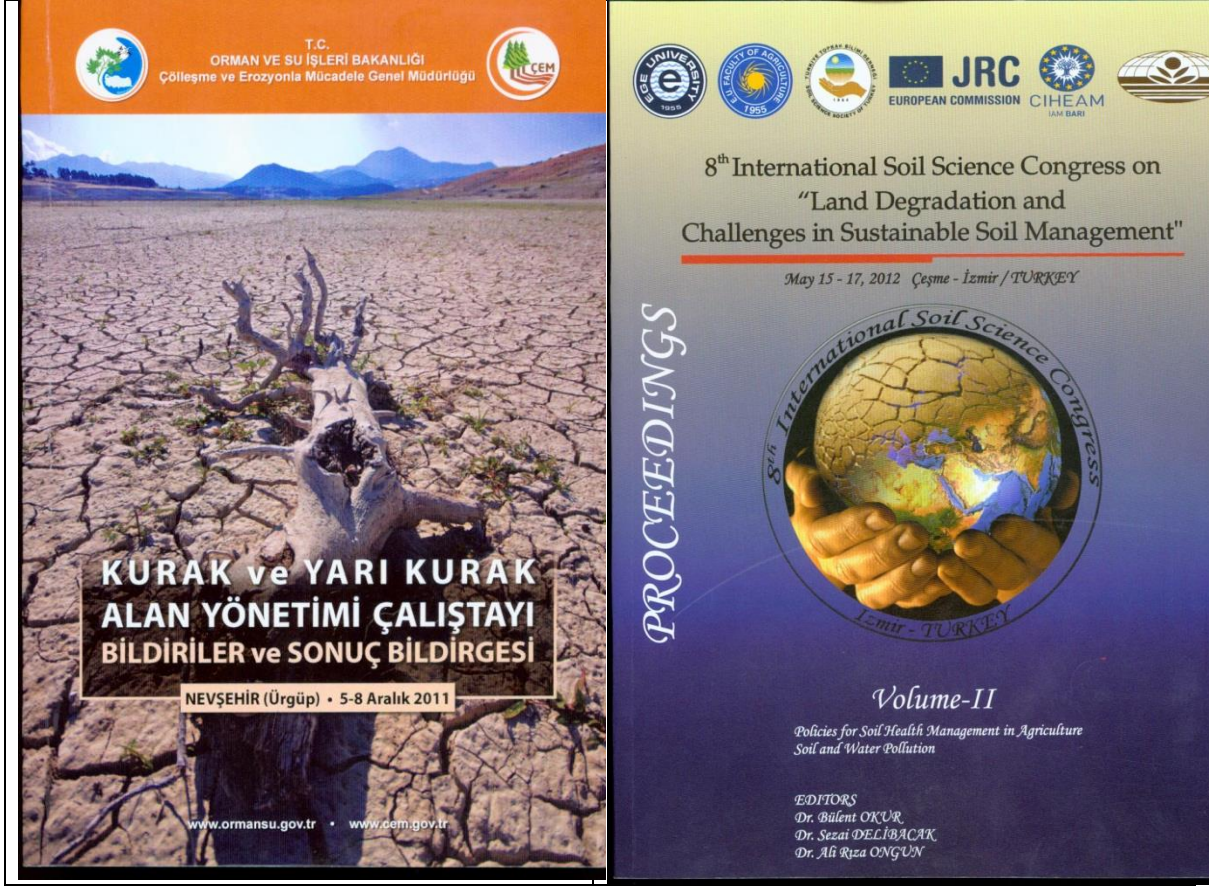
2.



3. “Symposium on Combat Desertification” was held on **17-18 June 2010 in Çorum**, and declarations were published.

4. “Arid and Semi-arid Land Management Workshop” was held on **5- 8 December 2011 in Nevşehir**. This workshop was attended by 80 participants, and declarations were published.

5. We participated in the International Congress on Land Degradation and Sustainable Soil Management held on **15-17 May 2012 in Izmir**.



6. Moreover, preparations have been started for a “Guideline on Arid and Semi-arid Lands Management”. A working group was established for ministerial consent. This working group was convened for its latest meeting on this issue on 3 May 2012. The group is still working on the draft text. It is considered that the consequences obtained from this draft text may contribute to the guideline to be prepared by FAO.
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Dear guests,

Turkey provides contributions on both theoretical and practical level to the regional and international activities as well as activities conducted in Turkey. Some examples are given as follows:

- As mentioned above, management of dry lands is one of the major problems in Central Asia region. Dry land management and fight against desertification are closely interrelated issues. As you may know, “**Conference on Confidence Building Measures in Asia, International Combating Desertification Research and Training Center**” will be established in Turkey, possibly here in Konya.
- 21st session of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions - Silva Mediterranean, a statutory body of FAO was held on 2-3 February 2012 in Antalya.<sup>1</sup> Turkey took over the period 2012-2016 presidency.
- 20th Session of FAO Near East Forestry Commission was held from 29 January to 2 February 2012 in our country, and Turkey took over the period 2012-2014 presidency<sup>2</sup>.
- During this session, “**Working Group on Dry Land Forestry and Combating Desertification**” was established. This working group will be coordinated by Turkey in cooperation with FAO.
- One of the most significant events, which discuss the forestry issues worldwide, UNFF will be held in April 2013 in Istanbul.
- International Workshop on “The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in Combating Desertification” will be held in cooperation with the Secretariat of United Nations Combat Desertification on 13-18 June 2012 in Ankara and Konya.

Dear Participants,

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, to our Foreign Ministry, FAO and GIZ for all of their moral and material supports. I would also like to thank all of you in my heart for being here with us.

With my best regards,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cem.gov.tr/erozyon/AnaSayfa/Silvamed.aspx?sflang=tr>

<sup>2</sup>

[http://www.cem.gov.tr/erozyon/Files/Silvamed/Prof\\_Dr\\_Lutfi\\_AKCanin\\_NEFRC\\_ve\\_SilvaMED\\_Acilis\\_Konusmasi.pdf](http://www.cem.gov.tr/erozyon/Files/Silvamed/Prof_Dr_Lutfi_AKCanin_NEFRC_ve_SilvaMED_Acilis_Konusmasi.pdf)