

## NDRD e-newsletter

أول الشجرة بذرة

*"A tree starts with a seed"***Dear colleagues,**

Just a short message as we are swamped here at NDRD by preparations for our first

**"International Symposium on Drylands Ecology and Human Security" (ISDEHS 2006)**

We expect to see many of you in Dubai in December and will certainly spoil you as much as we can with Gulf Arab hospitality :- )  
More info under: [www.isdehs.com](http://www.isdehs.com)

**Other Scientific Conferences**

Insider feedback brought to our attention that our colleagues in Saudi Arabia would be delighted to also welcome an international crowd to their

**Third Saudi Science Conference:  
New Horizons in Science and their Applications,**



to be held in King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from March, 10 to 13, 2007. Visas for this conference will be arranged through the organizing committee!

Please submit your abstracts on e.g. the conference themes "environmental stability and ecological ecosystem" or "natural resources and their sustainable use" of not more than 300 words before the deadline,

**September 24, 2006** by using the registration form: <http://www.3sascon.org/Registration.htm>

For submission and more information please contact **Prof. Dr. Hamoud Al-Balawi** (Chairman of the Scientific Committee)

**Scholarships for Ph.D. Students in Germany**

The Faculty of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Hohenheim is offering at least **7 - 10 scholarships for Ph.D. students** in its postgraduate studies. The program starts on 1st of January 2007. The scholarship is granted normally two years. The following "Promotionskollegs" are involved: "Soil resources and landscape ecology", "Plant production, plant nutrition and quality assurance", "Plant breeding, phytosanitary, and biotechnology", "Animal sciences and biotechnology", "Agricultural and environmental engineering", "Economic and social sciences of the agriculture and food economy" and "Tropical agricultural, food and resource sciences". For further information refer to: <http://www.uni-hohenheim.de/agrar/index-e.htm>

Applications with CV, copies of certificates, a short project description and if possible a letter of recommendation of a professor should be sent **until 30th of September 2006** to the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences (300), University of Hohenheim, 70593 Stuttgart, Germany.

**Oxford University Center for the Environment (OUCE) MSc in Drylands Science and Management**

This new one-year MSc course introduces students to the background science relevant to dryland environments, as well as to their management issues and challenges. Being a mix of science and applied courses with generic as well as focused components, the

e-mail: [papers@3sascon.org](mailto:papers@3sascon.org)

### ★ **Special Remark from NDRD:**

Misconceptions about Saudi Arabia???

Well, we at NDRD recommend that first you go and have a look for yourself and thereafter you may have an opinion. ☺

In the meantime let us be argumentative and quote from the "**Lonely Planet – Arabian Peninsula**"

*"The home of Islam is as diverse as it is surprising. It is a country with deep roots in tradition, yet one that is racing headlong into the future. The journey from traditional Bedouin encampments deep in the Empty Quarter (Rub al-Khali) to modern cities replete with stunning symbols of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a journey traversing the Saudi soul. Signposts to this extraordinary history abound. Madain Saleh is Saudi Arabia's greatest treasure, a breathtaking rock-hewn monument to the ingenuity of the Nabataeans, while you can still hear the echoes of TE Lawrence along the abandoned tracks of the Hejaz Railway. The wonderful mud-brick ruins of Dir'aiyah are Saudi Arabia's birth place, and Jeddah, gateway to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, has an enchanting old city made of coral. The fairytale mud towers of Najran belong to an altogether different world of ancient camel caravans laden with frankincense.*

*Saudi Arabia is also a **land of astonishing natural beauty**, from the spectacular, plunging landscapes of the Asir Mountains around Abha to the sculpted sand dunes of the Empty Quarter to the palm trees of the largest oasis in the world at Al-Hofuf, while the waters of the Red Sea offer some of the best diving anywhere in the world."*

In connection to attending the conference, you have a chance to meet this country and its interesting culture from a completely different perspective - sunshine and no disturbing tourists guaranteed!

Certainly we are aware that there is a general safety warning issued, but please be honest: When you look at it from a pragmatic point of view – where exactly is "still safe" nowadays? There is still mass tourism to Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Bali, etc. and scientists like us have a tendency to be creeping around in countries where they certainly should not be in respect to safety issues. So with a few precautions, Saudi is certainly "as safe" as many other places in the world.

degree develops both theoretical understanding and practical experience, with a key component being a field course in North Africa. The number of students will be limited so as to allow a large degree of personal supervision. Students of the International Graduate School at OUCE in Oxford have the benefit of being part of a thriving graduate community and have an excellent record of employment or continuing their scientific advancement at the end of the course. The institution is now starting to recruit good students from around the world, whatever their scientific background, for the next academic year (2007/8). By applying now, there is still sufficient time to seek scholarships to support funding.

More info:

<http://www.ouce.ox.ac.uk/graduate/#msc-dsm>



### **Scientific Networks - NDRD recommends:**



One of the major objectives of NDRD is to promote the dialog between research, development and application oriented activities. Especially research collaboration, organized in more or less formalized networks has become a phenomenon of crucial importance for scientific practice. National and regional scientific networks could "in theory" coordinate their research activities, disseminate results to a much broader audience and hence play a vital role to get their research findings integrated into policy. Theory vs Practice?

An Arabic proverb says:

الوعد سحابة والإنجاز مطر وأحسن المواعيد ما صدقه  
الإمطار

*"A promise is a cloud; fulfilment is rain; and the best promise is that which has been proved by rain"*

So NDRD will try to introduce in every newsletter - in our opinion - "worthy" initiatives in the field of drylands research.

Let us start with the **German Desert\*Net**, which has not only been the raw model, but the "intellectual environment" for having the inspiration for the creation of NDRD :-)



**Call for Papers:**  
**International Journal of Ecological  
Economics & Statistics**



Special Issue on  
**Stream Ecology and Low Flows (SELF)**

Access to safe streams as a habitat is highly variable around the world. Much progress still remains to be made in infrastructure improvements and hazard reduction.

Ecological and environmental educations in river basin also play a major role in achieving changes in attitudes in society. Papers are sought on ecological modeling of streams with emphasize on low flow limitations. For more information...

Contact: Prof. Saied Eslamian

<http://ceser.res.in/ijees/cont/self.html>

**Deadline: 30 September 2006**

**The German Competence Network for Research to Combat Desertification** was founded to form a binding link between different scientists who aim to investigate the complex causes and effects of desertification in interdisciplinary research approaches. Desert\*Net, as a network of scientists and experts, provides rational data outputs, gives advice on scientific methods and projects, and promotes the co-operation between and to institutions in Germany that work on various fields of desertification research. For further information on interesting upcoming events, the European Desert\*Net initiative, etc. have a look at <http://www.desertnet.de/>

Best wishes,  
Your NDRD Editing Team  
(GCC Network for Drylands Research and Development)  
[www.ndrd.org](http://www.ndrd.org)

Questions regarding preparation of abstracts for ISDEHS may be directed to the Organizing Committee at:  
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