

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES: February 20, 2011

**INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION (IGU / UGI)
COMMISSION ON LAND DEGRADATION AND DESERTIFICATION (COMLAND)**



Paul F. Hudson (secretary) and Guðrún Gísladóttir (Chair)

Purpose and Scope of COMLAND

Most environments are affected by common factors which favour and increase land degradation processes. Two main topics are widely responsible: a) climatic conditions and changes, and b) anthropic impacts through land use. There is an urgent need to achieve a better practical and theoretical understanding of land degradation processes which affect the world's landscapes. In order to achieve these objectives, the working plan of the Commission is as follows:

- to promote and coordinate interdisciplinary research on land degradation and desertification in our changing global environment;
- to study the effects of environmental change, both natural and human induced, and their implications for land degradation and desertification;
- to conduct regional case studies under different climatic regimes and environmental risks (forest fires, floods, river channel changes, soil-erosion, water depletion, water quality), study the planning and design of conservation measures and the potential conflict between ecological sustainability and economic viability;
- to alert authorities as to the importance of adequate surveillance of land degradation processes;
- to develop and communicate the best techniques for monitoring changes and collecting data, and
- to sponsor and support activities leading to exchange of information regarding land degradation and desertification.

I. STEERING COMMITTEE

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II. COMLAND MEMBERSHIP

- 239 members (from e-mail list)

III. INFORMATION ON MEETINGS IN 2010

COMLAND Session at IGU Regional Congress in Tel Aviv: *4 paper presentations*
COMLAND Pre-Congress meeting in Haifa (July 5-11, 2010) entitled “Land Degradation and Desertification”: *19 paper presentations*
Organizer: Prof. Moshe Inbar, University of Haifa, Israel

Other activities since 2008 Congress in Tunis

COMLAND continues to be an active IGU Commission, and since the 2008 IGU Congress in Tunis has been productive from the standpoint of the organization of meetings, publication, awards, and in the addition of new Members and Steering Committee Members.

Meetings:

Since the 2008 IGU Congress COMLAND has organized or co-sponsored six meetings.

1, Kuwait: March 14-18, 2009:

International Conference on Desertification
COMLAND Field Conference
Organizer: Jasem Al-Awadhi, Kuwait University

2, Melbourne, Australia: July 6-11, 2009

COMLAND sessions at the IAG meeting

3, Magdeburg, Germany: September 5-9, 2009:

International Conference on Land and Water Degradation Processes and Management

COMLAND Field Conference

Organizer: Gregor Ollesh

4, Murcia, Spain, September 16-19, 2009:

International Conference on Desertification in memory of John Thornes

Co-sponsor with the Spanish Society of Geomorphologists (main sponsor).

5, Haifa, Israel, July 5-11, 2010: COMLAND field conference in coordination with the IGU Regional Congress in Tel Aviv.

COMLAND Field Conference

Organizer: Moshe Inbar, University of Haifa

Also, COMLAND session at the Tel Aviv meeting

6, Grahamstown, South Africa: September, 2010:

Land Degradation in South Africa

Co-sponsor with South African Association of Geomorphologists (main sponsor)

Organizer: Prof. Kate Rowntree, Dept. of Geography, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, (COMLAND Steering Committee member)

IV. FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Five new meetings are planned (with COMLAND as organizer or sponsor), for Chile in 2011, Germany in 2012, Italy in 2012, Japan in 2013, and Poland in 2014.

1. Santiago, Chile: November, 2011

Sessions at the IGU Regional Congress, and COMLAND pre-congress field meeting

Organizer: Prof. Carmen Paz Castro, University of Chile (for COMLAND pre-congress meeting)

Title of Field Trip: *The Copiapo Valley in the Atacama Desert: Landscape Diversity, Land Use Complexity, and Development*

2. Cologne, Germany: August 22-26, 2012

COMLAND pre-conference meeting and COMLAND paper sessions at the IGU Congress

3. Caligiari, Sardinia, Italy: October, 2012

Title: *Land Degradation in Mediterranean Environments: Causes, Processes, Management*

Dates: Oct. 8-12 (preliminary)

Organizer: Dr. Andrea Vacca, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cagliari, Italy (Sardinia)

4. Kyoto, Japan: August 4-9, 2013

Sessions at the IGU Regional Congress, and COMLAND pre-congress meeting with field trip

Dates: to be determined (prior to IGU Congress)

Field Trip Organizer: Prof. Takashi Oguchi, Center for Spatial Information Science, University of Tokyo, Japan

5. Krakow, Poland: 2014

Sessions at the IGU Regional Congress, and COMLAND pre-congress meeting with field trip
Field Trip Organizer: Dr. Pavel Prokop, Polish Academy of Sciences, Krakow, Poland

V. COMLAND COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Murcia, Spain, September 16-19, 2009: Int. Conf. on Desertification in Memory of John Thornes
Co-sponsored with the *Spanish Society of Geomorphologists (main sponsor)*.

Grahamstown, South Africa: September, 2010: Land Degradation in South Africa
Co-sponsor with *South African Association of Geomorphologists (main sponsor)*
Organizer: Prof. Kate Rowntree, Dept. of Geography, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, (COMLAND Steering Committee member)

VI. PUBLICATIONS (2008 – 2010)

COMLAND has continued to publish its conference proceedings in high quality peer reviewed journal outlets. During the two year period since the 2008 IGU Congress in Tunis, COMLAND has published three special issues from prior meetings and two in progress.

In Progress:

Hudson, PF and Inbar, M (editors). “Geodiversity and Land Degradation: Anthropogenic and Natural Drivers of Environmental Change”. Land Degradation & Development.
Special issue of papers presented in Haifa at the COMLAND preconference meeting for the IGU Tel Aviv meeting. Editors: PF Hudson and M Inbar

Rowntree, K. (editor). Land Degradation & Development.
Special issue of papers presented at the South African Association (SAAG) of Geomorphology Meeting, in Grahamstown (COMLAND was a co-sponsor of the meeting)

2010:

Xiaoping Yang and Louis A. Scuderi (Eds.) 2010. Environmental Changes in Arid and Semi-arid Regions. Quaternary Research 73, 1, 162 pp.

Papers published from the COMLAND meeting held in Left Banner, Inner Mongolia, China, 2007.

2009:

Xiaoping Yang and Arthur Conacher (Eds.) 2009. Land Degradation and Rehabilitation in Ecologically Fragile Areas. Geographical Research 47, 1, 94 pp. DOI: 10.1111/j.1745-5871.2008.00562.x. Papers published from the COMLAND meeting held in Left Banner, Inner Mongolia, China, 2007.

Gregor Ollesch 2009. Abstracts and field trip guide. International Conference on Land and Water Degradation Processes and Management, Magdeburg, Germany September 6-9, 2009.

2008:

Steffanie Scott and Arthur Conacher (Eds.), 2008. Land Degradation and Poverty, *Geographical Research*, 46 (1), Published papers presented at the COMLAND meeting in Nghe An Province, Vietnam, in February 17 – 27, 2006.

VII. Recent Awards:

COMLAND has awarded four awards since the 2008 IGU Congress in Tunis, including its COMLAND Award for contributions to the Commission and the COMLAND Distinguished Award for Land Degradation.

COMLAND Award

- Jasem Al-Awadhi, Kuwait 2009
- Gregor Ollesch, Germany 2009
- Moshe Inbar, Israel 2010

COMLAND Distinguished Award for Land Degradation

- Rattan Lal, USA 2009