

The International Conference on Land Degradation in Dry Environments was held at Kuwait University in March 8 - 11, 2009, very well organized by the organizing committee under Dr. Jasem Al-Awadhi's leadership. During the conference around 80 scientific papers were presented and discussed among participants from more than two dozen countries and regions. Participants included distinguished world authorities, graduate students and younger and more elderly researchers and experts from universities, research institutions and applied fields as well as from administrative organizations. Their talks covered many important key aspects of the earth sciences, e.g., dust storms and their impacts, biodiversity in deserts, the carbon cycle, climate change, the status of land degradation research and rehabilitation measures, control of sand encroachment, deserts' response to global change, water resources in deserts, and remote sensing. Geographically, the papers were based on studies in many different arid and semi-arid regions of the world and with a focus on the Gulf countries. After paper sessions during the day, the organizers very generously offered interesting social programs each evening, including visits to the impressive National Museum, Science Park and Grand Mosque. The experience of participants was enriched by a brief field trip to former quarried fields and degraded sites in Kuwait currently under rehabilitation, and by an optional post-conference field trip to the UAE, extending to the mountainous border with Oman. To demonstrate COMLAND's particular appreciation, the Commission awarded Dr. Jasem Al-Awadhi the COMLAND Award at the closing ceremony; with the Award presented by Commission Chair Guðrún Gísladóttir.

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