

Partnering for Food Security in Dry Land Areas

Share [Tweet](#) [Like](#) 13 [Send](#) [in Share](#) [Pin it](#) [G+1](#) [✉](#)

By Janeen Madan

As world leaders gathered for the Millennium Development Goals summit at the UN headquarters in New York last week, there were also a number of important side events taking place. On Friday September 24, the Qatar National Food Security Programme (QNFSP) hosted “The Global Dry Land Alliance- Partnering for Food Security” event, which launched a global alliance aimed at strengthening cooperation among dry land nations. The event provided a much-needed forum to discuss challenges specific to dry lands which account for 45 percent of the world’s land area.



The newly formed Global Dry Land Alliance will constitute 45 to 60 nations with arid or semi-arid environments.
(Photo Credit: Bernard Pollock)

The issue of food security in dry land areas is extremely crucial to the global fight against hunger—60 percent of the world’s food insecure population lives in dry lands and over 80 percent of the rural population in these areas are dependent on crop agriculture and livestock for both food and income. Dry land areas suffer from land loss due to erosion, salinity, desertification, disappearing vegetation cover, loss of biodiversity and increasing water scarcity.

As Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), noted in his statement at the event, “land degradation damages the livelihoods of some 2 billion people living in dry lands.”

In the Sahel, a band of land that crosses Africa at the southern fringe of the Sahara Desert, 10 million people are threatened by food shortages. Furthermore, the Middle East, with 5 percent of the world’s population, accounts for 40 percent of the world’s cereal imports and experiences the highest level of water scarcity in the world. The recent food and financial crises have highlighted the need to support domestic agricultural systems in order to reduce vulnerability to volatile global markets. In regions where extreme weather threatens food supply, the answer is not short-term aid, but a global commitment to strengthening long-term food security.

According to Fahad al-Attiya, QNFSP Chairman, the newly formed Global Dry Land Alliance will constitute 45 to 60 nations with arid or semi-arid environments, including countries in the Middle East, Africa, the United States and India.