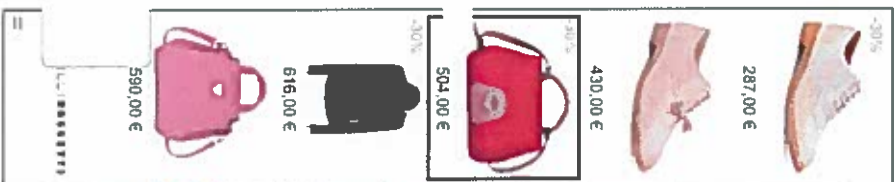


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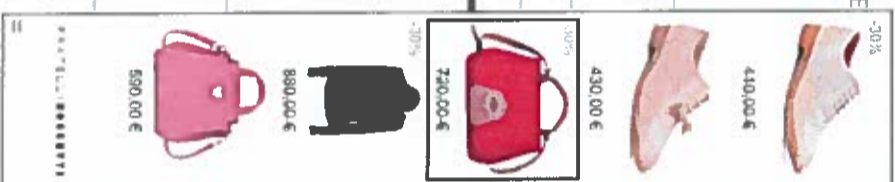
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Morocco signs Global Dryland Alliance foundation treaty

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Rabat, Oct 16 (IANS/MAP) Morocco and 12 other countries have signed the foundation treaty of the Global Dryland Alliance (GDA).

The GDA is aimed at establishing an international organisation to face food insecurity consequences, negative environmental and economic impacts associated with climate change.

The Alliance will work with local, regional, and international partners to identify, disseminate and implement solutions for agricultural, water and energy challenges of dryland countries.

The foundation treaty of the new organisation was signed on Sunday by Mohamed Sadiki, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests, in the presence of Morocco's Ambassador to Qatar, Nabil Zniber.

Speaking to MAP, Sadiki underlined the importance of Morocco's participation in the founding conference, saying that two thirds of the Kingdom's surface area is covered by arid and semi-arid lands.

The Kingdom will present its experience within the framework of this Alliance in the light of Morocco's green plan, which has brought new instruments to achieve sustainable agricultural development while preserving the environment and biological diversity, Sadiki added.

Qatar will bankroll the operational budget of the GDA for two years and will also host its headquarters in Doha, Qatari Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Khalifa Al Thani, said at the opening of the meeting.

According to the United Nations, drylands exist in 51 countries which are home to almost three billion people, a third of the world's population.

-IANS/MAP