

**Committee:** Environment Commission

**Issue:** Ensuring the Implementation of the Great Green Wall to Stop the Sahara from Expanding

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**Position:** President

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## INTRODUCTION

Depending on the season and the annual rainfall, it has been evident that during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Sahara desert has expanded anywhere between 10% and 18%<sup>1</sup>. The main causes are climate change and harmful human activity. Considering this, the African Union<sup>2</sup> launched the Great Green Wall initiative.<sup>3</sup> The project aims to restore and preserve the degraded regions in the Sahel and restrict the expansion of the Sahara into surrounding areas.

Desertification has not only affected the biodiversity in the surrounding area but also introduced countless communities to droughts and food shortages. Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) are unable to develop as these nations are held back due to problems regarding essential and fundamental human rights issues regarding lack of potable water and food. Organisations and new legislation are needed to eradicate this issue.

Eleven African countries are part of this effective project to preserve the Sahel region in order to circumvent any more detrimental practices. The coalition of these countries believed that the problem at hand was one that needed to be dealt with collectively rather than as individual nations.<sup>4</sup> Whilst progress has been made, desertification is taking place at uncontrollable rates. More funding, awareness and global focus must be paid to the Great Green Wall in order for it to achieve its aims. Desertification has serious implications for our biodiversity, communities, socio-economic stability<sup>5</sup> and poses a huge threat to the 2030 Agenda and the global climate.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas, Natalie, and Sumant Nigam. "Twentieth-Century Climate Change over Africa: Seasonal Hydroclimate Trends and Sahara Desert Expansion." AMETSOC, American Meteorological Society, 1 May 2018, journals.ametsoc.org/view/journals/clim/31/9/jcli-d-17-0187.1.xml.

<sup>2</sup> "The Great Green Wall Initiative." UNCCD, www.unccd.int/actions/great-green-wall-initiative.

<sup>3</sup> "Africa's Great Green Wall Just 4% Complete Halfway through Schedule." The Guardian, Guardian News, and Media, 7 Sept. 2020, www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/07/africa-great-green-wall-just-4-complete-over-halfway-through-schedule.

<sup>4</sup> Baker, Aryn. "Can Africa's Great Green Wall Help Fight Climate Change?" Time, Time, 12 Sept. 2019, time.com/5669033/great-green-wall-africa/.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, Tierney. "Comment: Why Is Desertification Important?" Climate Home News, Climate Home, 15 June 2012, www.climatechangenews.com/2012/04/28/comment-why-is-desertification-important/.

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Desertification

“Desertification refers to the persistent degradation of dryland ecosystems by climatic variations and human activities”<sup>6</sup>. Desertification can also be defined as the spread of deserted areas, for example, the Sahara Desert into the surrounding Sahel region. Desertification causes major environmental and socio-economic damage to the areas affected.

### Great Green Wall

The Great Green Wall is an initiative launched by an all-African coalition aiming to prevent the spread of the Sahara desert into the Sahel region. The initiative involves planting 8,000 km of trees and fauna across the width of Africa, spanning eleven countries.<sup>7</sup>

### Sahel Region

The Sahel is a semi-arid climate that acts as a border between the Sahara desert and sub-Saharan Africa. The region is prone to high temperatures and unstable rainfall. Countries of the Sahel are Sudan, Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Senegal.”<sup>8</sup>

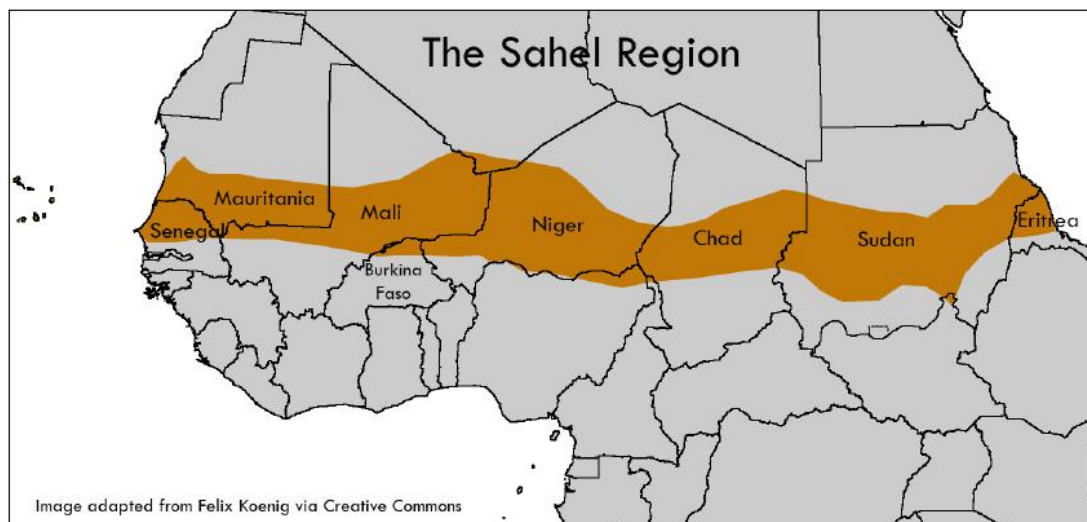


Figure 2: A map indicating the Sahel Region

<sup>6</sup> “Desertification.” Desertification: 1. What Is Desertification?, [www.greenfacts.org/en/desertification/1-2/1-define-desertification.htm](http://www.greenfacts.org/en/desertification/1-2/1-define-desertification.htm).

<sup>7</sup> “The Great Green Wall.” Great Green Wall, [www.greatgreenwall.org/about-great-green-wall/](http://www.greatgreenwall.org/about-great-green-wall/).

<sup>8</sup> Andariya. “Is Sahara Desert Swallowing Sudanese Villages?” InfoNile, 1 Aug. 2018, [infonile.org/en/2018/08/desertification-causes-concerns-and-technological-advances/](http://infonile.org/en/2018/08/desertification-causes-concerns-and-technological-advances/).

## **Drought**

“A period of dryness especially a prolonged one that causes extensive damage to crops or prevents their successful growth”<sup>9</sup> which is a resulting consequence of desertification in the affected areas.

## **Overgrazing**

“Overgrazing is grazing by livestock or wildlife to the point where the grass cover is depleted, leaving bare, unprotected patches of soil. As a result, water and wind cause erosion, especially on clay soils, and the growth of poisonous plants and thorny shrubs may increase.”<sup>10</sup> Overgrazing is a major cause of further desertification and loss of vegetation.<sup>11</sup>

## **Food Security**

“When all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”<sup>12</sup>. Desertification threatens food security, which means there are increased food shortages. This would negatively impact the Sahel Countries, especially considering their economic state which does not enable them to regain that security quickly enough.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **The Expansion of the Sahara**

The Sahara Desert is an eco-region located in the north of Africa spanning over 11 countries (Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Western Sahara, Sudan and Tunisia.) It is the world’s largest hot desert covering over 3.5 million square miles of land. Due to a number of factors including climate change (both naturally caused and the cause of human activity) and irresponsible agricultural practices, the desert is expanding in size. According to the Yale School of the Environment, over the last century, the Sahara Desert has grown 10% since 1920. According to the study, experts have concluded that the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation, which is “a natural climate cycle that changes the Atlantic Ocean from warm to cold”,

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<sup>9</sup> “Drought.” Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/drought](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/drought).

<sup>10</sup> Directorate, OECD Statistics. OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms - Overgrazing Definition, [stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1977](http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1977).

<sup>11</sup> “Causes of Desertification - Desertification - Eduqas - GCSE Geography Revision - Eduqas - BBC Bitesize.” BBC News, BBC, [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zctymnb/revision/4](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zctymnb/revision/4).

<sup>12</sup> <https://aifsc.aciar.gov.au/food-security-and-why-it-matters.html>

has affected the average rainfall across Africa. This has been especially visible in the Sahel Region.

Consequently, this, along with global warming, climate change and other anthropogenic and natural causes, has led to land degradation, mainly in the south region of the Sahara. The cause of this is because of improper irrigation, high temperatures and overgrazing boiling down to damaged soil fertility. This is especially important considering that the agricultural sector provides for more than 40% of Africa's economy as well as indirectly affecting other sectors, too.<sup>13</sup> Consequences of land degradation include biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, food and economic insecurity, migration and, in worst-case scenarios, even war and conflict.<sup>14</sup>

### Consequences of Desertification

It is evident that the impacts of desertification harm nature, biodiversity and even us. The ability for plants and animals to sustain themselves in inadaptable conditions becomes impossible at times. Droughts lead to the dehydration of plants and the death of animals. Desertification culminates in the fragility of the surrounding environment leading to soil erosion, the disruption of growth in flora and more. Additionally, anything from underground water reserves, topsoil, plant population and the water cycle is affected by this phenomenon. Water scarcity in such drylands prevents any production of "wood, crops, forage, and other services that ecosystems provide to our community." Many scientists link desertification to general climate change and biodiversity loss. This association is backed up by the exacerbation and rising temperature of the climate.<sup>15</sup> Climate change and desertification both affect each other directly and in both ways as desertification leads to land degradation caused by overgrazing which affects deforestation. This in turn affects the carbon cycle, giving rise to the buildup of carbon emissions and CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. This ongoing cycle brings about climate change and global warming affecting all biodiversity. Due to the destruction of habitats and disputes concerning habitation,

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<sup>13</sup> Authors: Xinshen Diao Elizabeth Robinson Shashidhara Kolavalli  
Vida Alpuerto, et al. "The Role of Agriculture in African Economic Development: What Do We Disagree on?" A Planet for Life, [regardssurlaterre.com/en/role-agriculture-african-economic-development-what-do-we-disagree](https://regardssurlaterre.com/en/role-agriculture-african-economic-development-what-do-we-disagree).

<sup>14</sup> Abbas El-Zein Professor of Environmental Engineering. "On Dangerous Ground: Land Degradation Is Turning Soils into Deserts." The Conversation, The Conversation, 13 July 2021, [theconversation.com/on-dangerous-ground-land-degradation-is-turning-soils-into-deserts-94100](https://theconversation.com/on-dangerous-ground-land-degradation-is-turning-soils-into-deserts-94100).

<sup>15</sup> "Desertification." 7. Is There a Link between Desertification, Global Climate Change, and Biodiversity Loss? [www.greenfacts.org/en/desertification/1-3/7-climate-change-biodiversity-loss.htm](https://www.greenfacts.org/en/desertification/1-3/7-climate-change-biodiversity-loss.htm).

plants and animals are worryingly affected by this with hundreds of species of both flora and fauna becoming extinct.<sup>16</sup>

Inevitably all this ultimately comes back and affects the human population. Potable water supplies become low, agricultural fields which provide for food and sustain the economy along with the spread of natural diseases and poisonous plants due to overgrazing all are rooted in desertification and its negative impacts on humans. As land degrades and deserts expand, the level of food production significantly reduces, water becomes scarce as sources dry up and communes are torn apart leading to migrations and, in severe cases, conflict.<sup>17</sup>

### **Causes of Desertification**

Prolonged periods of low, unsteady rainfall have led to extended periods of drought. As a result, desertification occurs, degrading land, destroying fields and causing food scarcity and more. Humans have played a prominent role and are a main contributor to the problem. The high activity of deforestation has affected the change in climate greatly due to its effect on the carbon system. Furthermore, the cutting down of trees extracts the roots from the soil which act as a binder for the land below. This eventually leads to soil erosion and the infertility of land; hence the introduction of the Great Green Wall for the revitalization and rebuilding of the Sahel's greenery. Due to the unimaginable conditions communities in the Sahel region undergo, overgrazing is unfortunately not uncommon. Farmers try to push to the limit the crops they are able to harvest but this leads to sometimes irreversible damage to the land with the inability to recover any vegetation. The usefulness and efficiency of the land is reduced leading to erosion and eventual desertification. Improper irrigation has had both economic and environmental effects. Agriculture has been and remains to be the most prominent economic activity in Africa. Countless communities in rural areas but also the continent's economies rely on this practice. Millions upon millions of hectares of land are used for agricultural purposes. Unfortunately, improper irrigation management systems are extremely common leading to "increased erosion", which in turn leads to desertification; "pollution of surface water and groundwater from agricultural biocides and deterioration of water quality." Consequently, most of these factors boil down to one main issue: climate change. Natural climate variability affects the fluctuation in temperature but is then exacerbated by anthropogenic practice.

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<sup>16</sup> Ani. "Over 3 Animal Species in India Extinct Due to Desertification: Researchers." Business Standard, Business-Standard, 8 Sept. 2019, [www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/over-3-animal-species-in-india-have-gone-extinct-due-to-desertification-researchers-warn-at-unccd-meet-119090800177\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/over-3-animal-species-in-india-have-gone-extinct-due-to-desertification-researchers-warn-at-unccd-meet-119090800177_1.html).

<sup>17</sup> "Explainer: Desertification and the Role of Climate Change." Carbon Brief, Carbon Brief, 2 Sept. 2020, 12:21, [www.carbonbrief.org/explainer-desertification-and-the-role-of-climate-change](http://www.carbonbrief.org/explainer-desertification-and-the-role-of-climate-change).

## **The Great Green Wall**

With the project's official initiation by the African Union in 2007, the initiative of the Great Green Wall has been widely welcomed. The project proposes an 8000-kilometre fence composed of trees stretching from the west to the east coast of Africa. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) plays a prominent role in the project raising awareness and bringing together all the members to combat this pressing issue. Furthermore, the campaign “Growing a World Wonder” aims to broaden the scope of what this initiative can reach, aspiring to maximise its effectiveness.

In the past 14 years, both local and global efforts have come to build approximately 16% of the total vegetation goal of the plan. This equates to approximately 24 million hectares of land reforested and/or regenerated.

The project is mainly funded by the European Commission; its aim was to boost local investments as well as the promotion of the so-called “green jobs.” The original finance amount was set at seven million Euros, but since then has been seeded upon by numerous organisations and partners such as the World Bank (USD 5 billion), European Commission (USD 2.5 billion), African Development Bank (USD 6.5 billion) and countless more with a newly fledged USD 14 billion in funds along with over 10 million ‘green’ jobs.

Besides the 11 African Countries which signed upon the initiative in 2007 (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Senegal), members of the EU, the UN, and other neighbouring African countries which are not directly affected by the project have greatly offered their assistance to rebuild a greener and more sustained Sahel for a better world for all.

## **MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED**

Major countries involved included the original members of the coalition of African Member states such as Ethiopia, any country in the Sahel Area which has made significant progress regarding reforestation and sustainability, but also other member states not directly affected by the Sahara’s expansion which have reached out in assistance such as Ireland. Additionally, the organisations mentioned have either played an influential role in the initiative such as the African Union, provided funding such as the European Union or raised awareness such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

## Ethiopia

Ethiopia, one of the members of the coalition of African countries which helped in launching the campaign, has produced over 5.5 billion plants and seedlings in total with over 151,488 ha of reforested land, countless hectares of terraces, land and multipurpose gardens have been restored along with improved management, education of food and energy security and the maintenance of the local biodiversity. In addition, over 200,000 jobs have been created with over a million hectares of land in total have been restored.

## Senegal

Senegal, a country which is in the Sahel region, plays an influential role as it was the first out of the eleven countries to plant a seedling in 2008 as a sign of their support of this instrumental fight to combat desertification. Since then, Senegal has planted 18 million trees and continues to carry out reforestation.<sup>18</sup> It has restored approximately 850,000 hectares of land; 72,452 reforested land and 119,202 hectares of the restored area. Senegal also carried out training, as well as encouraging education with 322,221 inhabitants being reached by the project. Senegal is profoundly involved as 34% of its arable land is threatened by desertification and land degradation.<sup>19</sup>

## Niger

Niger has created tens of thousands of green jobs, providing education and knowledge; and most importantly it has carried out the restoration, reforestation and dune fixing on over 800 hectares of land. Communities have come together to plant tree seedlings which number 146 million. Niger has played a central role in the initiative, remaining actively participated throughout. Being a nation in the Sahel, Niger is greatly affected hence their determination to solve the issue at hand. Regrettably, it is said that Niger has undergone extreme deforestation and has lost 96% of its natural forest cover, making it evident that reforestation is a prominent mission for the nation.

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<sup>18</sup> Baker, Aryn. "Can Africa's Great Green Wall Help Fight Climate Change?" Time, Time, 12 Sept. 2019, [time.com/5669033/great-green-wall-africa/](https://time.com/5669033/great-green-wall-africa/).

<sup>19</sup> Ngounou, Boris. "SENEGAL: 34% of Arable Lands Threatened by Desertification." Afrik 21, Afrik21, 24 June 2020, [www.afrik21.africa/en/senegal-34-of-arable-lands-threatened-by-desertification/](https://www.afrik21.africa/en/senegal-34-of-arable-lands-threatened-by-desertification/).

## **Ireland**

The Irish government has shown its full support and backing of the initiative by providing over 1.2 million Euros in financial assistance. This investment is proven to be greatly beneficial because it not only gives the project assets but also shows Ireland's determination to support the vital African initiative.

## **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**

This UN Convention aims to assist countries that are affected by long droughts and desertification issues. They have prioritized the Great Green Wall project and the issue being undertaken in the Sahel Region. The UNCCD aims to raise awareness, bring its members together to combat the issue and track the progress made. This convention has proven to be beneficial to the cause as awareness from events and publications has been raised, acting against desertification.

## **European Union (EU)**

The European Union has shown its support time and time again through the backing and funding of the project. Many EU member states have invested in the project offering their full allegiance towards eradicating the issue. The EU has provided and funded the project with approximately 80 million Euros along with their sub-branch, the European Commission having donated 2.5 billion USD.<sup>20</sup>

## **African Union**

The African Union endorsed the Great Green Wall for the Sahara in 2007. Countless internal committees, which have had great success in making an impact in their own states, congregate and discuss the progress and monitor the effectiveness of the overall project. The African Union oversees and evaluates the achievement and ensures the overall implementation of the initiative.

## **UN Environmental Program (UNEP)**

With desertification being one of the greatest threats to the environment, the UN Environmental Program (UNEP) is greatly involved in ensuring this is kept to its minimum. This branch stands with countries as they work hard to implement this vision in their nations. In 1978,

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<sup>20</sup> "Africa's Great Green Wall to See Quicker Growth with New \$14 Billion." Landscape News, 17 May 2021, news.globallandscapesforum.org/49608/newly-seeded-with-14-billion-africas-great-green-wall-to-see-quicker-growth/.



UNEP created the desertification branch, one of the most significant and dominant sub-branches regarding the desertification issue in the Sahel.

### Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

This specialized agency works hard to defeat hunger, combat food insecurity and improve nutrition. With its help, countries have been able to tackle the problems the desertification of the Sahara has brought to the Sahel Region’s communities. “The FAO contributes to international efforts to defeat hunger and improve local economies by helping its member countries modernize and improve agriculture and forestry.”<sup>21</sup>

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1950	<b>Sahara Expedition.</b> Richard St. Barbe Baker explores the Sahara and proposes the new creation known as the “Green front” to prevent any further desert expansion
1965-1973	<b>United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD)</b> was called because of severe drought and repeated crop failures in the Sahel region
1968 – 1973	<b>Sahelian drought period:</b> “Overgrazing and deforestation on marginal land lead to desertification. With less vegetation there is less transpiration and evaporation from the soil, causing less rainfall” <sup>22</sup>
29 August - 9 September 1977	<b>Plan of action to combat desertification (PACD).</b> “United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD) takes place in Nairobi, and the Kenya Plan of action to combat desertification is established” <sup>23</sup>
1978	<b>UNEP creates Desertification Branch</b> <sup>24</sup> - As the desertification issue was growing, the sub-branch for Desertification was created to combat the rising issue. This allowed for UNEP to have a specific branch to deal with the predicament.

<sup>21</sup> Kenton, Will. “Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Definition.” Investopedia, Investopedia, 19 May 2021, [www.investopedia.com/terms/f/food-agriculture-organization-fao.asp](http://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/food-agriculture-organization-fao.asp).

<sup>22</sup> “Case Study - the Impact of Drought in a Developing Country: the Sahel - Droughts - Edexcel - GCSE Geography Revision - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize.” BBC News, BBC, [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zt9ncwx/revision/4](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zt9ncwx/revision/4).

<sup>23</sup> “HISTORY.” Great Green Wall, [www.greatgreenwall.org/history](http://www.greatgreenwall.org/history).

<sup>24</sup> “HISTORY.” Great Green Wall, [www.greatgreenwall.org/history](http://www.greatgreenwall.org/history).

May 23rd, 1978	<b>United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) mandate was expanded</b> to incorporate the responsibility for the 22 countries within the Sahel region facing problems associated with drought and desertification
1980	<b>Awareness of Desertification is raised.</b> The idea of a “Great Green Front” starts to emerge and gets abundant attention to rebuild Sahel’s degraded landscape
June 3-14th, 1992	<b>United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)</b> , also known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit
2007	<b>The Great Green Wall Initiative is conceived.</b> Work on the initiative finally started as the African Union officially took upon the change-driven campaign.
2009	<b>Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification.</b> The United Nations had declared 2010-2020 as the Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification <sup>25</sup>
August 2018	<b>Irish Government Funding.</b> The government of Ireland announced their 1.2 million euro funding plan to assist the Great Green Wall campaign.
2014-2019	<b>EU Support.</b> The European Union (European Commission) offers funding to support the initiative.

## UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

### **A/RES/64/201 - United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010–2020)**

This resolution is in direct relation to the Decade for Deserts act proposed by the General Assembly. This document was introduced in 2009, outlining the course of action to be taken in the next 10 years from awareness to possible solutions to be taken. It recognises the gravity of the issue and is deeply concerned by it and hence calls for member states and other multilateral agencies to work hand in hand in the next decade.

### **A/C.2/74/L.41/Rev.1 - Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa**

This resolution is one tailored to the problem in the Sahel region and the affected nations. Heavily emphasises the importance of global and governmental collaboration as the

<sup>25</sup> “HISTORY.” Great Green Wall, [www.greatgreenwall.org/history](http://www.greatgreenwall.org/history).

main way of tackling the issue as well as offering a wide range of plausible solutions for member states to adopt.

**E/RES/2017/4 - United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017–2020**

As deforestation is one of the root causes of desertification, this resolution is key to combating both issues. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals plays a central and focal role in this document. It tackles the issue of deforestation as well as mentioning the direct effect it will play upon desertification and land degradation, specifically referring to countries in Africa.

**A/RES/68/232 - World Soil Day and International Year of Soils**

This Resolution recognises the importance, sustainability and value of soil in terms of agriculture and offers measures to protect it. Furthermore, it recalls past treaties and notes the importance of sustainable development.

**3337 (XXIX) (1974) G.A. RESOLUTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**

“Recognizes the urgent need to prepare a world integrated programme of development research and application of Science and Technology to solve special problems of desertification in all its ramifications and reclamation of land lost to desertification.”

**32/170 (1977) G.A. RESOLUTIONS ON MEASURES TO BE TAKEN FOR THE BENEFIT (1977) OF THE SAHEL REGION**

“Stresses immediate implementation of PACD in the Sahel region and relevant resolutions adopted by the UN conference on Desertification. Invites GC/UNEP to consider the role and activities of competent existing organs in the Sahel region to improve institutional

arrangements and including the establishment of subregional offices to combat desertification.”<sup>26</sup>

## **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

### **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Campaign: Growing a World Wonder**

In efforts to raise awareness of the issue, the UNCCD has launched a campaign called ‘Growing a World Wonder’ in hopes of educating the world on just how pressing this issue is. This brings in large industries, investments, organisations and people in unity to help Africa to achieve their goal of the Great Green Wall and eradicate problems not only of land degradation but also food scarcity and poverty. Seeing that the problem of desertification has so many indirect correlations to other world problems, we see that the importance of solving this quandary must be tackled with great competence.

### **Chinese Government Research**

Despite failing, due to the fact that the solutions proposed were only beneficial in the short-term and rather disadvantageous in the long run, the Chinese government tried solving the desertification problem. Countless research hours went into the project, locating desertification locations, measuring weather conditions and the possibility of afforestation. In the early 1980s, China tried to combat this problem by carrying out afforestation but discovered that this route was not a suitable or an effective one to go about. The main use that continues to arise which is parallel to the Sahel region is the lack of precipitation levels or its unreliability.

### **Decade for Deserts**

The United Nations General Assembly announced that 2010-2020 would be the Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification. The purpose of this was to promote any and all actions that would combat desertification, land degradations and deterioration. There were three main objectives to be tackled: the organising of activities and events to raise awareness on the issue, mobilising and providing funds for projects such as the Great Green Wall, and

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<sup>26</sup> Hawando, Tamiré. “ANNEX B.” UNEP'S MANDATE IN DESERTIFICATION CONTROL, United Nations, 1997, pp. 16–22.

monitoring and reporting reforestation growth and progress. Both the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Millennium Goals played a central role in its origin. The main challenges that were witnessed were overly degraded land which was strenuous and difficult to reforest and recover. Over the course of the decade, the largest and fastest increase of the growth of the Great Green Wall took place making it evident that the plan to establish this decade was favourable.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### **Faster Methods for Tree Planting and Reforestation**

Despite the progress made till now, only around 16% of the Great Green Wall has been completed. More efficient ways and methods are needed to accelerate the rate at which tree planting occurs. This can be done with further collaboration between nations, especially ones such as Ethiopia and Senegal with other member states, in order to share any info and statistics regarding the best way to go about the situation taking into account and considering the incredible progress they have made.

### **Importance of Indigenous and Endangered Species**

The reforestation act to build the Great Green Wall can and should be taken advantage of to reforest damaged land with indigenous and endangered species as such classes of flora adapted to the specific local environment and nowhere else. This not only increases the cultural integrity of the county's biodiversity but in case of endangerment, numbers could re-escalate, bringing back threatened and vanishing wildlife.

### **Governmental Support**

As seen by the major parties involved, the government of Ireland has been intensely showing its support for the initiative. If more governments were to have the same level of commitment, funding, awareness and resources, this campaign can reach its success to finally eradicate the issue of desertification in the Sahel region.

## Civic Support

Despite the creation of 'Growing a World Hunger', the reach of this campaign needs to be wider. Its effectiveness would increase if it could reach more people, more countries and more schools in order to raise awareness and educate people, with both civic and governmental support, as to what the Sahel Region is going through and its severity. Numerous charities have said that real change, just like any other cause, can start within. As awareness spreads for such an unspoken phenomenon, support, volunteering and funding will grow, increasing the rate at which the Great Green Wall will grow.

## Ensuring Responsible Agricultural Practices

Stricter laws and legislations are needed to be implemented, especially in LEDCs, as standard basic expectations for agricultural practices are not being followed. This leads to continual improper irrigation and overgrazing. Such activities are some of the biggest contributors to desertification hence the need for their containment through ratification.

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