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**Session IV
Challenges to the management of water resources and to countering desertification in
the Mediterranean region**

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Algerian experience in preserving fragile ecosystems from desertification

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Introduction :

- There is no doubt, Algeria, like the other south Bank Mediterranean countries, is facing some immense challenges, which in many cases threaten its viability as a nation,
- A great deal of efforts has been put in the modernization and improvement of Algerian economy,
- However, the country still face many difficulties in its fight against the inexorable environment and space of life degradation.

In this regards, Algerian policy makers adopted a set of measures, which in the long run, gave tangible results and a favourable impact on the environment.

1. Date palm tree cultivation in braving desertification phenomenon:

The development perspectives projected to horizon 2010 aim to the rehabilitation, the enlargement and the promotion of date palm in order to preserve the oasian ecosystem, against desertification and erosion, by reducing the ill-fated effects of violent winds and intense sunstroke. This is an indispensable condition to maintain life and socio-economical activities and to stabilize millions of people.

2. Other major actions taken to secure development sustainability of arid and semi arid zones in Algeria:

- Actions for water protection are of high priority, particularly for ground water,
- Supportive measures for better water economy,
- Waste water treatment programmes in every town,
- Urban solid waste management and control,
- Appropriate irrigation techniques in agriculture (drip),
- Date palm tree culture enlargement,
- Oasian patrimony safeguard,
- Sand hill fixing (El Mosrane-Djelfa pilot experience)
- Forest green barrier, which is an immense reforestation program to hinder desert prominence and steppe lands preservation.

- Ecologically adapted tree species for forest reconstitution,
- Land steppe management and preservation,
- Rational and well planned grazing management,
- Extensive pastoralism encouragement,
- Biodiversity conservation,
- Conservation of forests and other fragile ecosystems,
- Turning biodiversity into useful tools against environment deterioration,
- Appropriate research centres and universities in charge with specific arid and semi arid aspects,
- Well oriented multidisciplinary research programs, with a select place for renewable energy research and development projects.

3. Scientific and technological constraints:

- It is clear that technology is not a magic solution to these problems. But an important prerequisite for any solution is the availability of skilled manpower, a serious financial backing and a sound training policy, combined to efficient research programs. Algerian representatives try to join together these important conditions.
- However, there is a need for further efforts to attenuate desertification phenomenon, enhance productivity and meet national needs.
- In this context integrated approaches are needed.

Conclusion:

The OSCE participating states should help conduct joint frontline research in desertification and related aspects and support the forum in which policy issues pertaining to the development and dissemination of experiences and know how and solutions are discussed, in order to end at concrete measures susceptible to be translated into future co operations in environment improvement and desertification reducing fields.

- The rural people and related socioeconomic aspects, local know how which are a fundamental issue should always be taken into account when planning and implementing land resources management and conservation programmes.

Palm trees barrier against desert prominence

