

Speech on desertification

by Glenn D.

Last year during summer vacation, my family and I went to Spain. We stayed in a little village away from big cities, such an adorable and beautiful village with remarkably kind inhabitants. I still remember being shocked after the owner of the B&B we were staying at told us that someday soon, the village probably must be given up someday. This is because most of the inhabitants are involved in agriculture and farming, growing mostly mediterranean fruits and vegetables like lemons, oranges, tomatoes, but as the desert grows, they wont be able to continue as usual, to speak move away and find another job. If you do not already know, this process, happening not only in Spain, but in almost 40 % of the worlds land, is called desertification.

Desertification especially occurs in dry regions with already developed deserts, such as Africa, Australia, China, but also in southern Europe and is caused by us humans and climate change. Next to land degradation, sinking groundwater levels and growing deserts, people are starving, and their livelihood is being taken. We cannot let this happen, look away and continue as usual. We must help mother nature and end peoples suffer! With vanishing forests and freshwater supplies, entire ecosystems are being destroyed. Yet desertification is just one small part of the puzzle. As dry forests and bush-lands tend to have a higher risk of wildfires, when burning, they release tremendous amounts of CO₂ that will only worsen the consequences of climate change.

I am sure that almost all of you have heard of the Australian wildfires. During last wildfire season in 2019/2020, woodland and grassland one third the size of Germany burned down, killing an estimated 500 million animals. The fires have also destroyed the homes of many people and even killed at least 34 people.

Let us end this severe suffering! Luckily, as experts state, there is a solution to this. Next to climate change, another relevant cause of desertification is deforestation, as trees store water in the ground and keep the soil together.

So, in order to tackle desertification, we must work against deforestation. Reforestation is an exceedingly difficult, expensive and long term task, however, it has proven itself useful as scientists have begun to build a "great green wall" across the entire width of Africa, consisting of trees and other plants in order to stop and reverse desertification taking place beneath the Sahara desert.

All my evidence points to one direction: If we all work together preventing desertification to take over our precious planet, then we can restore nature, revive life that has dried up and help other humans providing food security, jobs and a home.

Thank you very much.