

Algiers conference to tackle Africa desertification

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A man walks by a car covered by sand in the village of Boumdeid, near Kiffa in Mauritania, in 2002. Regional cooperation to improve the fight against creeping desertification of the African continent is at the centre of a conference that is to open here Thursday.

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"It is difficult to bring action programmes of the continent's sub-regions in line if national programmes (to fight the problem) are insufficient," Youcef Brahimi of the Rome-based UN agency Global Mechanism to combat [desertification](#) told AFP.

Brahimi said the UN agency on Tuesday presented a platform for

cooperation and partnership as a basis for the Algiers conference.

"We're talking about an Internet site that has useful information on financial opportunities," he said, adding that those interested in a partnership or a mobilisation of resources could develop these partnerships online.

More than 40 [African countries](#) will take part in the Algiers meeting that is to adopt a "roadmap" to stop encroaching deserts.

The European Union's executive Commission has earmarked 3.2 million euros (4.5 million dollars) for the project.

"In Africa, between 1998 and today, most countries have worked out the details of their programmes, but unfortunately the financial resources announced by various regional and international bodies have not followed suit," Boubacar Cisse of the UN Convention to combat desertification told APS news agency.

Cisse said at least 43 percent of arable land in Africa is threatened by desertification which implies that 70 percent of the continent's economic activity is under threat.

Desertification and ensuing famine, [food insecurity](#) and migrations also threaten 40 percent of the African population, or 400 million people.

Thursday's Algiers meeting comes before the 10th session of the decision-making body of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification which opens in [South Korea](#) next month.

Algeria presides the convention's African group for two years until the end of 2011.

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