Dust Storms in Saudi Arabia Facts & a Strategy to Cope with

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Some Facts

- Dust storms is a natural phenomenon in desert ecosystems
- Global warming may reduce the frequency of dust storms (On the Relationship between Global Warming and Dust Storm Variation in China, Lu Aigang; Wang Tianming; Kang Shichang; Pang Deqian; Coll. of Life Sci., Beijing Normal Univ., Beijing, China, Environmental Science and Information Application Technology 2009. ESIAT 2009,

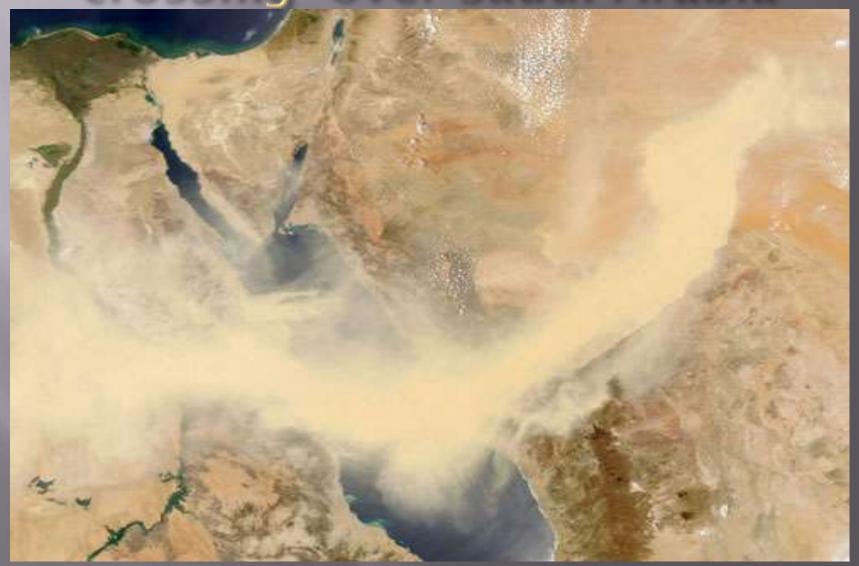
 International conference on, p 59)
- Dust storms has increased in frequency since 1950's by ten folds in North Africa
- In Mauritania, dust storms has increased from 2 per year to 80 storms per year since 1950's

In Saudi Arabia

Dust storms frequency in Riyadh between 1980-2007

Type of Storm	Number of days
Dust Haze	2317
Dust Storms	141
Rising Dust	1074
Total	3532

Satellite image of a dust storm crossing-over Saudi Arabia



A dust storm gusting over Riyadh on 3-7-2009



Major Impacts of Dust Storms

- Health hazards
 - On March 7th 2009, Red Crescent reported (1) the admission of 85 patients suffering from asthma (2) 154 car accidents with minor injuries
- Transportation (land, air, sea)
- Agriculture crops
- Sensitive equipments are affected
- Social (school suspension, traffic jams etc.)

Causes of Dust Storms



Overgrazing



Shrub cutting for fuel



Soil disturbance

What Should We Do?



King Saud University Campus, Riyadh

Proposed Strategy to Live with the Dust Storms

The Strategy is centered around

- Monitoring and predicting sand storms
- Coping with dust storms
- Assessment of sand storm impacts
- Educating the communities on how to deal live with sand storms
- Regional cooperation
- Coordination among national agencies

Thank You

