

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

Abdulaziz Assaeed
King Saud University

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

