



tems, economies, and cultures. Although often associated with arid regions, they can occur in any environment, reminding us that the successes and failures of arid zone landscape design may also have broader relevance for humid regions of the world.

The theme of desertification also reminds us that the concerns of this symposium have salience for international efforts to negotiate a Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), which entered into force in December 1996. The Convention is a priority of AGENDA 21, the action plan of the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The draft convention provides for multilateral and regional arrangements to mitigate desertification with a special emphasis on vulnerable regions of Africa. It creates a “global mechanism” to stimulate funding for these efforts. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and other international organisations sponsor desertification research and policy analysis (UNEP, 1995; UNEP/FAO, 1992; SCOPE, 1995; Stiles, 1995; Wasser and Hutchinson, 1995; and FAO, 1993). An international network of non-governmental organisations concerned with desertification and drought, RIOD, actively monitors and participates in debate over these policies and programs (<http://riod.utando.com>).

Environmental designers have had relatively limited influence on these negotiations and programmes, and it seems vital that stronger link-



LEFT: ANUP TALO POOL AT FATEHPUR SIKIRI, INDIA, THE ELEGANT MUGHAL CAPITAL (1571-1585) ABANDONED IN PART DUE TO ITS POOR WATER SUPPLY PROBLEMS.
MIDDLE: EXTRAVAGANT WATER DISPLAYS IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, USA.
RIGHT: ABANDONED FORT, SAINI, EGYPT.

ages be forged between landscape design and international environmental policy.

The current round of desertification negotiations builds upon previous generations of arid zone research in which landscape designers have had a role and which should therefore be briefly reviewed. Indeed, societies have experimented with medicinal, architectural, food, and forage aspects of desert landscaping for thousands of years. In antiquity, these experiments found expression in the literatures of natural history, agronomy, and medicine (Butzer, 1993). In the Islamic realm, they were advanced by al-Kindi (c. 795-870 CE), al-Dinawari (d. 895), ibnWahshiya (fl. c. 903-30), and others in Persia and Nabatea, not to forget the agronomic treatise of Ibn al-Awwam of Seville (Butzer, 1994; Watson, 1983). The mediaeval period also yielded agronomic treatises and landscape architectural experiments in Yemen, Ottoman Turkey, Persia, and Mughal India (Petruccioli, 1997; Subtelny, 1997; Varisco, 1994; and Wescoat and Wolschke-Buhlmann, 1996).

In the 19th century, major centres of experimentation arose in the U.S., European colonies, and Australia. In 1902, the American Forestry Association went so far as to rename its journal American Forests as Forestry and Irrigation to pursue the exciting conservation programmes emerging in the arid West. Geographers, soil scientists, and ecologists in Europe, America, and Russia made breakthroughs in large-scale environmental and evolutionary modelling. Colonial re-