

CONCEPT NOTE

LAND SOLUTIONS – AN ECONOMICS OF LAND DEGRADATION PRESENTATION

I. BACKGROUND – LAND DEGRADATION AND THE ELD

Land degradation and desertification affects fertile land and is eroding the multiple benefits human society derives from it throughout the world. On a global scale, around 10 – 20% of drylands and 24% of the world's productive lands are degraded. The consequences are alarming: food insecurity, poverty, reduced availability of clean water, and increased vulnerability of affected areas to climate change. It is estimated that about 1.5 billion people are already affected, with high severity in sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia. In Africa, where desertification affects around 46 per cent of Africa's land area, the loss of about 280 million tons of cereal crops per year from about 105 million hectares of croplands can be prevented if the soil erosion is managed.

The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative aims to raise awareness of decision makers and the public on the impacts and challenges of land degradation and land-based ecosystems from an economic perspective. It presents cost-benefit analyses of sustainable land management approaches, to inform political and business decision-makers to take the necessary measures to promote the transformation of degrading land management practices towards sustainable approaches to foster rural development and food security. The findings of recent ELD reports show that global losses through land degradation cost between USD 6.3- 10.6 trillion annually, with investments in sustainable land management as a significant opportunity for recovering these losses. An example is the case in Mali, on the policy of sustainable agroforestry measures adopted, whereby every USD invested is estimated to create a USD 14 benefit through increased crop yields in the long-term. According to the ELD in Africa Report, the benefits of taking action towards sustainable land management (SLM) across Africa are on average 7 times the cost of action during the next 15 years.

The ELD Initiative also systematizes scientific studies on the economics of land degradation, reaches agreements on methodological standards, builds necessary capacities and provides reliable data and application-oriented tools that are urgently needed as a basis for policy-making and investment decisions.

II. REPORTS LAUNCH – CONTEXT

So far the three reports i) [The value of land, prosperous lands and positive rewards through sustainable land management](#) ii) [a report for policy and decision makers, Reaping economic and environmental benefits from sustainable land management](#) iii) [The economics of land degradation in Africa: benefits of action outweigh the costs](#) have been launched at the following events:

1. On 15 September 2015, in Brussels, Belgium - presentation to key policy makers;
2. On 24 September 2015, at the UN general assembly – which has supported the development and final approval of the SDGs;
3. On 22 October 2015, at the UNCCD Conference of Parties – first launch after adoption of the SDG and in support of Land degradation neutrality.

The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) propose to launch the following ELD reports in Africa: *ELD Report The Economics of Land Degradation in Africa - Benefits of Action Outweigh the Costs* and a report for policy and decision makers, *Reaping economic and environmental benefits from sustainable land management*. The main report mentioned above, *The Value of Land* will be further discussed and presented to African decision and policy makers.

III. OBJECTIVES

The launch aims to showcase the findings of the ELD Initiative studies and work under the Initiative. This will be the opportunity to showcase the findings of the ELD study targeting decision makers, the private sector and especially policy makers in Africa. The launch will also provide a platform for participants to share knowledge on land degradation / land restoration and explore possible further collaboration options.

IV. TIMING AND VENUE

Timing: April 17, 2016 from 13:15hrs – 14:15hrs

Venue: Dusit Thani Lakeview Hotel, Room: Hydrange (At margins of the 6th special ordinary session of the AMCEN, in Cairo, Egypt)

V. TARGET AUDIENCE

- Technical experts to the governments ministries of agriculture, planning, development and finance/economics in Africa;
- Institutions/ organizations working in the context of land degradation/restoration.

VI. MEETING OVERVIEW AND PROGRAM

We propose a 1-hour event. The proposed draft agenda is as follows:

Time	Speakers
13.15 – 13.25	<p>Moderator- Pushpam Kumar</p> <p>Welcome (opening from the UNEP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director and Regional Representative, UNEP Regional Office for Africa (ROA)
13:25 – 13:30	Play the ELD movie: <i>Soil counts – preserve it!</i>
13:30 – 14:00	<p>Presentation of the ELD reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stacey Noel, Director, SEI Africa Centre – <i>Policy makers report</i> • Mesfin Tilahun, Mekelle University, Ethiopia
14:00 – 14:15	Panel discussion and Q&A (comprising of Stacey Noel, Pushpam Kumar, Mesfin Tilahun)