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| _unlogo | United Nations | ICCD/COP(12)/INF.2 | |
| Description: logo_unccd | **Convention to Combat Desertification** | | Distr.: General  As at 1 April 2015  English only  [DRAFT] |

**Conference of the Parties**

**Twelfth session**

Ankara, Turkey, 12-23 October 2015

Item \_\_\_ of the provisional agenda

**Special segment: round table and interactive dialogue sessions**

Note on the high-level segment during the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth session

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| *Summary* |
| At the high-level segment of the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12), ministers and other heads of delegation will hold plenary discussions in the form of three ministerial round tables and three interactive dialogue sessions, as follows: |
| * Round table 1: From global to local: translating Land Degradation Neutrality into action; * Round table 2: Drought Adaptation: mainstreaming drought management policy in national agendas and mitigating the effects of drought; * Round table 3: Land-based approach to climate change: resilience through sustainable land management; * Special Segment I: Interactive dialogue session with members of parliament: Framing of legislation to protect and rehabilitate land; * Special Segment II: Interactive dialogue session with civil society organizations: Land Rights; * Special Segment III: Interactive dialogue session with the private sector: Incentives for investment in sustainable land management. |
| It is anticipated that the high-level segment will bring political momentum to the deliberations of country Parties and boost the engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention. |
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I. Background

Decision 39/COP.11 on the programme of work for the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) proposed organizing an interactive dialogue sessions with relevant stakeholders, including ministers, civil society organizations, the business community, the scientific community and the members of parliament during COP 12. The high-level segment of COP 12 will be held on 20-21 October 2015 in Ankara, Republic of Turkey.

The high-level segment will be organized by the host country (Republic of Turkey) in consultation with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Ministers and heads of delegation from the 195 Parties to the UNCCD along with the above-mentioned relevant stakeholders will bring political momentum to the deliberations of Parties and guide negotiators as appropriate.

In order to assist delegations in preparing for the high-level segment, the secretariat, consultated with host country, has prepared this information note addressing some of the questions that ministers and other heads of delegation will be invited to consider during their deliberations.

II. Organization of the high-level segment

This special segment of COP 12 will focus on boosting stakeholders’ engagement in the UNCCD implementation processes. During the high-level segment, there will be three parallel ministerial Round Table Discussions followed by three interactive dialogues sessions with the members of parliament, civil society and the private sector respectively.

Each Round Table discussion will be chaired by chaired by a Minister from the UNCCD country Parties. . The substantive deliberations will be opened by the moderator and nourished by invited keynote speakers, one for each Round Table. The subsequent panel discussions and audience interactions will form the core of the High-level Segment’s deliberations.

For each Ministerial Round Table discussion, lasting approximately three hours, five eminent personalities with a distinguished background in the topics to consider will each make a 7 minute presentation. Panel members will be identified taking into account geographical distribution. The moderators will guide the deliberations and ensure efficient use of time resources. During the second half of the time allocated for each Round Table, the moderator will facilitate the interactions between panel members and the audience.

The opening ceremony of the high-level segment (Tuesday, 20 October) will start with a welcoming statement by the President of COP 12, followed by a message from the United Nations Secretary-General and a statement by the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD.

Following the opening ceremony, statements at ministerial level will be made on behalf of each of the regional and interest groups (Africa; Asia; Latin America and the Caribbean; the European Union; JUSCANZ; and Central and Eastern Europe. Names of speakers will be communicated to the UNCCD secretariat before the first week of COP 12.

The topics for consideration at the round table discussions and the interactive dialogue sessions will include the following:

1. Round table 1: From global to local: translating Land Degradation Neutrality into action;
2. Round table 2: Drought Adaptation: mainstreaming drought management policy in national agendas and mitigating the effects of drought;
3. Round table 3: Land-based approach to climate change: resilience through sustainable land management;
4. Special Segment: interactive dialogue session with members of parliament;
5. Special Segment: interactive dialogue session with civil society organizations;
6. Special Segment: interactive dialogue session with the private sector.

III. Round Table 1: From global to local: translating Land Degradation Neutrality into action

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), world leaders agreed that natural capital, in particular land resources are the foundation of our society and economy. The ambition for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) was born when Member States “recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. In view of this, we will strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development.”

LDN is generally understood as a state where the amount of healthy and productive land is stable or increases, this refers to both biological and economic productivity (sensu UNCCD 1994). This can be achieved by avoided degradation and the rehabilitation of already degraded lands. It is considered that a goal of an LDN can contribute significantly to the underlying causes dealt with by the other two Rio conventions, namely climate change and biodiversity since land degradation and its related effects contribute substantially to biodiversity loss and exacerbate climate change impacts. The interdependence and interrelation between these issues can be channelled to encourage effective policy and investment approaches among the three Rio conventions.

It was this vision that guided the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goal relating to LDN (SDG goal 15 and target 15.3) as part of the post-2015 development agenda. With a global consensus on the importance of halting and reversing land degradation and with a target of LDN, there are now new opportunities and a practical way forward for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

At COP11, the Parties to the UNCCD established an Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) to develop a science-based definition and concrete options for achieving a LDN target on halting and reversing land degradation. While no single indicator can be used to monitor and evaluate trends in land degradation, a flexible framework would allow countries to make sense of the relevant indicators. The framework will need to effectively communicate trends for the purpose of improved reporting and more focused policy/investment responses.

With the support of the Government of the Republic of Korea through the “Changwon Initiative”, the UNCCD Secretariat carried out a project to assist countries analyze the LDN approach and how it might work with the aligned NAPs by helping identify bottlenecks and frame an effective plan for implementation.

Setting disaggregated targets for ecosystem restoration and rehabilitation would encourage appropriate governance,planning and implementation responses. This would permit local, regional and national administrative units to better assess their land resource use and planning allowing them to establish realistic baselines, evaluate trade-offs, and prioritize action on the ground at the appropriate scales. This approach contributes to solve land degradation problems at national and global scale.

*Problem statement:*

With a population of 9.6 billion by 2050, we are facing a ticking time bomb. 24% of the usable land on Earth is degraded. By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity and two thirds of the world population (5.3 billion) could be living under water stressed conditions. Carbon emissions will reach 40 billion tonnes a year (40Gt) of CO2-equivalent per year. 40% of interstate conflicts are associated with land and natural resources.

Land degradation neutrality (LDN) is designed to be a long-term political commitment which requires countries to assess the current extent and degree of land degradation. This would then enable countries to prioritize investments and incentives for sustainable land management (SLM) restoration and integrated land rehabilitation . Countries are likely to set specific targets according to their national circumstances in order to monitor progress towards halting and reversing the current negative trends.

Key Question: ***How can countries and communities transform their land management,governance and implemantation systems to foster better stewardship in order to achieve the LDN target?***

Some sequential components that can be considered during the deliberations include:

1. Assessing the current extent and degree of land degradation in order to establish priorities for action as well as setting targets and a baseline against which the present state of the land would be evaluated;
2. Demarcating the spatial and temporal scales at which an LDN implementation plan would apply;
3. The development and application of appropriate indicator frameworks and methodologies for the ongoing monitoring of trends in land degradation; and
4. The identification and strengthening of institutional capacities relevant at the national and sub-national levels.

Other factors that are critical to achieving LDN may include:

1. The drivers of land degradation based on assessments derived from national reports and other sources,
2. Policy responses and incentives (including legislation and regulation) for reducing and eliminating the drivers of land degradation,
3. Prescribing and mandating land management and restoration practices as per the diagnosis and the persistence of drivers; and
4. Procedures for reviewing national progress against LDN implementation plans.

**Questions for the debate:**

1. What are the lessons learnt from the work of the IWG and the LDN pilot project? How will you be translating LDN in your country and integrating it into sustainable development priorities? How will it impact implementation at local and national level?
2. LDN can only be achieved through a consistent effort across all the economic sectors that use land resources. This may entail eliminating perverse incentives, and promoting better land management practices, green technologies, inclusive business models, innovation, etc. How can countries begin to foster this level of cooperation among various sectors and ministries?
3. How do we communicate the ambition, means to and end result of LDN to the general public? What can we do to make this communication more compelling?
4. What are the immediate needs in terms of capacity building, including tools and technologies, technical training and extension services? How can these needs be met in a cost-effective and self-sustaining manner?
5. What finances are currently available for scaling up successful restoration activities? What about climate change financing? How can other funding sources be accessed for multi-sector programs focused on land management and planning that reduce poverty and food insecurity? What is the potential for public-private partnerships and how can these be mainstreamed into regulatory and institutional frameworks to empower local communities and provide access to information and credit?
6. How can Committees and Countries strengthen their institutional capacities in order to achieve the LDN targets?
7. What would be the organization of the LDN mechanism under the umbrella of UNCCD?

Who/How can monitor the LDN targets at global level? Who will be financing this?

1. How can countries manage to reduce the negative effects of the natural hazards such as forest fires and floods to achieve the LDN targets?

V. Round Table 2:Drought Adaptation: mainstreaming drought management policy in national agendas and mitigating the effects of drought

While drought is a natural phenomenon, it is being exacerbated by climate change and land management choices. The ability of the land and soil to absorb and store water is the product of its health. Degraded soil does not absorb water causing hardship in time of drought, particularly in terms of agricultural production and food security. Degraded soil is also more vulnerable to erosion and flooding as when higher volumes of water do come they cannot be absorbed. Droughts amplify tensions and competition among different water uses, particularly when governance of available water resources is weak. Up to 135 million people may move as a result of desertification and drought processes by 2050.

The most common approach countries used in dealing with drought is the post-impact “reactive” intervention by governments or relief and aid agencies. These interventions are normally relief measures in the form of emergency assistance programmes aimed at providing money or other specific types of assistance (e.g., livestock feed, water, food) to the victims experiencing the most severe impacts of the drought. This approach does not lead to behavioral change or different management practice.

This approach needs to be complemented by pre-impact government programmes to reduce vulnerability. These are commonly referred to as mitigation measures. These measures include establishing comprehensive early warning systems; improving seasonal forecasts; increasing emphasis on water conservation (demand reduction); increasing water supplies - constructing reservoirs/water harvesting, interconnecting water supplies between neighboring communities: drought planning; and awareness building; and education. Insurance programmes, currently available in many countries, are also a part of vulnerability reduction strategy.

UNCCD has supported the use of sustainable land management to increase soil health and looked at water demand management (WDM) to increase effectiveness and efficiency of water consumption (more crop per drop, more value per drop, more jobs and health per drop). WDM includes use of cropping patterns choice and drought adaptation (e.g. drought resistant species). In the Mediterranean Basin (including most of the MENA countries), potentially the most water stressed region; WDM measures could reduce demand for water by +25% according to UNEP-MAP-Blue Plan.

To be fully comprehensive, UNCCD (with WMO and FAO) has been promoting the development of national drought management policies that combine post and pre-impact programmes with greater institutional capacity and improved coordination and collaboration within and between levels of government and with concerned stakeholders (i.e., communities, natural resource managers, utilities, agribusiness, farmers organizations, and others). Drought management and flood preparedness should be strongly grounded in a national water policy such as Integrated Watershed Management) and in regional water initiatives (e.g. for trans-boundary management).

*Problem Statement:*

Droughts bring significant water shortages, economic losses, environmental degradation and adverse social consequences, including migration and poverty.. The summer of 2012 was the driest since record-keeping began more than a century ago. Drought conditions were noted across up to two-thirds of the continental United States and Australia. Persistent, frequent and severe droughts are having an especially harsh impact across the Middle East and North Africa region where per capita renewable water resources are four times lower than they were in this region in the 1950s. Climate change is likely to shift the patterns of droughts and increase the frequency and severity of extreme drought (and flooding) events. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects that droughts will intensify in the 21st century in some seasons and areas, due to reduced precipitation and/or increased evapotranspiration. Regions thought to be especially vulnerable include southern Europe and the Mediterranean region, central Europe, central North America, Central America and Mexico, northeast Brazil, Southern Asia and southern Africa.

Regrettably most countries do not have a comprehensive strategy for drought management or drought risk reduction.

Key Question: ***What needs to be done by Parties to UNCCD to enhance drought adaptation?***

**Questions for the debate:**

1. What are the effective measures to address drought and water scarcity?
2. What role for land and soil management in terms of drought management? For example, should we changing the types of crops we grow? Should we rehabilitating land at watershed level?
3. What kind of early-warning systems will be needed?
4. How can countries streamline drought policies into the national development and cross sectorial strategies?
5. Is more drought insurance a solution?
6. Can we move from a reactive to a comprehensive approach to mitigate the effects of drought?
7. Could integrated watershed management be an solution for water scarcity and drought control?

IV. Round Table 3: Land-based approach to climate change: resilience through sustainable land management

Land, soil and forests have been missing, in any meaningful sense, from climate change agreementsso far. But this is changing. Given the fact that land degradation accelerates climate change and vice versa; if widely adopted - land rehabilitation and sustainable management could be a workable solution for both adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

Land based approach is the main solution that will work for the very poorest – who are hit hardest by climate change. Land is their primary – often only – tangible asset. By managing land better, we can build resilience. The diffusion of cost effective and simple sustainable land management techniques to farmers around the world, especially on 500 million small scale farms, would be vital for the resilience of global food supply in particular. It is clear most of the land based adaptation techniques that are needed are low-cost practices and skills, which are often based on traditional knowledge. They can be employment generating and empower rural communities.

At the same time, land has a major role to play in the climate change mitigation debate. Yet, healthy soils can store large amounts of carbon – up to 50 and 300 tons a hectare. Land-use change and land degradation are responsible for about 20 percent of carbon emissions globally. [[1]](#footnote-2) This is true despite the fact that the soil and forests are the largest carbon store on Earth; after the oceans.

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will discuss the land sector in their (Intended) National Determined Contributions (I - NDC) for a future comprehensive climate change agreement. We can make a convincing case that investing in sustainable land management now will buy us valuable time to allow for a transition to a low-carbon economy.

Two billion hectares of degraded ecosystems are available worldwide for rehabilitation. Nearly 500 million hectares of that is abandoned agricultural land. By rehabilitating this degraded land, the international community would increase food security, mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon and secure vital ecosystems services.

*Problem Statement:*

Climate change is having a very heavy impact on the poorest people. It is an often forgotten truth that 75% of the poorest people in the world live on the land in rural areas. They mostly rely on small-scale rain-fed agriculture. And globally, there are approximately 2.5 billion people involved in smallholder agriculture.[[2]](#footnote-3) For people who depend for their whole lives - and entire livelihood - on the health and productivity of their land, less rainfall and more land degradation because of climate-change is a nightmare scenario. Already, every year, around 12 million hectares of productive land are lost entirely to land degradation processes. The possibility of mitigating climate change by reducing carbon emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation, and by increasing carbon uptake through afforestation and sustainable forest management, highlights the essential role of forests in supporting life on Earth. Estimates made for FRA 2010 show that the world’s forests store 289 gigatonnes (Gt) of carbon in their biomass alone[[3]](#footnote-4). The IPPC is warning us to expect a further 2 percent drop in agricultural output, per decade – as a result of climate change. Migration and competition over scarce and vital natural resources will accelerate. Several vulnerable “hot-spots” are already emerging. However, it is a global problem and no region is immune.

Key Question: ***What message should UNCCD Parties send to the climate change COP 21 about the role of land and soil in efforts to combat climate change***?

Question for the debate:

1. Why has land be under-recognized in global debate about climate change?
2. Is the world experiencing the consequences of land degradation and climate change in tandem? Or are they separate concerns?
3. How do we harness the potential of land and soil to help communities adapt to climate change or sequester carbon?
4. How can UNCCD help Parties combat climate change by rehabilitating degraded land?
5. Are common indicators between Rio Conventions (to measure progress and resilience) a good idea?
6. How to constitute policies regulating the use of input, taking an important place for the increase of agricultural production in accordance with climate change and food safety, by the evaluation of sustainable land management and environmental aspects?

VI. Special Segment I

Interactive dialogue session with members of parliament: Framing of legislation to protect and rehabilitate land

Land-use related sector represents approximately 33 percent of the Green House Gasses (GHG) abatement potential.[[4]](#footnote-5) Halting ongoing deforestation, reforesting marginal areas of land, and sequestering more CO2 in soils through changing agricultural practices (namely SLM) could substantially increase carbon sequestration. Unlike solutions required for other sectors with sizeable infrastructure component (i.e. residential buildings, power plants, etc.), changes in the land use can be scaled up relatively faster and at a much lower comparable investment cost.

Despite the significant potential of the healthy soils, approximately 12 million hectares of productive and useable land continue to be degraded every year. Some of the main factors contributing to this negative trend include unclear land tenure regulations, competing priorities, fragmented policy structure, and overall lack of sound legal framework to uphold land rights and ensure sustainable development. Gender disparities related to ownership of the land and its resources further exacerbate the trend. An international comparison of agricultural census data shows that less than 20% of landholders are women.[[5]](#footnote-6) Guaranteeing women in developing countries the same access to agricultural resources like men could raise farm production in some countries by 20-30% and increase national output by 2.5-4%.[[6]](#footnote-7) As such, land degradation issues can create a ripple effect both within and between borders. Framing appropriate legislation to protect and rehabilitate land can be a crucial step in unlocking the potential of a country toward a sustainable development path.

In this context, governments play a key role in establishing mechanisms that can incentivize proper land management, disincentive land degradation practices among both private and public sectors, and execute a range of other protective actions against land degradation on political, legal, and social levels. While recognizing that decision- and policy-makers have a lead role in the implementation of those mechanisms, its success often depends on the active role of many other national players, including parliamentarians. To that effect, the UNCCD Secretariat has produced a *Handbook[[7]](#footnote-8)* on the role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the Convention, which was positively welcomed by the members of the parliament at their Round Table session, convened on the margins of the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD (COP 11) in 2013.

Parliamentarians provide access to national perspectives at a global scale; they can define the political agenda, co-determine the priority of issues and influence policy guidelines. They can also ensure policy continuity between outgoing and incoming governments, thereby keeping issues related to land degradation on the political agenda. Taken as a whole, parliamentarians guide the nation’s political discussion agenda and officiate as important actors in transforming societal, economic and environmental challenges into state-controlled actions

*Problem Statement:*

The main challenge lies in designing appropriate land and soil policies that can be effectively implemented, through a participatory, integrated and iterative process, and continually enforced. For one, land sector is highly fragmented. In agriculture sector alone, there are approximately 1 billion smallholder farmers directly dependent on land and its natural resources for their daily survival. Environmental protection policies and land-specific regulations may face additional resistance if they cut into people’s livelihoods by seeking to ease the pressure on natural resources. A sound national land-use policy should thus cover all uses of land and implicate all relevant stakeholders.

A crucial first step in addressing these challenges will entail legislative recognition and executive collaboration. Enhancing communication and collaboration between the two branches can lead to better formulation of land-related policies that take into account the need to uphold environmental sustainability while at the same time preserve the capacity of soil to perform its economic, social and cultural functions.

Key Question: ***What are the critical elements for a successful legislation aimed at protecting and rehabilitating land?***

**Some components to be considered:**

1. Mapping current land use and identifying land management practices detrimental to healthy soil function;
2. Clearly defining the various categories of land (i.e. public land, government land, customary land, private land) and accompanying rights (i.e. existing land rights, all tenure forms) and responsibilities;
3. Assessing the impact of existing sectoral policies on soil degradation processes (e.g, legislations on spatial planning at urban/region/country scales, urban development policies, building laws, regional laws, etc):

* Coordinating sectoral agencies involved in land use;

1. Establishing a transparent of list of potentially soil polluting activities / sectors:

* Setting up an inventory of contaminated sites;

1. Mapping areas at risk of erosion, organic matter decline, salinisation, compaction and landslides;
2. Identifying existing areas of conflict relating to access or ownership of land;
3. Creating effective and conscious public opinion on environmental problems (considering the role of awareness raising, education of public servants, empowerment of existing grass-roots movement on land rights, etc.)

**Questions for the debate:**

1. How can the existing (often competing) demands for land among different sectors of the economy be balanced? Especially those including food production, export crops, tourism, forest, renewable energy, wildlife conservation, housing and public amenities, roads, industry, among others? What are the parameters to be considered?
2. What successful mechanisms, practices, legislations currently exist to mainstream actions to address desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and promote sustainable land management (SLM) in your national development strategy and other relevant policy arenas? Can specific components of a successful legislation on land use be cited from your county’s experience?
3. How can ministers and members of the parliament work together to develop successful legislations on land use with view to environmental sustainability, economic viability, sustainable development and maximum stakeholder engagement (based on the consideration of the above-mentioned components)?

VII. Special Segment II

Interactive dialogue session with civil society organizations: Land rights

A rights-based approach to sustainable land management is necessary to ensure good land stewardship of productive land. Roughly 1.2 billion people currently live without access and formal property rights.[[8]](#footnote-9)

When a local population has confidence in their rights, they invest in the land and can be encouraged to manage it in a sustainable way. Every year, soil erosion caused by unsustainable land use destroys 5-7 million hectares of agricultural land.[[9]](#footnote-10) Farmers with long-term, legally-protected control over land are far more motivated to become stewards of the land in the long term as well as to increase its productivity. In this regard, farmers and herders need firm rights to the soils, grazing, woodlands and water sources on which their livelihood depends

Governments can establish mechanisms that better uphold land rights vital to the local population. For instance, states could take measures to promote and protect the security of land tenure, especially with respect to women, and poor and disadvantaged segments of society, through legislation that protects the full and equal right to own land and other property, including the right to inherit. These mechanisms can also encourage private sector investment. Land titling in Brazil and Thailand, for example, increased investment levels by 40-115%, and multiplied access to credit by 200-350%.[[10]](#footnote-11) The implementation of a property rights program in the Central African Republic increased incomes five-fold from 2009-2012.[[11]](#footnote-12)

As appropriate, governments should also consider establishing mechanisms consistent with their international human rights obligations to improve efficient and equitable access to land for the poor and for women. In Asia and North Africa, women own less than 5% of landholdings.[[12]](#footnote-13) Policies enabling women to have the same access as men to credit, seeds, tools and insurance produce startling increases in land productivity. Indeed, studies show that if women had the same access to land and productive resources as men, farm yields would increase by 20-30%, reducing the population of chronically hungry people by 17%.[[13]](#footnote-14) These mechanisms should also promote conservation and sustainable land use, to restore degrading land to productivity for the future. Already, desertification caused by unsustainable land use creates income losses of USD 42 billion every year.[[14]](#footnote-15) By 2050, food demand is expected to increase by up to 100% in developing countries.[[15]](#footnote-16) To prevent food crises of epic proportions, action must be taken now.

Land grabbing threatens this rights-based approach. Land grabbing is where land is “bought” from the government without community engagement, and at prices well below the land’s worth. Furthermore, lands subject to land-grabs are often the most productive in the area, sometimes with the only access to scarce water. A recent analysis showed that substantial areas of land have been traded through these land deals, totaling in 2012 between 32.7 and 82.2 million hectares. This corresponds to 0.75–1.75% of the Earth’s agricultural land. [[16]](#footnote-17)

Land tenure regimes play a critical role since they safeguard protection of one’s land rights. They also need to ensure that landholders have access to an adequate quantity and quality of land for a viable livelihood. Currently, over half the world’s rural poor have landholdings too small to provide an adequate income.[[17]](#footnote-18) For the best results to land productivity, and consequent food security and decreased conflict, access to land should be accompanied by access to other necessary inputs. These include water, credit, transport, extension services and other infrastructure. Farmers with both secure access and tenure rights and access to these other inputs are more likely to invest in their land, improving environmental conservation. If tenure rights are safeguarded and the policy incentives are well-considered, poor people can abandon land-degrading practices, invest in the land, and feed their families through their chosen livelihood.

*Problem statement:*

Up to 1 billion people depend directly on natural resources for their daily survival. These are the poorest members of the global community. Land degradation has an immediate impact on their lives and their fundamental human rights. It undermines the right to food due to loss of soil fertility and the resulting decrease in food production. As 40% of the world’s degraded land occurs in areas with the highest incidence of poverty,[[18]](#footnote-19) this translates to hunger and insecurity for millions. Currently, one in every eight people worldwide is chronically undernourished.[[19]](#footnote-20) Unsustainable land management undermines the right to water by causing dramatic declines in ground water levels. 12 million people die every year due to water shortages or contamination.[[20]](#footnote-21) Degrading land undermines the rights to health and even life due to increasing poverty and conflicts over the little that remains.

Land dependent communities often have tenuous land ownership and can be excluded from participating in crucial decision-making that directly impact their lives. These are significant driving factors of unsustainable, degrading land use practices, and must be directly addressed.

Key Question: **How does secure land tenure and other land rights contribute to addressing the issue of land degradation? How should we be implementing FAO guidelines on land tenure in the context of the UNCCD?**

**Questions for the debate:**

1. What are the mechanisms that have been successfully established at the local and national level to facilitate farmers access to productive land? Are there any specific, successful programmes targeting female empowerment and granting them access to land and credit? What about the rights of indigenous peoples to traditional and common lands?
2. How do countries envisage protecting productive agricultural land against those persons and institutions that are grabbing the most fertile land? What could be the measures that governments could take to avoid land grabbing? What has worked in the past?
3. How can civil society organizations work jointly with governments in the development and implementation of legal and policy mechanisms to guarantee food security and access to water for people living in areas affected by desertification, land degradation and drought?

VIII. Special Segment III

Interactive dialogue session with the private sector: Incentives for investment in sustainable land management

As we move towards a global population of over 9.6 billion by 2050, we need to focus our innovative and visionary capacities on technology that enables us to best manage the land to meet our increasing needs. The demand for agricultural products alone is expected to double, in the coming decades, offering immense opportunities for dynamic businesses. 80% of the global population is anticipated to become global ‘consumers’ by 2030[[21]](#footnote-22). This is an additional 2 billion people demanding products and services. Providing for this growing population of consumers in a sustainable manner is an exciting and challenging mission.

If we want to continue along the path of human development we have to identify and create opportunities to address the challenge of climate change and land degradation through bold leadership, determination and entrepreneurial drive. The business opportunities in creating a sustainable world in which 9 billion people can live could be worth $3-10 trillion a year by 2050.[[22]](#footnote-23)

Degraded land is an underperforming asset for the business sector - often with significant productivity yield gaps.[[23]](#footnote-24) Business can play an important part in changing the current land management paradigm where economic behavior encourages unsustainable practice that degrade land (such as over cultivation, overgrazing, deforestation, improper use of irrigation, resource extraction that lowers water tables and accelerate erosion). By building on existing best practice and adopting sustainable land management (SLM) approaches across all land uses, business will be a change agent for good with direct benefits on its triple bottom line (financial, social and environmental performance). By adopting SLM, business can positively influence environmental and social trends while strengthening their own resilience to issues like climate change, demographic dynamics and skills shortages.

At the same time, policy and economic incentives and market based funding mechanisms can encourage the restoration of degraded land. Innovative investment vehicles, fiscal instruments or market-based mechanisms can directly generate or influence the flows of funds by attracting or redirecting them in SLM.

*Problem statement:*

Short-sighted practices that overburden the land undermine the availability of the ecosystem services that land provides, such as water, soil fertility, or erosion control. This is as true for individuals, communities, governments and for the private sector. Practices that reduce nutrients in the earth, limit carbon sequestration, degrade the top soil and ultimately reduce the productivity and water retention of the land have long-term economic impact for business and for society. Other ecosystem services that would be relevant to businesses include timber and wood fiber production, flood prevention, waste purification, genetic resources, medicinal plants and organisms, freshwater availability, power, biomass production, and recreation. Their loss is undermining human security and business potential.

Key Question: ***How can business contribute to solving the issue of land degradation?***

The purpose of this High Level Dialogue is to explore what role the private sector can play in addressing land degradation. What is business already doing and what will be needed in terms of evidence, policy, legislation and incentives to encourage business to adopt SLM and go Land Degradation Neutral (LDN)? Parties will hear from leading private organizations and networks about their needs and their commitments post 2015.

Through Action 2020, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and its member companies have developed a number of significant business solutions aimed at contributing to reducing the loss of natural ecosystems and restoring degraded ones so that biodiversity and ecosystem services are maintained. In particular, some of them specifically aim at contributing to the UNCCD land degradation neutrality target have expressed an interest in committing time and resources in the coming years to explore and address these challenges.

**Questions for debate**:

1. What will it take for business to adopt sustainable land management and contribute in efforts to restore degraded land?
2. Can business also go land degradation neutral? How can this target be measured and reported upon?
3. How can influential business corporations drive the transition to LDN across their value chain, and gradually of entire industries and sectors?
4. What are the policy/legislative gaps that need to be filled?
5. Can product certification help achieve the objective?
6. What economic incentives or market-based mechanisms are required?
7. How can the public and private sector collaborate?

IX. Expected result

A summary of the outcomes of the ministerial round-table discussions and the interactive dialogue sessions will be presented by the President of the COP. The summary from the President will be transmitted to a plenary session of the COP 12 for further consideration.

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18. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1803tstissuesdldd.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
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21. http://global-mechanism.org/about-us/the-importance-of-sustainable-land-management [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
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23. Deforestation and land degradation are major global issues resulting in economic losses equaling 3.3–7.5% of the global GDP. E.g. Salinization of the Aral Sea surroundings: the decision to introduce large scale cotton production in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. A legacy decision has led to diminishing agriculture production in the area and limiting future growth. See, ELD http://eld-initiative.org/fileadmin/pdf/ELD\_Business\_Brief.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-24)