



Desertification and Drought Day 2023 Information Note ***Her Land, Her Rights***

"Women are major actors in the global efforts to reduce and reverse land degradation. However, in the vast majority of countries, women have unequal and limited access to and control over land. We cannot achieve land degradation neutrality without gender equality, and we cannot exclude half the population from land management decisions because of their gender."

– Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD Executive Secretary

Women hold a vital stake in the health of the land, yet they often don't have control over it. In all parts of the world, women face significant barriers in securing land rights, limiting their ability to thrive and prosper. And when land becomes degraded and water is scarce, women are often the worst affected. Investing in women's equal access to land and associated assets is a direct investment in their future and the future of humanity. It's time for women and girls to be at the forefront of global land restoration and drought resilience efforts.

A launch pad for an ambitious women's land rights agenda

The global focus for the 2023 Desertification and Drought Day is on women's land rights—essential for achieving the interconnected global goals on gender equality and land degradation neutrality by 2030 and contributing to the advancement of several other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will reaffirm its commitment to gender equality with these Desertification and Drought Day 2023 objectives:

- **Raise awareness** of the disproportionate impact of desertification, land degradation and drought on women and girls and the barriers they face in decision-making on land issues;
- **Highlight women's contributions** to sustainable land management and broader SDGs;
- **Mobilize global support** to advance land rights for women and girls around the world.

This year's global observance of Desertification and Drought Day will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, with events taking place in all parts of the world.

Gender equality remains unfinished business

According to UNCCD's landmark study "*The Differentiated Impacts of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought on Women and Men*", gender equality remains unfinished business in every part of the world. Consider the following:

- Today, nearly half of the global agricultural workforce is female – yet less than one in five landholders worldwide are women.
- Women's rights to inherit their husband's property continue to be denied in over 100 countries under customary, religious, or traditional laws and practices.
- Globally, women already spend a collective 200 million hours every day collecting water. In some countries, a single trip to fetch water can take over an hour.

Advancing global gender equality and land restoration goals

UNCCD has a long track record in placing gender equality firmly at the core of its mandate as a vital catalyst of progress. By adopting the Gender Action Plan in 2017, Parties to the



Convention acknowledged the specific role of women in land restoration and sustainable land management, as well as the importance of gender equality as a guiding principle for achieving the objectives of the Convention.

Take action

Together with partners, high-profile personalities and influencers, UNCCD is launching a global campaign **#HerLand** to recognize excellence, leadership, and efforts in sustainable land management by women and girls; amplify the voices of women and girls living on the frontlines of desertification, land degradation and drought; and mobilize global support to advance land rights for women and girls around the world.

All of us can do our part:

Governments can promote laws, policies and practices that end discrimination and secure women's rights to land and resources.

Businesses can prioritize women and girls in their investments and facilitate access to finance and technology.

Individuals can support women-led initiatives that are restoring land and help spread the message by using the hashtag **#HerLand**.

Discover more and join: <https://www.unccd.int/land-and-life/gender/herland>

Key messages

Desertification, land degradation and drought disproportionately impact women and girls, as they often do not have access to and control of land resources. They are most affected by reduced agricultural yields and increased water scarcity.

In the vast majority of countries, women have unequal and limited access and control to land. In many regions, they remain subject to discriminatory laws and practices that impede their right to inherit, as well as their access to services and resources.

When women are empowered, entire families and communities benefit. In addition to being on the frontlines of land degradation and climate change impacts, women can also be at the forefront of global efforts to restore land back to health and boost drought resilience. Gender-responsive land restoration is a pathway to reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.

Investing in women's equal access to land and associated assets is a direct investment in their future and the future of humanity. Securing women's land rights can help advance global gender equality and land restoration goals, and contribute to the achievement of broader Sustainable Development Goals.

Desertification and Drought Day is on 17 June 2023. Worldwide.

Visit <https://www.unccd.int/events/desertification-drought-day> to learn more.