

United for Drylands at Expo Doha 2023

A gathering of worldwide leaders to foster innovation, knowledge sharing and investments in horticulture in Drylands

Doha (Qatar), 21-22 February 2024

Healthy land is central to the wellbeing of the planet's ecosystems and biodiversity; it **feeds us, shelters us**, and provides the backbone to a **thriving global economy**. When land is degraded or plagued by drought, it loses its capacity to sustain life, which leads to a range of consequences from crop failure to migration and conflict. The **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** was established in 1994 to protect and restore our land and ensure a safer, just, and **more sustainable future**.

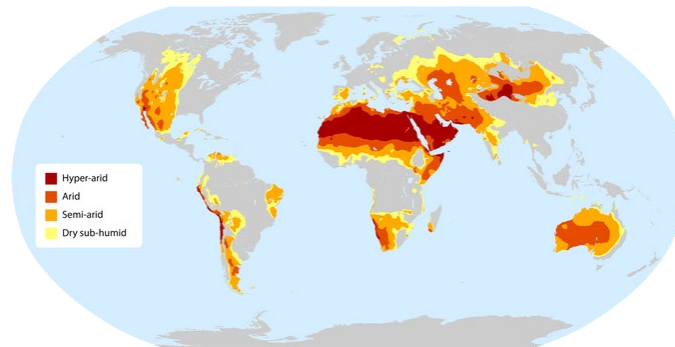
The Convention unites **governments, scientists, policymakers, the private sector and communities** around a shared vision to restore and manage the world's land. This work is crucial to ensure the sustainability of the planet and the **prosperity of future generations**.

UNCCD is partnering with the **Government of Qatar and Global Dryland Alliance** to convene a **global panel of leaders to foster innovation, knowledge sharing and investments for horticulture in drylands**, participating to **Expo Doha 2023 legacy**.

The **Global Dryland Alliance (GDA)** is an international organization composed of dryland countries and is headquartered in Doha, Qatar. Officially formed in October 2017 with a membership of 11 countries, the organization has the stated aim of **advancing food security for dryland nations and innovating technologies in the fields of agriculture and water security**.

Dry lands are areas characterized by poor availability of soil and water resource; occupy more than **40% of the land surface in world** and are home to **about 2 billion people**.

To mitigate the harmful effect of changing climatic conditions on productivity as well as quality of horticultural crops in drylands, there is requisite to establish substantial **adaptation strategies**. **Unlocking the potential of drylands will help increase economic status and livelihood security of horticultural farmers of arid and semi-arid regions**.




Agenda




Overview:

At Expo Doha Congress Center:

- 20 February: Educational program at Heenat Salma Farm
- 21 February 2024: Business 4 Land conference at Expo Doha Congress Center
- 22 February 2024: Innovation 4 Land conference at Expo Doha Congress Center

THE SUB-THEMES



 <p>Modern Agriculture</p> <p>Providing innovation, research, and scientific advancements to produce safe, sustainable, and affordable food for the increasing population of the world.</p>	 <p>Technology & Innovation</p> <p>Incorporating new techniques to enhance farming productivity and balance environmental sustainability.</p>	 <p>Environmental Awareness</p> <p>Raising global awareness to promote a long-term change in attitudes and behavior towards the environment.</p>	 <p>Sustainability</p> <p>Humanity's common objective for balancing different needs along with awareness about the economy, technology, environment, and social sciences.</p>
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United for Drylands at Expo Doha 2023

Business 4 Land – unlocking investments for horticulture in drylands

Wednesday 21st February 2024 9:00- 11:30

Location: Expo Doha, Congress Center, Cultural Zone, Al Bida Park | Qatar



United for land

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

EXPO 2023 DOHA QATAR

United for Drylands at Expo Doha 2023:

Innovation 4 Land – Where innovation and creativity meet action

Thursday 22nd February 2024 9:00- 11:30

Location: Expo Doha, Congress Center, Cultural Zone, Al Bida Park | Qatar



United for land

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

EXPO 2023 DOHA QATAR

Detailed agenda for Expo Doha Congress center

Wednesday 21st February 2024 – Business 4 Land Conference – unlocking investments for horticulture in drylands		
Time	Session	Place
9.00 – 9.10	Opening Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on the B4L Initiative by Ms. Louise Baker, Managing Director of the Global Mechanism of UNCCD 	Congress center (Big Amphitheater – 200 participants)
9.10 – 10.10	High level panel of experts Challenges and opportunities for horticulture in the drylands	Congress center (Big Amphitheater – 200 participants)
10.10 – 10.40	Coffee break & Exhibition : “Tasty drylands – pomegranates from Afghanistan”	
10.40 – 11.30	Success stories : Unlocking investments for horticulture in drylands Panel with companies and heads of trade agencies to present examples of success stories in unlocking investments for horticulture in drylands:	Congress center (Big Amphitheater – 200 participants)
Thursday 22nd February 2024 – Innovation 4 Land – Where innovation and creativity meet action		
Time	Session	Lead
9.00 – 9.30	Opening Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Remarks • Keynote address by His Excellency Fahad bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United Kingdom : Be the change you want to see in the world : being a youth in drylands today 	Congress center (Big Amphitheater – 200 participants)
9.30 – 11.00	Best Practices in Action: showcasing solutions at Expo Doha From the development of drought-tolerant and resilient varieties of fruits and vegetable to the promotion of agroforestry and biodiversity conservation, innovators are playing a major role in developing the drylands all over the world. At Expo Doha 2023, the most creative ones gathered, and will present their solutions.	Congress center (Big Amphitheater – 200 participants)
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break & Exhibition : “Tasty drylands – pomegranates from Afghanistan”	

Detailed agenda for the education program at Heenat Salma farm :

Tuesday 20th February 2024 – Educational program at Heenat Salma Farm		
Departure à 8:00 from Expo Cultural Zone		
Time	Session	Lead
8:45	Arrival at Heenat Salma Farm	UNCCD
9.00 9.30	Light Farm-to-table Breakfast	Caravan Earth
9.30 13.00	<p>Workshop “CaravaneEarth: a Holistic Approach for Achieving the SDGs”</p> <p>09:30 – 10.30 Welcome Note and Introduction Session 10:30 – 11:30 Panel Discussion: "Bridging the Gap : Enhancing the Sustainable Capabilities of the Heenat Salma Farm to Address Desertification Challenges in Qatar"</p> <p>11:30 – 11:45 Coffee-break 4 groups of participants. Each group will focus on a specific sustainability challenge and study the respective field via an interactive farm tour focusing on the topic of research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Water and soil desalination</i> • <i>Desertification combat in Qatar</i> • <i>Addressing the challenges posed by hot summers, enhancement of sustainable crop production to 365 days a year</i> • <i>Sustainable solutions for circular economy based on Heenat Salma Farm's operation</i> 	Caravan Earth
13.00 14.00	Lunch break	
14.00 15.30	<p>Common Wrap Up Session: Summary of key points and insights based on collaboration and knowledge sharing, received during the interactive workgroups.</p>	Caravan Earth
15.30 16.00	<p>Planting a Community Garden: UNCCD team will follow permaculture principles for a productive, diverse, and sustainable garden that mimics the patterns and resilience of natural ecosystems.</p>	Caravan Earth
16.00 16.30	Coffee break	
16.30 17.30	<p>Hands-on Workshops on Permaculture: Nature-based Art and Traditional Craft* <i>Ethical Textile</i> <i>Woodwork</i> <i>Botanical Illustration: Studying the Patterns of Nature</i> <i>Traditional Ceramics</i></p>	Caravan Earth
17.30 18:00	<p>Educational Nature Self-Walk: The team will move around the farm in an exercise that focuses on well-being and resilience.</p>	Caravan Earth
18.00 19.00	Farm to Table Networking event	
19.00 19.30	Travel back to Doha by bus	Expo

Business 4 Land Conference – unlocking investments for horticulture in drylands

February 21, 2024 at the Congress Center, Expo Doha 2023 (Cultural Zone, AlBidda Park)
9:00 to 11:30

Rationale

Half of the world's GDP depends on terrestrial ecosystems staying healthy and productive.¹ Yet, we still lose approximately 24 billion tons of fertile soils annually in our agricultural systems globally.² By 2050, global crop yields are estimated to decrease by 10% due to land degradation and climate change, with some regions suffering up to a 50% reduction.³ As a result, world food prices are expected to increase by an estimated 30%.⁴ This increase does not include the increasing energy prices and costs over the next decades as fossil fuel reserves diminish and the accompanying costs of logistics (trade), agricultural input, and equipment increase. These calculations also don't include the need to feed an increasing population with changing diets, resulting in a projected increase in food demand by roughly 70% by 2050.⁵ Land is also key in removing carbon; however, while terrestrial and oceanic sinks have removed over half of the carbon emissions generated from human activities, the rate of sequestration is now declining. If land degradation continues unabated, this could potentially trigger a reversal from land being a net sink to a net source of greenhouse gas emissions.⁶

While the market share for global sustainable investments has grown, investments in land related to SDG 15 are still significantly inadequate. Despite a rapid increase in sustainable investments in recent years, climate, land, and biodiversity finance needs remain large, further exacerbated by the uncertainty around the size of mitigation and adaptation needs.⁷ The global economy is set to lose USD 23 trillion by 2050 through land degradation, desertification, and drought (DLDD). Solving these alarming trends would cost USD 4.6 trillion – only a fraction of the predicted losses.⁸

Private financial activities that harm the environment, such as causing land degradation, amount to \$5 trillion. This is a whopping 140 times greater than the funds invested in Nature Based Solutions (NBS)⁹, including for combating land degradation. The existing funding disparity and inadequate financial support highlight a significant gap between current investment levels and the imperative to transform land systems. Urgent action is required to redirect financial resources towards sustainable land management, necessitating swift engagement from all stakeholders, including the private sector. The UNCCD- Business for Land (B4L) Initiative aims to catalyse partnerships with the private sector businesses to promote accelerated actions to address the ecosystem, financing and climate challenges of combating land degradation.

¹ <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/poor-land-use-costs-countries-9-percent-equivalent-their-gdp>

² UNCCD (2017), GLO I

³ https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2018_idr_full_report_book_v4_pages.pdf

⁴ https://www.eld-initiative.org/fileadmin/pdf/ELD-pm-report_08_web_72dpi.pdf

⁵ FAO (2019), Global agriculture towards 2050.

⁶ UNCCD (2022), GLO II

⁷ Mobilizing Private Climate Financing in Emerging Market and Developing Economies, IMF, 2022/007

⁸ <https://www.unccd.int/news-events/poor-land-use-costs-countries-9-percent-equivalent-their-gdp-0>

⁹ State of Finance for Nature, 2023 by UNEP, Global Canopy and ELD (Economics of Land Degradation)

The Business for Land (B4L) Initiative

The Business for Land (B4L) Initiative is designed to unite all UNCCD’s private sector-related work under one overarching initiative. It aims to facilitate private sector engagement in the implementation of the Convention and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) through strategic partnerships and networking among interested stakeholders, including local communities working on the ground.

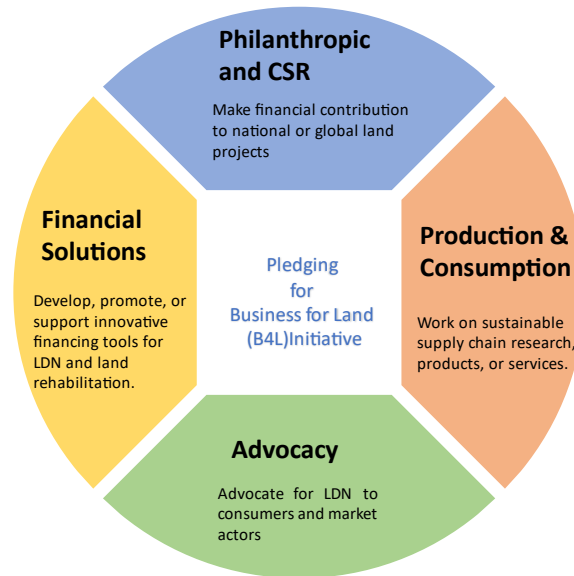


Figure 1: B4L Action

The initiative seeks to leverage the private sector's expertise, skills, and resources to encourage commitments and efforts in combating desertification and land degradation. The goal is to facilitate the restoration of one (1) billion hectares of land by engaging the private sector in *(i)* implementing and advocating for land-based projects aimed at consumers and other market actors, *(ii)* making adjustments to supply chains, and *(iii)* introducing new financing products. Private sector entities participating in the initiative will additionally *(iv)* offer philanthropic support to land restoration and LDN (Land Degradation Neutrality) projects. These four action points form the basis of the initiative's engagement framework and are the prerequisites for businesses to join the UNCCD Business for Land (B4L) Initiative.

B4L serves as a platform for businesses to showcase and receive acknowledgment for their sustainable practices, ultimately bolstering their reputation and influencing consumer perceptions positively. The initiative offers avenues for peer learning and information exchange, fostering discussions on innovative solutions for addressing desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD). Additionally, it focuses on sustainable business models, aiding enterprises in contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). Specifically for small and medium-sized businesses, the initiative facilitates technical assistance to implement profitable and sustainable business models while safeguarding their valuable land resources.

UNCCD serves as the convener, overseer, and facilitator for the B4L initiative, scheduled for official launch during COP 16 in December 2024. The ultimate aim is to establish B4L as an autonomous initiative led and managed by businesses, ensuring self-sustainability. Once this independence is achieved, UNCCD plans to disengage from direct involvement with the initiative.

Purpose of the Conference at Expo Doha 2023

The primary purpose of this conference is to convene representatives from the private sector and private finance. It will serve as a platform to inform businesses about the Business for Land (B4L) Initiative. The event aims to foster partnerships and engagement with businesses and financial institutions, laying the groundwork for the official launch of the B4L initiative during COP 16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Additionally, this Business for Land conference at Doha focuses on the theme of *Sustainable Horticulture Value Chains in Drylands*, aligning with the legacy of Expo Doha.

Description of the event:

Collaboration with businesses is crucial, and their investment in sustainable solutions is essential not just for protecting land resources but also for ensuring the long-term sustainability of businesses. The UNCCD is actively involving businesses through the Business for Land Initiative. This side event at the Expo Doha - United for Drylands event is a foundational step for wider engagement and partnership with the private sector to encourage sustainable investment, financing, and accelerated action towards achieving Land Degradation Neutrality.

The event will comprise of two components:

1. Introduction to Business for Land (B4L) Initiative

- Showcase the core objectives, strategies, and anticipated impact of the B4L Initiative.
- Demonstrate how businesses can play a pivotal role in sustainable land management.
- Elaborate on how businesses can benefit from being a part of the initiative.
- Encourage commitment and involvement from the private sector in the initiatives to lay the groundwork for the official launch of the B4L Initiative during COP 16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

2. Foster Partnerships and Engagements:

- Facilitate discussions between private sector representatives, financial institutions, and key stakeholders.
- Discuss how to implement the Business for Land initiative
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership to address land-related challenges.

The event will feature a high-level segment, aiming to establish the imperative of engaging with businesses to secure financing, expedite action, and realise enduring economic advantages through sustainable land management practices. UNCCD Partners will be actively invited to present their

initiatives to the participants, with a call to pledge and actively contribute to achieving Land Degradation Neutrality.

Participants:

- UNCCD representatives.
- Representatives from multinational corporations, small and medium enterprises, and financial institutions
- Associations and business leaders in the agriculture and horticulture sectors
- Sustainability officers and environmental experts from private companies
- Investors interested in sustainable initiatives
- Government officials responsible for economic and environmental policies
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) focused on sustainability and land conservation
- Academics and researchers in the fields of sustainable agriculture and finance
- Experts in sustainable horticulture value chains
- Representatives from international organisations supporting sustainable land initiatives
- Media representatives covering environmental and business topics

Logistical Details for Venue

Number of Participants: 200

Innovation 4 Land Conference – Where innovation and creativity meet action

February 22, 2024 at the Congress Center, Expo Doha 2023 (Cultural Zone, AlBidda Park)
9:00 to 11:30

Purpose of the Conference at Expo Doha 2023

The primary purpose of this conference is to convene representatives from academia, innovation, community leaders and youth. The event aims to be a step toward UNCCD COP16, mobilizing non state stakeholders, as well as innovators from all over the world who are presenting their solutions at Expo 2023 Doha.

Description of the event:

Drylands are a huge part of the solution when talking about food security, carbon sequestration, water retention, but also peace and stability. To transform those soils with poor fertility into opportunities for communities to thrive, we need technics and technologies. There are three components of a successful dryland farming system: retaining the precipitation on the land, reducing evaporation from the soil surface to increase the portion of evapotranspiration used for transpiration, and utilizing crops that have drought tolerance and that fit the precipitation patterns. That requires solid academic and scientific support to demonstrate innovative solutions that can be scaled up to accelerate land degradation neutrality all over the world.

This event aims at gathering world innovators and forward-thinkings minds for networking, opportunities of collaborations, and identification of best practices.

The event will feature a high-level segment, aiming to establish the imperative of fostering innovation and knowledge sharing and empowering youth and women for greening drylands. And will be followed by a youth consultation on the road to COP16.

Participants:

- UNCCD representatives.
- Government officials responsible for economic and environmental policies
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) focused on sustainability and land conservation
- Academics and researchers in the fields of sustainable agriculture and finance
- Experts in sustainable horticulture value chains
- Representatives from international organisations supporting sustainable land initiatives
- Media representatives covering environmental and business topics

Logistical Details for Venue

Number of Participants: 200