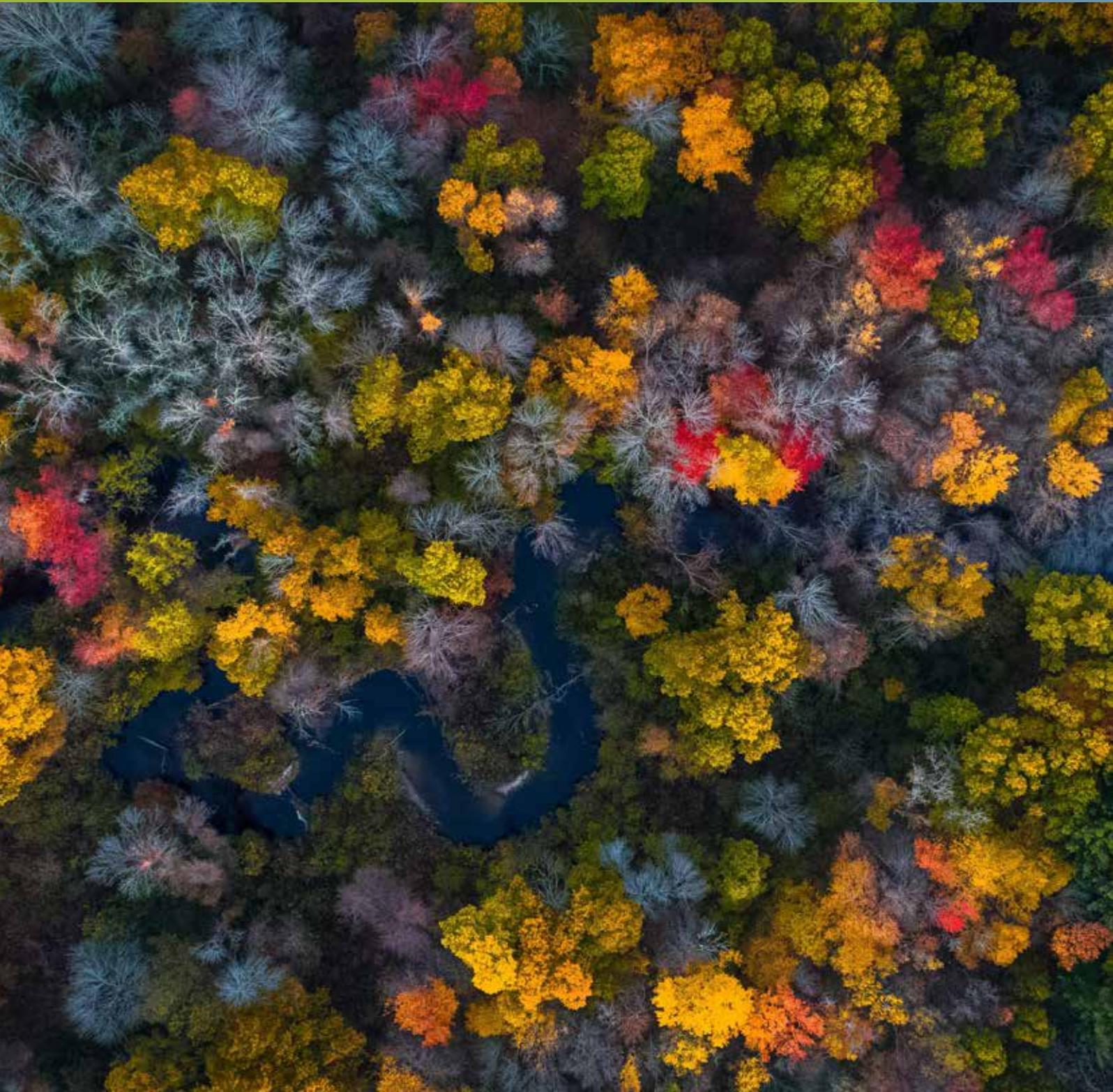




United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

Supporting the Global Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Land-based Solutions for
Healthy People and a Healthy Planet





The Problem – Ignoring the link between land and health

Land is the foundation for all life on Earth. How land is used and managed influences nature, food, water, energy, climate, and even our health. Today, the pressures on land and the wealth of resources it provides are greater than at any other time in human history. Nearly three quarters of the Earth's ice-free land has been transformed from its natural state, mainly to meet the demand for food, raw materials and human settlement.^{1,2} Even more alarming is the accelerated pace of land conversion, in order to provide the food, animal feed, fiber, bioenergy and water needed to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over the past 50 years, industrial production, technological development and our changing consumption patterns have significantly altered all ecosystems, putting over 1 million species at risk.³

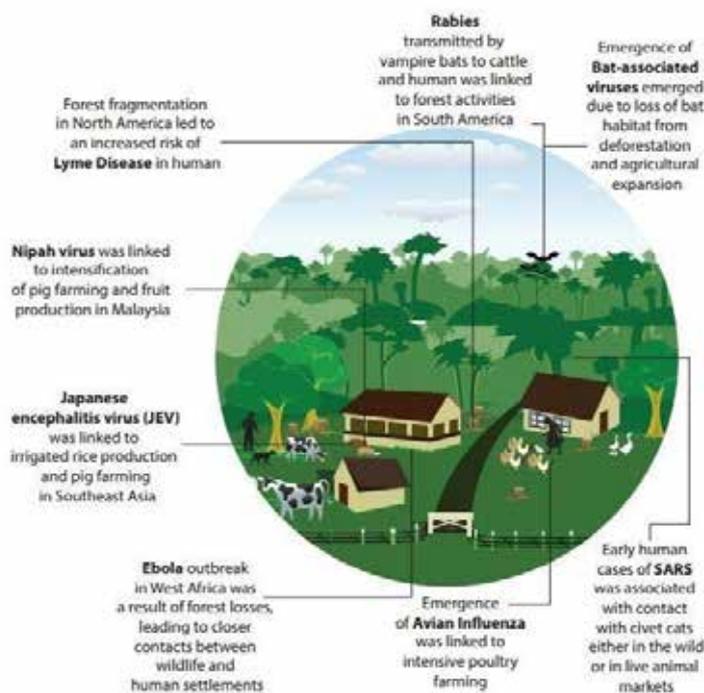


Figure 1: Primary drivers of disease emergence associated with the past emerging zoonotic disease events (Source: UNEP Frontiers Report¹¹).

Humanity depends on land use practices which provide positive economic, welfare and security benefits. However, some forms of land use degrade ecosystems and adversely impact human wellbeing through the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services (including food and water security) and the emission of almost a quarter of the greenhouse gases driving climate change. Moreover, land degradation elevates human health and safety risks, including the emergence of novel infectious diseases. This is because land use change frequently modifies natural habitats, expanding the wildlife-human interface while also altering the dynamics of inter-species microbial transmission.⁴ This in turn, increases the exposure of humans to pathogens and heightens the risk of spillover from wildlife to domestic animals and humans, known as zoonosis.^{5,6} Land use change is the primary driver for emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) of humans, over 60% of which are zoonotic with most originating from wildlife reservoirs at the frontier clearings adjacent to natural ecosystems (Figure 1).^{7,8,9} The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates about one billion cases of illness and millions of death occur every year from zoonoses.¹⁰

Since late 2019, the world has been struggling to contain an outbreak of a new zoonotic virus commonly called COVID-19, and the repercussions have been colossal. Beyond the devastating public health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved into a complex emergency with significant humanitarian, socio-economic, political and security dimensions. It has laid bare the vulnerability of both our human and natural systems, which were already threatened by climate change. On the economic front, recession and the contraction of per capita income is taking place in more countries simultaneously than at any other point since 1870.¹² The pandemic poses a real challenge to the global goal of ending poverty by 2030 (SDG 1)¹³, which is now projected to increase for the first time since 1990.¹⁴ Poor, marginalized communities, without any support or safety net, are particularly vulnerable, and the number suffering from hunger could go from 135 million to more than 250 million people.¹⁵ The agricultural labor force is buckling under the strain of the lockdown response to the pandemic and almost 1.6 billion informal economy workers are significantly impacted.¹⁶ The resilience of global systems in most sectors has taken a tremendous hit, leading to dramatic swings in commodity markets and serious food supply chain disruptions,¹⁷ a sharp contraction in remittances—the largest source of foreign exchange earnings for emerging markets and developing countries,¹⁸ and even signs of reverse migration between countries and from urban back to rural areas.¹⁹

The pandemic-driven economic crisis itself brings impacts on human health that extend beyond the pandemic itself. As the number of coronavirus cases and deaths grow, disruptions in other healthcare areas have been significant, particularly for the most vulnerable. The ripple effects of the lockdown have rebounded upon already beleaguered health care systems in ways that will affect many who may have already weathered the coronavirus storm. For example, the developing world could witness 1.4 million excess tuberculosis deaths by 2025²⁰, while in sub-Saharan Africa over the next year, experts have predicted the possibility of 500,000 excess deaths due to AIDS-related illnesses²¹ and 325,000 excess malaria deaths.²²

The Solution – Safeguarding people’s lives and their livelihoods, keeping the land in balance

Faced with an increasingly uncertain future, as a global community, it is crucial that we take steps to reduce the risk of future pandemics and find ways to recover the lost resilience in our global systems. Protecting and restoring natural ecosystems is crucial for avoiding the well-understood risks of the emergence of novel infectious diseases.²³ Moreover, land is the key to building back better: Avoiding future degradation and reversing harm from the past can accelerate the progress on all 17 SDGs in the face of both the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

That is why the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is clear: We are calling on all members of the global community to treat the land as a limited and precious natural capital. Land degradation is to be avoided, reduced and reversed to sustain a healthy planet and to deliver opportunities and essential benefits for all people, particularly women, youth and the rural poor. This document aims to explain the work of the UNCCD, drawing on relevant developments in policy and practical examples of actions that can be to tackle land degradation and drought with a view to enhancing human health and wellbeing in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

1. Principles for action: UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework

UNCCD prioritizes human wellbeing and health through combatting desertification, land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought. The UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework reaffirms this commitment, with objectives that emphasize ecosystem and community resilience, and the living conditions of affected populations.²⁴ The expected impacts of the Strategic Framework are equally relevant. People living in areas affected by desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) will have an improved and more resilient livelihood base and will secure long-term benefits while the resilience of ecosystems is increased. The socioeconomic and environmental vulnerability of affected populations to climate change, climate variability and drought is also expected to be reduced.

The UNCCD Strategic Framework also contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular regarding Sustainable Development Goal 15 and target 15.3: “by 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world”. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer an important blueprint for collaboration. Each of the SDGs is essential but the reality is that all, at some level, place demands on land. Often these demands are competing. To deliver the SDGs and even accelerate their implementation, it is therefore critical to tackle land degradation, prevent future losses and restore the stock of healthy and productive land.

Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), with conservation, sustainable use and restoration as its three pillars, provides an effective and innovative framework for doing the right things, in the right places, at the right scale.²⁵ The IPCC has documented, with high confidence, that policies promoting LDN – which is contained within SDG Target 15.3 – serve not only to address land degradation, but also enhance food security, human wellbeing and climate change adaptation and mitigation.²⁶ Creating an enabling environment for LDN can help policymakers and planners navigate social, economic and environmental tradeoffs so food security, energy needs, rights, access to clean water and biodiversity are considered – and addressed – together. This offers UNCCD stakeholders an opportunity to go beyond institutional and sectoral siloes and join forces.

2. Addressing the primary drivers of COVID-19 while strengthening the resilience of our communities

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment. In many parts of the world, land is the most important asset for people,^{28,29} and land-based solutions that foster health and biodiversity offer innovative ways to tackle the pandemic. Land can play a key role in the prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery phases of the COVID-19 crisis. The response areas identified below offer ways in which Parties can address health and its determinants and make investments for health through evidence-informed policies across sectors.

2.1 Prevention and preparedness

Prevention by addressing the primary environmental driver of emerging infectious disease outbreaks. Land conversion for food production and urban expansion has increased the exposure of humans to viruses, increasing the risk of zoonotic disease emergence. Avoiding land degradation, improving the condition of affected ecosystems through sustainable land management and restoring or rehabilitating what has already been lost can prevent outbreaks, limit the negative impact on people by building resilience and helping ensure food security.

EXAMPLE CASE 1

Congo Basin: the primary drivers of recent zoonotic disease outbreaks are largely related to how the interface between humans, wildlife and nature is managed. The case of Ebola outbreak in the Congo Basin was strongly associated with high deforestation rates in combination with local demand for bushmeat in the region that increase the exposure of human-wildlife contact. While deforestations and bushmeat availability may yield short-term benefits, such activities had a much larger social cost in the long run. As a response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak, smart land-use planning and development in and around protected areas was initiated as part of the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), with the aim of tackling the key underlying drivers of the zoonotic diseases, including promoting the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems by avoiding deforestation. For more information, click [here](#).

Preparedness by strengthening the resilience and security of our food and water systems in times of crisis. Pandemics can trigger food insecurity. For example, when the global food supply chain is disrupted, we see higher prices and food scarcity with the most vulnerable people most at risk from instability. On healthy and productive land, communities feel secure. While investing in local and regional food systems and integrated land use planning can make food supply chains more resilient and risks are diversified.

Similarly, containing the spread of COVID-19 is inevitably linked to the availability of water and sanitation. However, billions of people lack access to clean water, sanitation, and basic handwashing facilities.³⁰ Strengthening the healthy land and water nexus contributes to building more resilient water systems and in the long-term preparedness for future outbreaks.



Photo Vaccination Marabo Health Centre DRK, Julien Harneis, https://www.flickr.com/photos/julien_harneis/329047175

2.2. Response and recovery

Response by reducing the crisis' impact on the most vulnerable people. The COVID-19 crisis is hitting national economies hard; the equivalent of 305 million full-time jobs will have been lost globally by the end of the 2nd quarter of 2020 (10.5% lower than in the last pre-crisis quarter).³¹ For many extended families around the world, healthy land acts as a safety net in times of crisis, including sustenance. In times of crisis, it is crucial to secure availability of and access to healthy land for the most vulnerable.

EXAMPLE CASE 2

In **Niger**, farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) and soil and water conservation have led to greening. FMNR involves



simple, low-cost techniques for native tree and shrub management, to produce continuous harvests of trees for fuel, building materials, food, medicine, and fodder. As a result, 200 million trees are now protected and managed, leading to 10- to 20-fold increase of tree cover over 30 years (1975–2005). After 20 years real farm incomes had doubled on 900,000 farms. That is an addition of roughly USD 1,000 per household or USD 180 per hectare. Soil fertility had improved to boost grain yields by 10% on average. For more information, click [here](#).

Photo: Farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) and soil and water conservation have led to greening.

Recovery by re-establishing and creating new jobs, mobilizing additional resources, and building back better. Strong fiscal and monetary policy measures are pivotal during times of crisis. Mobilizing public domestic and international financial resources into land-based projects and programmes can contribute to a green recovery from the current crisis. It can help foster action at scale, promote successful innovation in the areas of job creation, livelihood protection and sustainable value chains, and at the same time define new models for financing these developments.

EXAMPLE CASE 3

Jamaica has strategically partnered with 128 communities across the nation to expand water storage capacity by a combined 2,261,927 gallons over the last seven years. The integrated approach to enhancing food and water systems through relatively small investments (GEF and JCCCP small grants implemented by UNDP) in water harvesting and storage facilities are still actively serving more than 135,000 persons in virtually every parish across the nation, months and years after project closure. The emphasis on community partnerships have had positive impacts on health and sanitation, sustainable agriculture, sustainable livelihoods, and local economies. Improved access to potable water while boosting crop harvests may also prove to be critical in supporting the local fight against infectious diseases including COVID-19 and in ensuring the livelihoods of residents weathering the economic repercussions of the crisis. For more information, click [here](#).

Photo: Improved access to potable water while boosting crop harvests builds local resilience in the face COVID-19 and in response to climate change. (Photo from UNDP Jamaica Photo Story Book)



EXAMPLE CASE 4

In **China**, home to more than 50 million people, the Loess Plateau in the northwest is reborn. Centuries of overuse and overgrazing led to one of the highest erosion rates in the world and widespread poverty. Two projects funded by the World Bank and the Government of China set out to restore the heavily degraded Loess Plateau through one of the world's largest erosion control programs with the goal of returning this poor part of China to an area of sustainable agricultural production. More than 2.5 million people in four of China's poorest provinces – Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Gansu, as well as the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region – were lifted out of poverty. Through the introduction of sustainable farming practices, farmers' incomes doubled, employment diversified, and the degraded environment was revitalized. For more information, click [here](#).



Restoring China's Loess Plateau Photo: <http://vegansustainability.com/restoring-chinas-loess-plateau>

3. Playing our part: UNCCD response to COVID-19

Faced with a global COVID-19 crisis, we need concerted action to foster human health and healthy ecosystems—our life support system. To help address the COVID-19 crisis, and to identify and prepare for elements for further consideration by UNCCD Parties, the Convention Secretariat and the Global Mechanism are focusing their response around the following framework for action comprising three tracks, namely (i) addressing the health dimensions of the global crisis, (ii) safeguarding people's lives and their livelihoods and (iii) building back better, smarter and stronger. There is no hierarchy in this approach; all three tracks would need to be tackled simultaneously as they touch upon the prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery phases of the crisis.

Track 1: addressing the health dimensions of the global crisis. UNCCD calls for environmental action to drive positive transformative change for people, beginning with raising awareness of the linkages between health and environment. Lack of awareness of land degradation and its drivers and impacts can become a barrier to action. If we understand the link, we can limit the primary pathway of zoonotic disease transmission as well as reduce the social and economic impacts of a global pandemic. Decision-makers and the general public may not always be aware of these interconnections. We will stress the need to highlight the interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change, human health and land and to identify gaps in knowledge among practitioners and policymakers. Through scientific assessment and applied policy analysis, the UNCCD strives to provide evidence on policies and good practices in sustainable land management (SLM) and restoration that optimize livelihoods, jobs and food security that benefit women and men alike.

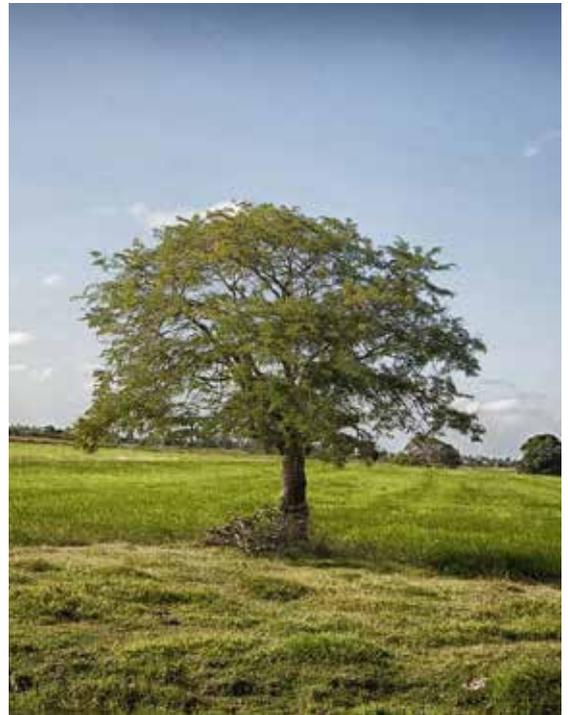
EXAMPLE CASE 5

In **Guyana**, the economy is mainly driven by agriculture, forestry, fishery, and mining sectors and land degradation has been occurring in sporadic areas due to the unsustainable use of natural resources and recurring natural disasters. The country has set strong LDN targets and on-the-ground measures to combat land degradation and to support corrective actions, including the promotion of SLM practices (Figure 6). Guyana has successfully aligned LDN with its national development priorities via a green economic pathway, achieved through the “Green State Development Strategy” of the overarching country development framework. By integrating LDN, Guyana is on the path of enhancing opportunities to improve livelihoods and contribute to food security, as well as to improve the country’s gross domestic product and the population’s economic wellbeing, particularly those living in areas affected by land degradation issues. In order to translate their commitment into concrete actions, Guyana is moving towards implementation through the development of concrete gender-responsive LDN transformative actions on the ground. For more information, click [here](#).

Track 2: safeguarding people’s lives and their livelihoods to help mitigate the impact of the crisis, particularly in fragile states. Land acts as a safety net, particularly for the most vulnerable people, including women and youth. Integrated land use planning, land restoration, sustainable land management, and protecting natural areas are among the best responses to the socio-economic crisis facing humanity today. Gender-responsive planning and implementation can help policymakers build a bridge between urban and rural systems (e.g., food production and consumption) and shorten supply chains that are exposed by this crisis. The UNCCD encourages the setting of voluntary land degradation neutrality targets that achieve multiple benefits, build resilience and encourage landscape, regional, national SLM and restoration. Collectively, we are working to make sure those practices that work can be incentivized and scaled up as we connect action to national and international policies, finance and technical support as well as through leveraging partnerships.

EXAMPLE CASE 6

In **The Gambia**, the 3S Initiative (Sustainability, Stability and Security in Africa), implemented by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through the GEF 7 STAR allocation, directly links the creation of land-based jobs for vulnerable groups with environmental health and resilience to climate shocks by generating economic opportunity through the restoration and sustainable management of natural resources. The project will pursue: 1) Efficient and effective food value chains for multiple benefits, especially on rice, supported through IFAD’s ROOTS (resilient of organizations for transformative smallholder farming) programme 2) removing deforestation from supply chains through sustainable forest and land management (SFLM) in sensitive areas 3) expand restoration of degraded lands both with IFAD and GEF investments. The project will contribute to job creation for youth especially potential migrants or returnees and work with the matching grant facility of IFAD to attract diaspora remittances. For more information, click [here](#).



Guyana has aligned policies to help ensure sustainable agriculture contributes to economic development. (Image by David Mark from [Pixabay](#))



The 3S aims to enhance sustainability, security and stability simultaneously by, for example, linking land restoration with renewable energy production to create higher value jobs for former returnees.

EXAMPLE CASE 7

The **UNCCD** is ramping up its activities to supporting countries on Drought Preparedness with a focus on a management approach that prioritizes “prevention” over “recovery”. Recognizing the growing need to help Parties, communities, agriculture, businesses, and individuals threatened by drought, UNCCD is working with 70+ countries to guide them through the process of developing and enhancing proactive national drought plans. To enable action, UNCCD, together with partners, also developed a drought toolbox with a range of effective technical and policy options that could be used to analyze drought vulnerabilities and risks and to guide and help prioritize feasible drought mitigation intervention measures. The toolbox is also designed to provide drought stakeholders with easy access to tools, case studies and other resources to support the design and implementation of national drought plans. The tools presented in the drought toolbox are organized in 3 modules: (i) drought monitoring and early warning systems; (ii) drought vulnerability and impact assessment and (iii) drought risk mitigation measures. For more information, click [here](#) and [here](#).

DROUGHT TOOLBOX

Providing drought stakeholders with easy access to resources to support action on drought preparedness with the aim to boost the resilience of people and ecosystems.

[About the toolbox \(ES/FR\)](#)

[Language support](#)

[Drought planning](#)

UPDATES

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The UNCCD Drought Toolbox

DROUGHT Monitoring and Early Warning

Explore tools and data

DROUGHT Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

Explore tools and maps

DROUGHT Risk Mitigation Measures

Find tools and solutions

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Global Water Partnership

European Commission

NDMC

UN Environment-DHI Centre on Water and Environment

UN Environment

DHI

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

Photo: The UNCCD Drought Toolbox. <https://knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox>

Track 3: moving away from the business-as-usual mindset to build back better, smarter and stronger. The COVID-19 crisis has revealed that changes in society can occur in a relatively short period of time offering the prospect for a normative structural reset. Post-coronavirus economic recovery stimulus measures and packages will lock in choices and set a long-term trajectory for policy and investment. People and nature must be at the centre of this deep transformation of the global system. Investments and incentives that focus on restoring a lasting balance between people, prosperity and our planetary boundaries give us the best shot at long term preparedness and resilience, especially for the poorest. The Global Mechanism mobilizes resources to support the implementation of the Convention, assisting countries to identify, access, combine and sequence environmental finance, including through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other bilateral and multilateral donor and private sector funding.

EXAMPLE CASE 8

Blended finance, is necessary to achieve the target of a land degradation-neutral world (SDG target 15.3) by 2030. New financial instruments and intermediaries, as well as enabling conditions, are needed to catalyze private capital to achieve LDN. The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, therefore, facilitated the establishment of the **LDN Fund** - an impact investment fund managed by Mirova that blends resources from the public, private and philanthropic sectors to support achieving LDN through sustainable land management and land restoration projects implemented by the private sector. By leveraging long-term non-grant financing, the LDN Fund is investing in financially viable private projects on land rehabilitation and sustainable land management worldwide, including sustainable agriculture, sustainable livestock management, agroforestry and sustainable forestry. Eligible projects generate environmental and socio-economic benefits as well as financial returns. The LDN Fund is currently supporting businesses and catalyzing investment towards sustainable land management and land restoration projects to make a transformative transition towards a healthier and more resilient post-COVID-19 world. For more information, click [here](#) and [here](#).



Mirova's LDN Fund selected Urapi Sustainable Land Use (Urapi) (<https://www.urapi.co/>) for its first investment, a program focused on restoring degraded land and promoting sustainable land management in Latin America.

The Aspirations – Building back better

1. Shaping a social contract for nature

This document summarized how land degradation, biodiversity, human health and climate change are interdependent challenges taking place at multiple scales. Their interdependence puts into sharp focus the importance of a holistic response. While awareness is growing, our commitment to sustainable solutions needs to be intensified. As does our understanding of how solutions can be leveraged so that we respond to and recover from the COVID-19 crisis and at the same time reduce the risk of future pandemics.

Acting together to tackle land degradation represents tremendous untapped potential. With forward-looking policies, targeted finance and incentives, and strong political will, the potential of integrated land use planning, sustainable land management and restoration can be fully unleashed. We will leave no one behind. Citizens can be provided with jobs, food security and resilience to future shocks and stresses. Citizens can enjoy a sense of purpose and dignity in an uncertain world.

Land-based and nature-based solutions offer a viable pathway towards regenerating our communities, societies, and regional economies.

To make this happen, the time has come for a new social contract for nature.

We will need to build bridges and establish partnerships between stakeholders. Synergies between the three Rio Conventions and related environmental and development organizations are essential. Everyone has a role to play and everyone has a stake in the game.

A Social Contract for Nature involves bold action on the ground. Each of us can contribute directly or encourage our leaders to stop the loss of natural capital: avoiding future land degradation and land use change, and reducing and reversing existing land degradation to protect our natural and working landscapes. This in turn will also cut climate change and biodiversity loss, reduce the emergence of zoonosis and support community resilience. Maintaining the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services from the land is a critical building block for life in harmony with nature.

2. Going beyond business-as-usual

Such a social contract for nature would mean measures to build back stronger, smarter, safer. To build a world that is green, just and resilient:

- **Investing in research and development** as well as innovations in the **environment and health nexus** to better understand how anthropogenic environmental change is affecting human health, through both short-term and direct pathways such as SDS and long-term and complex pathways such as climate change or biodiversity loss.
- **Enhancing coherence and synergies** among the many actors involved in the knowledge base, policy responses, and practices on these issues is urgently needed. New models of governance could be adopted between national and local levels and across sectors. Spatial planning and risk prevention policies as well as technical measures to combine conventional engineering (e.g. raising dikes) with nature-based solutions (e.g. making room for rivers) make sense. If carried out properly, such projects can be highly efficient and cost-effective and have multiple benefits – for example, building parks that cool cities in the summer, which can boost human wellbeing and contribute to biodiversity conservation.
- **The full involvement of all stakeholders**, including women, children according to their evolving capacities, young people, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities is indispensable. Youth as the torchbearers of the 2030 Agenda have a pivotal role to play both as beneficiaries of actions and policies under the Convention and as partners and participants in its implementation. Land- and ecosystem restoration can be an important building block to engage youth in sustainable development, delivering immediate outcomes and a longer-term sense of hope for youth at risk.

- **Innovation and technology transfer:** around the globe, fast advancing technologies shape production and consumption, and drive patterns of land use and terrestrial ecosystems at various scales. Research found that across the SDGs and their 169 targets, 70 per cent of the targets could be enabled by the Fourth Industrial Revolution technology applications already in deployment.³² Artificial Intelligence (AI) brings with it an ability to optimize systems through automating, assisting, augmenting and ultimately creating autonomous systems to execute decision making without human intervention. Levers such as agricultural robotics are key in achieving the projected reductions in GHG emissions as they reduce fossil fuel usage in agricultural activities. AI tools for land use planning are also very important in reducing emissions as they optimize the use of, and help protect, natural resources such as forests. Besides emissions, these applications minimize the negative environmental effects associated with the overuse of inputs such as water and chemicals. For example, precision monitoring in agriculture can enable savings of specific inputs such as fertilizers and water used for irrigation, and AI levers in the water sector alone could also boost global GDP by \$190 billion by 2030.³³ The creation of a broader ecosystem that focuses on harnessing technology to tackle environmental challenges and decrease the gender gap in access to information and technology, would be a valuable and much-needed step.
- **Reimagining financial systems:** developing and implementing innovative financial instruments and enhancing the involvement of business, civil society and citizens in policymaking for environmental protection. Private and public sources for funding landscape restoration are needed to go to scale and leapfrog implementation with a view to creating land-based green jobs and strengthening the resilience of rural communities across the region, particularly to address the post-COVID-19. Green bonds are increasingly used in landscape restoration while more recently large sovereign and pension funds are moving towards decarbonizing their investments. Along with increasing philanthropic investments, these private finance options offer great opportunities for landscape restoration. A mix of funding cross sector public sources could also be envisaged. Options to redirect subsidies and tax incentives that promote restoration such as the creation of innovative financing mechanisms, like public private partnerships (PPP) or payment for ecosystem services, that are locally appropriate and can be taken to large scale or that secure cross financing of restoration activities (e.g. through fees, charges, deposits, funds etc.) can also be developed and deployed.
- **Fostering an enabling environment:** as good governance of land resources is indispensable, achieving land tenure security can form the backbone of an effective approach. When all other aspects of the enabling environment are considered and addressed in a coordinated way, land tenure security can increase the resilience of populations and ecosystems.³⁴ The promotion of gender equality in terms of land rights and security remains one of the most obvious quick wins for restoration and multiple SDGs. At the same time, the capacity of land administrations to facilitate integrated land use planning needs to be strengthened or built, in many countries. Such an increase in capacity will help managing tradeoffs and synergies with other land-based targets and improve coordination.
- **Leveraging the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and Decade of Action for the SDGs:** based on reports to the from UNCCD governments, it is estimated that over 20% of the earth's terrestrial cover has been degraded. As land degradation is responsible for a quarter of global CO₂ emissions (3.6–4.4 billion tonnes), the IPCC underlines that land-based actions could contribute to approximately 25 to 30 per cent of the climate change solution if other sectors continue to maintain their ambition.³⁵ It is estimated that farmland restoration applied on 172 million hectares could generate 14.08 gigatons reduced CO₂ by 2050. The upcoming UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration³⁷ and the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals³⁸ in combination with various other initiatives such as Land Degradation Neutrality target setting and implementation³⁹, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs – Paris Agreement)⁴⁰, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)⁴¹, the Bonn Challenge (including, among others, the New York Declaration on Forests, the Initiative 20x20, and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative), offer a unique opportunity for fundamental change. Taken together, and taking into consideration different methods for overlap, the total global commitments for restoration range from around 700 to 950 million hectares.

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