Securing Healthy Soils and Stopping Land Degradation: Outcomes for Rio+20
Rio Conventions Pavilion, Athletes Park
10:30-19:00, Sunday, 17 June 2012

The demand for life’s essentials will rise significantly in the next 20 years. About 50% more food will be needed, 40% more energy and 35% more water. How will these demands to be met and with what resources? Past trends show that land, the foundation of these goods and services, is not only getting destroyed, but is outside the radar screen of policy-makers because there is no political will to get something done?

How serious is the problem? By 1992, estimates showed that only 3% of the Earth was fertile land but every year, 75 billion tons of fertile soil is getting lost for good, slowly eating away at the six-inches or so of topsoil that stands between humanity and extinction. Every year, 12 million hectares of productive land that could produce 20 million tons of grain is lost to land degradation and drought alone.

Without healthy soils and productive land, there is no sustainable development. There is no green economy and no secure future for most. Creating the ‘Future We Want’, starts with the
commitments to preserve non-degraded land and soil and to balance out the degrading land with the recovery of an equal amount of degraded land. It is the commitment to become land-degradation neutral. Come join the policy-makers, scientists and experts, as well as civil society organizations meeting in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday, 17 June, to show that with political will, it is possible to preempt future dire scenarios.

Find out the winners of the Land for Life Award, who will be announced immediately following the event at an evening reception graced by celebrities and dignitaries. The award, with a total prize fund of USD 100,000, recognizes innovations from around the world that show tangible evidence of combating land degradation, but need scaling up.

Featured speakers include Her Excellency Izabella Teixeira, Brazilian Minister of Environment, His Excellency Mr. Don Koo Lee, Minister, Korea Forest Service, Her Excellency Ms. Edna Molewa, Minister of Water and Environment, South Africa, Mr. Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Professor Antonio Magalhães, Chair of the UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology, Dr. Dennis Garrity, Executive Board Member at the World Agroforestry Centre and Mr. Luca Montanarella, SOIL Action Leader, Joint Research Center, European Commission, among others.

This all-day event also serves as the global observance of the World Day to Combat Desertification, a United Nations day observed all over the world every 17 June to honor the contributions of the World’s drylands people and to draw global attention to the changes taking place in the world’s most fragile ecosystems.
MESSAGES FROM SPEAKERS

Opening Session

In his welcome address on behalf of the host country, Brazil, Mr. Francisco Paulo Guilherme Cabral, Secretary of Extractivism and Sustainable Rural Development, Ministry of Environment, said the Government is updating legislation to improve the management of natural resources. Multiple ministries and stakeholders and being brought into the process as the Government seeks the greater participation of society in sustainable land management. He said this national example of implementation reflects the UNCCD ten-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018), which moves from knowledge to action, supported by clear and achievable targets.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) pointed out that 20 years after the first Earth Summit we should not talk about what we’ve achieved but rather what we haven’t achieved and what we
need to do moving forward. Mr. Gnacadja was clear about the need to shift from thinking about desertification as the deserts encroaching to understanding that desertification is a manmade process that we need to take responsibility for.

A round table discussion with heads of United Nations and International Organizations reemphasized these points. The session’s Chair, Minister Don Koo Lee, Republic of Korea, reminded participants about the important links between desertification, drought and land degradation and poverty. He said looking at implementation of the UNCCD within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and the discussions at Rio+20 revealed a number of important points. First with regards to the science of the sustainable management of land and soil, as pointed out by Mr. Gnacadja, the science has improved, now the challenge is to ensure that this science is understood and put to use.

Dr. Kanayo Nwanze, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development, explained that the people involved in sustainable land management are ready to adopt new scientific approaches and technologies. As a specific example, he drew attention to the astounding pace
of technology adoption in drylands. Land holders who have never seen a telephone land line have jumped into running a high tech business with cell phones, for example.

Dr. Mannava V.K. Sivakumar, Acting Director, Climate and Water Department (CLW), World Meteorological Organization, supported this observation with one of his own. Farmers are increasingly accessing weather forecasts on their mobile phones. As such the challenge lies in expanding the use of this technology for things such as drought management.

The panel also discussed the political and policy environment in addressing soil and land. Ms Jan McAlpine, Director, UN Forum on Forests, reiterated that the situation has improved. Twenty years ago discussions on soil were limited to the scientific community whereas now, policy makers are increasingly engaging in dialogue.
Much remains to be done, however, said Mr. Jochen Flasbarth, President, and German Federal Environment Agency (UBA). He stressed that many governments still underestimate the importance of soil and that a coordinated global policy approach is needed to ensure that soils are managed sustainably. In that respect he pointed out that the Global Soil Week scheduled for November 2012 in Berlin aims at launching a soil related post Rio+20 process.

For many policy makers, soil is seen as a domestic issue but this is not the case – as pointed out by Mr. Alexander Mueller, Assistant-Director General for Natural Resources, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). He said soils are a non-renewable resource but we are treating them as if new soil is easy to come by. He reiterated the need to come together as UN agencies, NGOs and farmers, to build awareness and present an alternative for policy makers to consider. We also need to expand people’s understanding of the scope of the problem. In addition, he introduced the Global Soil Partnership as a tool to improve governance of soils.
Mr. Timo Makela, Director-General, Environment Directorate-General, European Commission pointed out that those who do consider soil and land as an important issue still tend to view it as an ‘African problem’. He said global targets on sustainable land management must be adopted to reflect the reality that land degradation is a global problem.

The importance of global targets was also emphasized by Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), who reminded participants that the Aichi biodiversity targets included specific goals on restoration, sustainable management of agriculture, and the phasing out perverse incentives, all of which are directly relevant for sustainable land management. The decision has been taken; therefore what we need now is action.

During the question and answer session that followed, some solutions were proposed:

• Coordinating on the ground actions with political commitments and high level policies by linking soil to poverty alleviation and further empowering the UNCCD as the global convention. This requires mainstreaming sustainable land management into economic decision making,
removing perverse incentives and harmful subsidies, including subsidies for fertilizers. However, it is difficult to promote sustainable land use if we don’t have sustainable consumption and green procurement policies.

- The need to better highlight successful techniques for sustainable land management that work across sectors. This will help implementation, the mobilization of financial resources and international negotiations.

The session agreed that business as usual is not an option. Mr. Gnacadja stated that we need commitments to land degradation neutrality if we want to ensure food security, access to clean water and, ultimately, sustainable development. Ms McAlpine proposed that soil is to the Earth what the blood in our veins is to us – without it, we cannot live. We are destroying the basis for future wealth and food and we must stop. As pointed out by Dr. Nwanze, the people managing the land are the best conservationists; we only need to empower them to see results.

Panel 1: Towards a Zero-net land degradation world

Mr. Jochen Flasbarth, President, UBA chaired this panel. H.E. Mr. Don Koo Lee, Minister, Korea Forest Service and UNCCD COP 10 President drew attention to the fact that land is the infrastructure for life on Earth. Therefore, we have the responsibility to use environmental resources in a sustainable way. He emphasized the time is ripe to translate passion into actions and to take action to avoid land degradation as far as possible and that Rio+20 calls for global target setting of Sustainable Development Goals. He said the target of a Zero Net Land Degradation (ZNLD) would help implementation of the Changwon Initiative which was launched during UNCCD COP10 in Korea last year.

The Republic of Korea has experience in successful land restoration initiatives to share, for example, the Korea 10-year national forest plan gives top priority in restoring land and forest, he said. One of the lessons learned is that conservation is most important as we cannot afford to continue loosing arable land, but that restoration is important, too even though it is slow and expensive.
Prof. Antonio Magalhães, Chair, UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology (CST), stressed the role of science in achieving ZNLD. He said, on the one hand, it is true that there is still a lack of science and we have to continue research in all relevant areas. But on the other hand, a lot of scientific research has already been undertaken and results are available. However, these have often not yet been adapted and fully used. Prof. Magalhães said he is very much in favor of a ZNLD target but noted some concerns being raised. For instance, what exactly does ZNLD mean? In his view, it refers to the sustainable use of land and natural resources. Therefore, he said, countries should not be afraid of a target on land, but be in favor for sustainable land management (SLM), especially for future generations. In this regard, science has an important role to play. He said a call for more science does not mean going for more sophisticated science, but a more sustainable way; not sophisticated technology, but simple technology, including dissemination and application of existing technologies. This is also true when it comes to stopping soil erosion and protecting soil in the Brazil. He highlighted the relevance and several initiative of the CST, including the 2nd Scientific Conference which will take place in early 2013 and will deal with the cost of action versus inaction (see ELD panel discussion below).
Dr. Dennis Garrity, Executive board member, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and UNCCD Drylands Ambassador, focused his intervention on ZNLD and sustainable food security. He said it is necessary to see that food security can be achieved by achieving ZNLD. Understanding where we stand and where we should go requires global and national mapping and monitoring of the status of degrading and regenerating land and land that is stable. The good news is that even though land degradation can happen everywhere, it is NOT occurring everywhere. In fact, the major concerns are limited to very few places, which are especially located in southern Africa and the northern part of Australia. Some of the most sensitive ecosystems are located in drylands and land degradation already occurs in 10% of the drylands. Conserving soil moisture increases resilience to land degradation. Practices like agroforestry and conservation agriculture which can help in re-greening the Sahel are available and, in turn, will help to achieve food security. But it is important to strengthen existing small-scale farmers’ initiatives on the ground and to support them through national awareness raising programmes. Dr. Garrity answered the question whether we can achieve a land-degradation neutral world with a clear “Yes, we can.” Small-scale farms provide good example already.
Dr. Veerle Vandeweerd, Director, Environment & Energy Group, United Nations Development Programme reflected the role the UNDP’s Integrated Drylands Development Programme can play in achieving a ZNLD target. She emphasized the importance of advancing social equity while protecting the environment. This is especially true in drylands, the most vulnerable places, where the poorest people live. She said development issues need to be fully taken on board when fighting land degradation. To sustainably manage land resources we need to help people to manage their resources sustainably (the community level) and strengthen governance of environmental resources (the institutional level). Development and ecosystem protection can help increase the livelihoods of affected populations. Furthermore, there is a need for concrete action on the ground; a need to translate the National Action Programmes designed to combat land degradation into concrete action. Ms Vandeweerd referred to the agreement between UNCCD and UNDP to promote knowledge sharing and awareness rising in drylands, which has been signed earlier this year. In this context, the UNDP Integrated Drylands Development Programme supports the implementation of the UNCCD and will help to promote and achieve ZNLD. However, according to Ms Vandeweerd, UNDP wants to go even further. In her opinion, drylands management should become an integrated topic of the green economy. She said UNCCD and UNDP should combine efforts to achieve this.
Discussion and Q&A

Three important issues were raised by Mr. Tim Searchinger, World Resources Institute, during his intervention. First of all, it is important to clarify if ZNLD will focus only on drylands. Land degradation in general and in drylands are two different issues and in his opinion a focus in drylands should be kept by UNCCD. Second, he raised the need for a matrix to be set up to make goals and targets meaningful (e.g. soil erosion, carbon content) and to operationalize the concept of ZNLD. Third, the need for science and action has to be balanced. Best practice examples on successful reforestation in Korea are good examples on how to realize this and to successfully apply science. Furthermore, existing agricultural practices can be applied by small-scale farmers within a short time.

Prof. Antonio Magalhães stressed that the current UNCCD mandate is clearly on drylands, but said land degradation does not only occur in drylands. Therefore we have to discuss how to integrate this issue in the UNCCD process. Dr. Dennis Garrity strongly supported the issue of science for action and further stressed the importance to connect science and local knowledge, which has been neglected in the past. Ms. Vandeweerd said long-term capacity building on agricultural practices is key.

An intervention from a representative of Senegal focused on the operationalization of existing scientific knowledge and the need to link science with local knowledge and the civil society. A representative from Brazil said desertification is a major problem in his country. Therefore several initiatives have been established and the lack of a scientific basis has been identified as a major obstacle. Consequently a network has been created to solve this problem. In this regard, Brazil is willing to support UNCCD to proceed in this process.
Prof. Ben Boer, Research Institute of Environmental Law, Wuhan University and Emeritus Professor, Australian Centre for Environmental Law, University of Sydney emphasized that in his opinion ZNLD can be achieved from a scientific view. However, several parameters are key: knowledge about the economics of land degradation, supportive policies and institutional arrangements and an integrated approach. The latter also incorporates law. He said a protocol on land and soil is a central instrument to achieve ZNLD. Setting guidelines for national instruments to implement ZNLD is important for the implementation of the target. Desertification, a subset of land degradation, is the central aspect of UNCCD. Prof. Boer, therefore, called for a new convention on land and soil.

Dr. Luca Montanarella, European Commission-Joint Research Centre recalled that achieving ZNLD implies accounting of land degradation, which includes processes of ongoing land degradation in comparison to ongoing land restoration. What exactly can we consider to be land degradation/restoration and what is the appropriate scale for its accounting – global, national or local scale? On this question, Dr. Garrity stressed the importance of choosing the right indicators and measurements of scale. UNCCD has been working on this question already
and will continue. Measuring land degradation can be done by remote sensing, but not a single indicator is reflecting the whole process. With regard to the scale of accounting, he underlined the importance of the national and local levels. He further called on countries to come up with national targets.

H.E. Mr. Don Koo Lee also stressed the importance of national and local level accounting for land degradation processes and referred to success stories in Korea. Dr. Veerle Vandeweerd posed the question: how do we want to achieve SDGs and targets? The process will start in Rio on a global level which can help to make additional financial resources available, but it needs to be operationalized on the national level. Furthermore, when it comes to accounting, the ZNLD target monitoring and evaluation need to be put in place.

A representative from Argentina said that when it comes to indicators, the ZNLD target net productivity is not sufficient. Furthermore the process has to be documented. He also raised the question of how the baseline for the accounting would be defined and also stressed the need for an integrated approach and assessment.

**Panel 2: Global Soil Partnership**

Later in the afternoon, participants considered the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), a response to the acknowledgement of soil as a critically important component of environmental, agricultural and economic systems. As noted by Mr. Alexander Mueller, Assistant Director-General for Natural Resources, FAO, it takes about 1000 years to produce 2–2.5cm of topsoil and yet, in some countries we are losing soil at the rate of 100 tons per hectare per year. The loss of soil is linked to a number of pressures. Eugenio Gonzalez, Executive Director, CIREN, Chile, explained
that soil in Chile is being lost as a result of rain erosion, the overuse of soil for the past 200 years and the excessive application of agro-chemicals.

Responses to these threats are already being mobilized. As explained by Mr. Mueller, the Global Soil Partnership was launched in September 2011 with funding from the EC-JRC to address the lack of soil data, limited technical capacity, fragmented knowledge and research and low priorities for soil within policy making and funding decisions. Approaches include both the convening of workshops and direct action through regional global soil partnerships including in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. The Global Soil Partnership benefits from a global map of degradation trends (GLADIS, 2011) and an overview of the threats to land resources (Status of the Worlds Land and Water Resources).

This international partnership is complemented by the soil biodiversity initiative established at Colorado State University (CSU). This initiative, as explained by Dr. Diana Wall, CSU, is a response to rapid policy interest and the rapid development of science. The initiative already has interest from 58 countries that recognize the need to translate scientific expertise into practical action. Specific actions link soil to climate change mitigation, soil fertility, and the bio-control of pests, and include a proposal to develop an atlas of soil biodiversity. At the national level, actions range from the development of knowledge and scientific information to on-the-ground investments in sustainable land management, to the adoption of national legislation.
With regards to knowledge and scientific information, the panel highlighted a number of investments. Mr. Carlos Clérici, Director Soils and Water Division, Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, Uruguay, presented maps of current erosion and degradation risks in Uruguay. Mr. Gonzalez revealed that in 2010, Chile undertook a similar exercise of mapping all disasters resulting from erosion. This study revealed that almost 50% of the national land area is subject to erosion. According to Mr. Mueller, the Global Soil Partnership will support such efforts by building in-country knowledge and technical capacity related to soil.

Mr. Gabriel Quijandria Acosta, Deputy Minister of Environment, Peru, spoke on the topic, “Why soils require attention and recognition?” He reminded participants that technology is not the only source of knowledge. Moreover, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices yield important lessons and useful technologies.

Speakers demonstrated that on-the-ground activities to support sustainable land management are well recognized and established. Mr. Clérici described the approaches to address soil degradation, including crop rotation, no-till farming and reduction in the use of pasture. Mr.
Gonzalez also described concrete actions such as soil restoration, disaster management, the appropriate application of agro-chemicals, agro-forestry, and optimized use of water. Soil restoration and sustainable water use was also recognized as important actions by Mr. Andre Leu, President, and International Foundation for Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) who also highlighted the potential of organic farming and the contribution of traditional agricultural practices.

Taking action at the highest level, Mr. Acosta explained that Peru has established a national programme to combat desertification and soil degradation. In Uruguay, Mr. Clérici described national legislation aimed at ensuring sustainable agricultural development within the framework of the full and effective consideration of the environment. The legislation specifically mandates the development and adoption of plans for responsible soil use and management to achieve sustainable production. Thus far, 30 such plans have been developed based on science and taking into account the needs and views of land-holders. Legislation with a similar purpose is also in place in Chile. Mr. Gonzalez described a number of laws intended to manage soil as a rare commodity including interim laws on sustainability as well as a law to subsidize investments in sustainable land management and a law to subsidize the planting of trees.

Overall, all panelists and discussants agreed that soil is an important and often undervalued asset. Mr. Leu referred to soil, Earth and land as Pachamama (our mother). During the discussions the suggestion was made that soil should not be considered as a natural resource, which implies that it should be used, but rather as natural capital, implying that it should be preserved.

Moving forward, additional work is needed to disseminate scientific information, including traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. A wide variety of technologies exist and a number of initiatives are in place. As emphasized by Dr. Luca Montanarella, European Commission-Joint Research Centre, it is important to ensure that existing projects and programs are developed and implemented in synergy with each other and within the range of complementary international policies in place, including the three Rio Conventions.

Panel 3: Economics of Land Degradation

Dr. Sergio Zelaya, Coordinator, Policy for Advocacy on Global Issues, UNCCD chaired the panel discussion on the Economics of Land Degradation.
Mr. Blessing Manale, Deputy Director-General, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa, focused his presentation on South Africa’s efforts in achieving a green economy through sustainable land management. He said land that is degraded is a loss for social and economic development and for the environment. Sustainable land use and management can foster food security, job creation and improve quality of life and should therefore be the framework for sustainable development and the fight against desertification.

He said since South Africa became a Party of the UNCCD in 1995, the UNCCD has framed all of South Africa’s interventions on land. For instance, South Africa has successfully implemented a programme on land care, which includes measures in the fields of encroachment, agriculture, livestock and fostering sustainable land use and management. Land care means supporting sustainable land use. He said the Land Bank, which has been established in South Africa, needs to focus more on land itself. Currently the bank is mainly seen as an agricultural bank. Drawing attention to the September 2011 UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on desertification and UNCCD COP10, Mr. Manale said he sees some movement in the international community when it comes to land and soil. Therefore, it is even more important that Rio+20 becomes a success for the Rio Conventions and the outcome document takes into account land productivity and soil health as an important issue of sustainable development and the green economy. Target setting and the creation of market mechanisms are important parts of this agreement, which needs to set the framework for sufficient financing, quick money and indicators development in order to allow for land to provide sustainable income.
Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Director Division of Environmental Policy Implementation at UNEP, introduced the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative and started his intervention by admitting that economics do in many cases come with a negative connotation. In general, communities who live in drylands are happy to live there, even though it is not an easy life, for example, due to drought and poverty. However, drylands are productive if managed in a sustainable way, especially if dryland pastoralists adapted integrated ecosystem approaches that take into account the carrying capacity of the land. However, in some cases the use of land in drylands is unsustainable. For instance, intensive farming is not adapted to dryland ecosystems because it uses up the available water resources. The latter case clearly shows the negative aspects of economies and investments. Nevertheless, economics of land degradation in arid areas is an important issue. Among the existing challenges are that land is not valued and wrong investment incentives are degrading land. Many countries invest in irrigated agriculture instead of pastoralism in the drylands. Apart from halting land degradation, it is possible to restore one billion hectare of degraded land around the world and at the same time create jobs, sequester carbon and increase access to water. Land restoration also contributes to climate change adaption. It is important to note that long-term investments are needed, and that national capital and investments in turn need to take into account the ecological capacity of drylands. Opportunities for synergies in funding, e.g. for energy production in drylands (solar) should be looked at more closely. In the operationalization of ELD, he urged taking into consideration initiatives like The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), which has already developed a methodology that can also be used in valuing land.

Dr. Luca Montanarella SOIL Action Leader, Joint Research Centre, European Commission, presented on the economic implications of protecting soil functions. Soil functions provide services for ecosystems and people. These functions include the production of biomass, especially in agriculture, provision of clean drinking water, an intact biodiversity pool that needs
to be valued and protected, infrastructure and housing and a carbon pool as well as a memory of our history to protect. Soil functions provide soil ecosystem services that are in competition with each other. Therefore, we have to make choices as we cannot use all services at the same time. But what is the economic benefit of improving soil protection in the EU? One measure is to cost the loss of 115 million ha of land to water erosion and 42 million ha to wind erosion. Lastly, he announced that a new version of the World Atlas of Desertification will be launched next year.

**Mr. Kook-Hyun Moon, Chair, Sustainable Land Management Business Forum**, addressed how the business community can respond to ELD. He said existing problems cannot be solved by governments and civil society alone; the involvement of the business community is necessary. In Korea, the business community has successfully initiated several campaigns on sustainable land and forest management. At the UNCCD COP 10, Korean companies invited other international business leaders and launched a new business forum: The UNCCD SLM business forum.

By 2050, 9 billion people will depend on already scarce land; therefore, urgent action is needed to address imminent food security concerns. The private sector needs to be included in efforts to combat land degradation and to restore land and involved in the pursuit of the goal of a land degradation neutral world. We need a Public-Private-Partnership to combat desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) involving governments, the business community, the civil society and universities, with a focus on measures, technologies and research to create synergies. Synergy development in combating land degradation needs to be done across conventions and sectors.
According to Mr. Andre Leu, President, International Foundation for Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), most agriculture in the world is rain fed. Improving rain fed agriculture is important to soils. In the light of climate change, it is even more important to know how to increase rain fed agriculture while avoiding irrigation. He said that organic agriculture can help in this regard, and land under organic agriculture can even provide higher yields and capture more water than conventional systems.

Best practice examples are available. He highlighted one country in Africa that has extensive drylands but is most vulnerable to irrigation. Thanks to organic agriculture, yields have increased 186% and inputs are appropriate to local soils. He also emphasized the need to increase soil restoration efforts.

Mr. Julien Dominic Publio Dias, Cervejaria Grupo Petropolis Brazil, the discussant for this session asked how pastoralists can produce more food for local communities and make grazing activities compatible. In response, Mr. Thiaw emphasized that arid land ecosystems contain
ecosystems with good grazing results. Pastoralists are very well adapted to dry areas and will even lose productivity if they stop moving the cattle. In contrast, intensive agriculture is not adapted to drylands. From an environmental point of view a combination of pastoralism with agricultural activities in a harmonized way is preferred to increase food production in drylands. Mr. Thiaw further explained that he meant to be provocative regarding the meaning of ELD, arguing he would prefer to name ELD the “Economics of land and desertification.”

Mr. Dias further wondered how we can finance the valuing of land. Currently, many ecosystem services are still not valued and no real mechanism of compensating damages exists. He hoped the question would be addressed by the ELD Initiative and underlined the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders. In response, Dr. Montanarella said when looking into and trying to define the value of land the first option is to look at prices achieved when selling and buying land and the how much can be related to its functions and services? He recalled that the first soil surveys in the EU were done for taxation purposes only. It becomes more difficult when we try to measure the costs of the various degradation processes in the EU as it is difficult to come up with accurate estimates. He agreed that we cannot just reduce everything to economics.

Furthermore, Mr. Dias observed that when it comes to afforestation projects, business actors have more resources than governments, yet most businesses spend money without taking environmental concerns into account. If this money is spent taking social and environmental concerns into account, there would be a lot to invest in SLM. Mr. Moon took this opportunity to further stress the importance of food security in preventing land degradation. In Republic of Korea, people devastated land due to a lack of energy and food security.

Mr. John Soussan, OSLO Consortium, said in the valuation of land, engagement with the business community and national governments are necessary in order to get an investment fund established. Still, he urged keeping in mind that investing in land will compete with other potential areas of investments. We need to take these issues very seriously, not just the economics, but land more generally. He added that it is of upmost importance to move from land degradation to land and soil restoration practices. Civil society organizations are already promoting practices of restoration including reforestation, pro-poor investments and marketing. He called on the Convention to build on existing experiences, especially the ones from civil society organizations. He emphasized the importance of linking people to the land as they then cares about it. In this regard he called for a move from “agriculture” to “agribusiness”.
Closing and summary of the daytime session

A representative of each of the sessions presented the outcomes of their panel’s discussion. **Mr. Luc Gnacadja**, Executive Secretary, UNCCD, chaired this session.

**Dr. Knut Ehlers**, on behalf of the President, UBA, reported that the round-table session basically focused on three questions:

- Why do we need to set a net degradation target? There is a need to fight climate change, reduce the loss of biodiversity and to stop the vicious cycle of poverty and land degradation in order to reach the MDG 1.

- When is this target reached? Speakers emphasized that, the target will be realized when land degradation and land restoration are at least in balance. This calls for a strong set of indicators.

- How can the target be achieved? Most of all a greater effort to transfer readily available knowledge into action is needed.

The discussion made clear that we cannot afford to keep losing 12 million ha of land per year and that reaching the zero net land degradation targets is possible.
Reporting on the outcomes of Session 2, Mr. Luca Marmo, Environment Directorate-General, European Commission, summarized the highlights on Global Soil Partnership:

• The role of soil and the global soil partnership: the ambition is to bring together the three Rio Conventions in so far as they relate to soil.

• With regards to soil, we know many actions that work; we just need to implement them to address soil degradation processes that are measurable and ongoing.

• We need to shift our awareness and understanding of soil especially among policy makers and those who see soil as a resource to be exploited.

• We need to address all soils not just biodiversity, soil carbon or drylands. Although this is where the resources are being focused these are not the only places where the problems lie.
Dr. Sergio Zelaya, Coordinator, Policy Advocacy on Global and Emerging Issues, UNCCD, presented the highlights of the last session. He said emphasis was placed on:

• Market-based mechanisms with targets and indicators to identify financing opportunities.

• The need to focus on opportunities for synergies in funding and benefits, including through looking at the economics of land and land degradation and associated opportunities such as job creation.

• The fact that a number of methodologies already exist, for example, TEEB.

• The benefits of focusing on soil functions and the costs of losing such functions.

• An overarching that enhancing soil anywhere enhances life everywhere. There is need for a clear decision from Rio + 20 to move the issue from lip service to concrete commitments and where soil is considered as natural capital that cannot be eroded.