

Seminar to Celebrate the World Day to Combat Land Degradation

“Land Has True Value – Invest In It”

June 18 - 12:00 to 13:30, FAO Headquarters

Land/Tenure and Water Technical Networks Seminar

Draft Concept Note and Agenda

Introduction

Globally, over a third of the land surface of the planet is either highly or significantly degraded. This degradation is reflected in significant losses in soil productivity and soil erosion, and the impacts on agricultural production this entails at a time when demand is increasing. In terms of the relationship between soil and agricultural production, it is estimated that good quality farm land the size of a football field is going out of production every 5 seconds due to soil erosion.

The World Day to Combat Land Degradation is meant to underscore the global significance of these challenges, but it is also meant to showcase workable solutions to these challenges. The theme of this year’s event is “land has true value – invest in it”. The event will be co-hosted by the Permanent Representation of the People’s Republic of China and the office of the Deputy Director General for Climate and Natural Resources, FAO.

Investments come from many sectors and can take many forms. In the event this year we will highlight how the private sector is reacting to this challenge, and addressing land degradation within their own business practices. The following countries, companies, organizations, and farmers associations will be invited to speak:

Country Experience: Philippines

Philippines - Secretary, Hon. Emmanuel F. Piñol, Dept. of Agriculture (or his representative - TBD); Philippines has been a regional leader in decentralized approaches to sustainable land management, particularly through the success of devolving authority to local communities and municipalities.

Private sector experience: Elion Resources Group land restoration experience in Inner Mongolia – China

The Kubuqi Desert ecosystem restoration model is a unique approach which has developed proven solutions to desertification and land degradation in this context. Over the past 28 years, immense efforts have been exerted in combating desertification in the Kubuqi Desert, Inner Magnolia (China). To date, more than 6,000 square kilometers of land has been restored¹. The

¹ <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/elion-preventing-desertification-at-the-kubuqi-international-desert-forum-300121225.html>

success in Kubuqi has become a potential model for the global community, in terms of degraded land rehabilitation and addressing climate change.

Financing innovation in the land sector: Rabobank

As an integrated financial institution in the agricultural sector, Rabobank is acutely aware that meeting the growing need for food while reducing environmental pressure is one of the biggest challenges of this century. In 2013, FAO and Rabobank Foundation began a partnership by collaborating on three projects in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Kenya, all oriented to improving smallholder farmers' incomes, access to financial tools and ability to invest in more efficient production of food crops. Building on this initiative, the two institutions are ramping up similar projects in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Representative – National Farmer's Organization

The contribution of farmers and farmer-led organizations are essential to any successful interventions to combat land degradation and creating new investments and innovation in the land sector. This intervention will highlight not only how farmers can benefit from these investments, but are also leading the way in new innovations to reverse land degradation and maintain sustainable agricultural production.

(Burkina Faso – TBD)

The Global Mechanism – UNCCD

The Global Mechanism of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification was established to help support countries in translating the Convention into action, and achieving Land Degradation Neutrality at the national level. The Global Mechanism is a broker of knowledge, expertise, and advisory services to promote partnerships and demonstrate innovations at the country level, and help develop transformational initiatives to reverse trends in land degradation.

The Seminar to Celebrate the World Day to Combat Land Degradation will:

- Present and discuss the experience in private sector investment in fighting desertification and land degradation.
- Focus on models to scale-out this experience more broadly with both private and public partners.
- Share similar experience from other projects and initiatives supported by FAO and other organizations.
- Explore new partnerships where FAO is able to add value to these investments.

Agenda of the seminar

Activity	Time (min)	Responsibility	Comments
Opening remarks/introduction	5	Ms. Maria-Helena Semedo, FAO Deputy Director General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the seminar and invited guests
Opening remarks/introduction	5	Mr. NIU Dun Permanent Representative People's Republic of China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the innovations in combating land degradation in China • Underscore China's efforts to assist country partners through the Belt and Road Initiative and other programs
Experience and innovation from countries - Philippines	10	Hon. Emmanuel F. Piñol. Secretary Dept. of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight successful country examples where sustainable land management has led to greater and more sustainable investments
Experience and innovation from the private sector - Elion Ecological Company and Elion Desert and Ecological Science and Technology Center	10	Mr. Wang Wenbiao, Chairman, Elion Resources Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the experience of China in fighting desertification and land degradation. • Focus on the potential to scale-out this unique experience to similar geographic regions including the needed tools/resources.
Rabobank Group and Rabobank Foundation	10	Mr. Bas Ruter, Director of Sustainability – TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight agricultural sustainability agenda of Rabobank Group. • Present Rabobank Foundation successes in partnership with FAO
Representative – National Farmer NGO Organization	10	Burkina Faso – TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present experience on the important role of innovative technologies and approaches to support farmer's

			investments in sustainable land management
UNCCD	10	Mr. Juan Carlos Mendoza, Managing Director, UNCCD Global Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the theme of WDCDD, and the unique role of the private sector
Q/A session and discussion	10	Moderator – Eduardo Mansur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator leading Q/A session.
Wrap up and closing	5	Roberto Ridolfi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key take-home messages and closing.