



CHILDREN & THE UNCCD

The Land



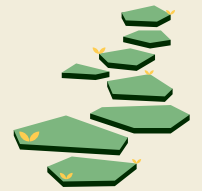
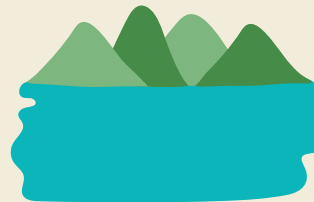


CHILDREN & THE UNCCD

TO YOU THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

We are happy that you are interested in your planet, our planet, Earth, and so want to learn more about it. It is a fascinating planet that is made of many things, such as animals, people, plants, minerals, and so much more. But one of its basic and most important materials is land. The land is beautiful as you can see from the pictures in this book.

And, this land is our land, my land, your land, your neighbours' and your friends' land. To maintain this beauty, we must all take care of this land.



What is the book about?

- A. Trees
- B. Earth
- C. Land
- D. Water

1

But the land is more than just beautiful. It gives us so many things that we cannot live without. That is why we must take care of it. This book is about appreciating and taking care of our precious land so that it will continue to produce all that we need for life, and that our planet will continue to be beautiful.



What is Land?

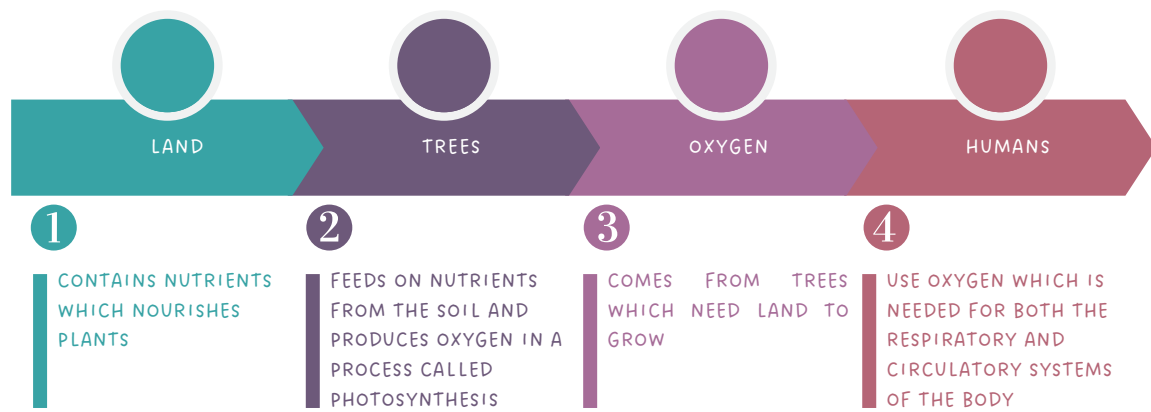
Land is the solid part of the earth's surface, including rocks and mountains. Everything stands on a piece of land generally, including our houses, garages, hospitals, and schools. Can you imagine our lives without land? In this little book, we will be talking about that part of the land which has soil and other resources, and which we need to do activities like farming and growing livestock. We all need to learn more about the importance of land because of all the great things it gives to us. Some of these very important things include:

Oxygen

You know that trees produce our oxygen, but did you know that without oxygen you will only survive for about six minutes? Do you see now how land is connected to us having oxygen? The trees need the land if they are to grow and provide us with oxygen.

- Land is
- A. space
 - B. Large body of water
 - C. solid part of the Earth's surface
 - D. bright shining light

Flow diagram showing the connection between land, trees, oxygen, and humans



Food

Do you realize that apart from fish and the other foods we harvest from the sea, most of our food comes from the land? Yes, from potatoes to cabbages, and bananas to apples all depend on the land. If there was no land with good soils we would not have most of our foods.



Name two examples of important things found on land.

- A. weight
- B. height
- C. food
- D. Mountains

3

Water

Did you know that if you don't drink water in any form you would die in approximately six days? 60% of your body is water, so you must drink enough water to stay alive. And yes, you guessed it, we need the land for our water supply. It provides our watersheds, holds our groundwater, and provides the space for our surface water and reservoirs.



Other Things We Use Land For

If someone gave you a huge piece of land, what would you do with it? Would you build an amusement park, or a huge mansion; or would you use it for something else? How we use our land is a very important decision, for we need land for the three basic things which are necessary for survival: Food, Water, and Oxygen. We use our land for many purposes. What we do with the land is what is called "land use."

Land use is therefore when an area of land is used by people for a specific purpose to meet their wants and needs. It may be used as it naturally exists, like using a lake for swimming and boating. Or the land may be changed so that it can be used for specific purposes, such as chopping down a forest to use the land for agriculture. Land use is the result of our decision to do or not to do something with it, for example, we can let the trees on a piece of land grow like wild forest.

Which of these we use land for?

- A. Farming
- B. Writing
- C. Dreaming
- D. Building

4

So how do we use land, let's take a look

There are five main types of land use: residential, agricultural, recreational, to enable transportation, and commercial.

Residential

What type of home do you live in? Whether it is an apartment, townhouse, or another type of dwelling, the land that buildings stand on is being used for residential purposes, meaning the land is used to provide space for people to put their homes.

Agricultural

Do you live on a farm, or have you visited one? Land used to produce food for humans and animals such as fruits, vegetables, and livestock that gives us meat, milk, eggs, and more is called agricultural land. Next time you eat your favourite meal, remember that agricultural land use made it possible. Every country in the world uses some of its land for agriculture. Can you name some foods your country produces?



Which of the following includes the three main uses of land

- A. Recreational, Transportation, Residential
- B. Sailing, fishing, swimming
- C. Flying, writing,

5

What do you find on a farm

- A Plants
- B Malls
- C Shops
- D Ocean

6

Recreational

Some of you like to go swimming or hiking for sure. Probably you like playing cricket or football. If you do, these activities are possible thanks to recreational land use, where there is space for people to relax, do sports, exercise, play games, or take walks. Many times the use of land for recreation does not require a change in its natural features, for example swimming in natural lakes.



Land use for transportation and commercial activities

For you to get to school and your parents to work and other places, you and they use roads or streets whether you are walking, or traveling by bus, car, or bicycle. These roads and streets are constructed on land, but so too are businesses such as shops, supermarkets, stores, and vegetable markets. Most things that require some physical space need land. This is why we must be careful in how we treat and use our land.



Land sustains our life

Because land is so important to most of what we do, it is very necessary to our lives. Our planet, Earth is very different from all the others we know about because it sustains our lives. This it can do because it has water, oxygen, and land. All three are connected one with the other as you can see from the pictures shown here.



What is the name of our Planet?

- A. Mercury
- B. Minerals
- C. Jupiter
- D. Earth

7

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR LAND



We carry out many activities on the land, and sometimes, some of these activities can seriously damage our land. This is one reason why we must all work together to protect the lands of our planet. Whether you are a child in Africa, America, Asia, Australia, or Europe, wherever you live, we all share the same planet, planet Earth. This is our common home and we must work together to protect its resources, one of which is land.

There are areas of our planet where we have very good land. There are places where some of these very good lands are being made bad because of the way we use them. This is not good for the future of our planet. We therefore must do something to stop this and to improve our lands. But while these lands are still rather good, there are other lands which are of bad quality, unable to grow food and support animals as they should. Because these lands are in a worse condition, we need to pay special attention to them. What lands are these?

Desertification

When good land goes bad

When land which once produced food and supported livestock stop being able to do so, we say it has become unproductive. This process is called land degradation, and when land degradation becomes very serious the land then becomes very dry and begins to look like lands in a desert, this process is called desertification. Therefore, desertification is actually very serious land degradation. Desertification affects many areas of our planet. Do you know what is the difference between deserts and desertification?



HEALTHY / PRODUCTIVE LAND

UNHEALTHY / DESERTIFIED LAND

Which of the following may happen when there is no rain for a long time?

- A. Flooding
- B. Hurricane
- C. Drought
- D. Earthquake

8

Desertification is

- A. The planting of crops
- B. Use of organic fertilizers
- C. Cutting down of trees
- D. Severe degradation of land.

9

Desertification

Causes of Desertification

Desertification is the result of many factors, so what are some of these?

Have you heard of climate change or global warming; no?

When there is a long-term change in the weather pattern of a region of our planet, or the planet as a whole, this is called climate change. This means among other things that the usual or normal weather is disrupted. Climate change has many bad effects, for example, in naturally dry areas, climate change can cause droughts to be longer and floods to be more dangerous and so have greater bad effects on plant, animal, and human life.



AREAS AFFECTED BY DROUGHTS & FLOODS

Which of these could help us protect our land

- A. Plant cover crops
- B. Regularly cutting down trees
- C. Extracting natural resources
- D. Use fertilizers to farm

10

CAUSES OF DESERTIFICATION

Bad uses of the land

As we now know, land can become degraded, because of how we humans use it. Our bad use or mismanagement of land happens in different ways, through our different practices. Here are some of those bad practices:

Overgrazing of animals

Animal husbandry and therefore grazing is very important in many societies not only for meat and milk but for such things as wool, the manufacture of leather, and more. Sometimes, there are too many animals grazing on very limited land. This leads to overgrazing which then damages the land severely, sometimes to the point where desertification is the result, making the land less productive, or not productive at all. Grazing must therefore be done bearing in mind the size and the condition of the land.

Poor farming practices

Farming for the production of food, otherwise called agriculture is necessary, for without food we cannot live. This is why most societies use a portion of their land for agriculture. However, we don't always do agriculture the right way. We sometimes plant crops where they are not best suited; we do not allow the land to rest; or we sometimes put too much or the wrong fertilizers and chemicals into the soil. These wrong practices we must change if we are to protect our land.

Describe land degradation

- A. When productive land becomes unproductive
- B. Good Use of the land
- C. Using land for transportation
- D. Recreation

11

What are some of the things we should do to curb pollution?

- A. Encourage the Use of gas-consuming cars
- B. Burn plastics
- C. Plant more trees
- D. Use organic fertilizers

12

CAUSES OF DESERTIFICATION

Deforestation

Most countries have some forests, and some countries have very large forests indeed. These forests are important not only because they are the reserves of trees. They are home to many animals and other living things, providing their food and shelter. Forests also provide us with timber, much of our oxygen, and other important resources.

The forests play a great role in maintaining the fertility of the soil by providing cover for the land from excess sunshine and rain. The roots of the trees keep the soil together and so help prevent soil erosion. The forest is therefore very important for the protection of the land, so we must do what we can to stop deforestation, which is the destruction or decrease in the amount of forest we have.



FOREST

DEFORESTATION

Which of these activities damages our land?

- A. Cutting down trees
- B. Air pollution
- C. Playing football
- D. Swimming

13

Which of these may cause desertification?

- A. Plenty food
- B. A lot of trees
- C. Deforestation
- D. Flowers

14

CAUSES OF DESERTIFICATION

Use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides

In agriculture, we use artificial fertilizers to increase the production of crops and get better harvests. We sometimes use weedicides, herbicides, pesticides, and other chemical substances, many of which are very harmful to our land. They poison many of the living organisms in the soil making our land poorer which could then lead to desertification where the land is no longer able to support the growth of plants and provide food for humans and animals. It is therefore always better for us to use natural fertilizers in our farming.



Which of these can cause land degradation?

- A. Use of organic manure
- B. Planting cover crops
- C. Water logging
- D. Chemical contamination of the soil

15

Which of these may be caused by degradation?

- A. Extinction of trees if they are not replaced
- B. Soil which cannot grow plants
- C. Animals get plenty of food
- D. Shortage of food

16

CAUSES OF DESERTIFICATION

Soil Erosion & Landslide

When the top layer of soil is washed, blown, or carried away, this is referred to as soil erosion. This is caused by the forces of nature such as water and wind, but is also caused by the behavior of human beings. This also results in land degradation and desertification.

A landslide is generally a sudden movement of the soil/land down a slope due to the force of gravity. This happens in hilly/mountainous regions and can be due to different factors including the land becoming soaked by too much rain, or by earth movement. Humans do contribute to the causes of landslides through such activities as deforesting hilly and mountainous areas, exposing them to rain; by excessive mining in hilly areas, and improper infrastructure development. Landslides also lead to land degradation.

There are other kinds of land degradation such as waterlogging, chemical contamination, acidification, salination and more. Land degradation and desertification can often be the results of a combination of two or more of these factors, which then lead to the loss of soil, vegetation, other biological diversity, and the soil's ability to retain water.



LAND SLIDE

SOIL EROSION

What is soil erosion?

- A. It is the process in which the quality of something is destroyed
- B. Is the interaction of agriculture and trees, including the agricultural Use of trees
- C. It is the planting of trees
- D. It is when the top layer of soil is washed, blown or carried away

CONSEQUENCES OF LAND DEGRADATION & DESERTIFICATION

Now that we know a bit about land degradation and desertification, let's take a look at some of the main problems they cause. What do you think some of these might be?

The first and main thing that happens is that the soil loses its fertility, that is its ability to grow crops. From this come many other problems including:



Many plants and crops will grow poorly or stop growing altogether.



Animals suffer and die because of a lack of food.



The balance in nature is completely disturbed as insects, plants, and animals which all play their role in maintaining this balance die out leading to a serious decrease in biodiversity. This affects us human beings as we are part of nature and depend on this balance for a healthy existence.



When the land is severely degraded, it could lead to a shortage of: food for plants, which get it from the soil; food for animals that eat plants and other animals; and food for people. If land degradation becomes even more serious, there could be famine causing the deaths of many people.

What would you advise people to recycle?

- A. Food
- B. Toys and plastic
- C. Paper
- D. Plants

18

CONSEQUENCES OF LAND DEGRADATION & DESERTIFICATION



A grain of wheat travels a long journey to becoming part of a bun on your dining table. It is grown by farmers, transported by drivers from the farm to the factory to make flour, and then bought by confectioners to bake bread.

Let's imagine that there is nothing to sell now because the soil can grow no wheat. The farmers, drivers, and confectioners can all be unemployed, and everyone and everything gets worse; people become poorer, the economy is seriously affected, and you have no bun to eat!



Food is a basic necessity for all living things. Once food becomes scarce in the area we live, those who can move to other areas of their country or other countries will do so. Animals also move to other food sources. This behavior is called migration. Plants wither and die because they cannot move. When there is a large movement of animals and or people, this is called mass migration, which can sometimes lead to conflicts over food and other resources.

Approximately how much percent of the human bodies is water

- A. 100%
- B. 75%
- C. 20%
- D. 60%

19

Desertification can affect:

- A. Our food supply
- B. The health of plants
- C. Our water supply
- D. Our tall buildings

20

THE WORLD COMES TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR LANDS

To help protect the lands of our planet, the nations of the world decided they needed to agree on what they should do individually, in groups, and altogether to save the land. They began a process to fight against the loss of good land globally, and so created the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, UNCCD to use its acronym. But what is the UNCCD? What does it do? And how does it work? These are all questions you rightfully have, so let's discuss a little about these then.

THE STORY OF THE UNCCD

Once upon a time, around 1970, There was a great drought in a place called the SAHEL in Africa. The land became bare, the plants died, and so did a lot of people and animals. This was a tragedy, and The United Nation developed a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, but it didn't work well. Therefore, in 1992 they decided to create a convention, which will be a legal agreement between countries where they will commit to working together to fight land degradation and desertification. That's how the UNCCD came into being.

THE UNCCD TODAY

There are 195 countries that are members of the UNCCD. The African Union and the European Union are also members. It has a secretariat in Bonn Germany, and Regional Liaison offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Turkey. This Secretariat is responsible for the daily administration of the UNCCD affairs.

Main bodies

There are three main bodies where all the representatives of the countries meet. These countries are called Parties, and their representatives meet to have discussions and take decisions, these are:

1. The Conference of the Parties which is the most powerful body.
2. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation Convention, which reviews how the process is working.
3. The Committee on Science and Technology which gives advice about the science and technology that can be used to deal with land degradation and Desertification.

What is the function of UNCCD?

- A. Donate food
- B. Plant trees
- C. Develop strategies for fighting desertification
- D. Travel the world

THE WORK OF THE UNCCD

Through the UNCCD process, the Parties work in various ways to reduce the amount of land degradation/desertification taking place across the globe, and to solve the problems they cause. Some of the actions they undertake include:

- Individual countries develop the National Action Programmes to combat land degradation/desertification.
- Countries of various subregions and regions develop sub-regional and regional action programmes to combat land degradation and desertification.
- Parties cooperate on scientific and technological methods to deal with land degradation/desertification.
- Countries do awareness raising, training, and general education on land issues.
- Working together to ensure that whatever we do now and in the future, we do not damage anymore of our good land in anyway. This is generally called Land Degradation Neutrality.

Which years did the drought in the Sahel happen?

- A. 2020s
- B. 1950s
- C. 1998s
- D. 1970s

22

1How many countries are members of UNCCD?

- A. 18
- B. 2000
- C. 195
- D. 350

23

How many bodies does UNCCD have where all the countries can meet?

- A. 10
- B. 15
- C. 45
- D. 3

24

Why are forests important?

- A. Trees are cut to make space for farmland and to supply charcoal.
- B. Forests are used to harm the environment and endanger animals and plant species.
- C. They can cause deforestation
- D. Forests are used to prevent soil erosion, prevent soil from sunrays and clean the air we breathe

25

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ASKED

1	C	2	D
3	C	4	C,D
5	A,D	6	A
7	A	8	C
9	A,B	10	A
11	D	12	A
13	A	14	C
15	A	16	C
17	B	18	B
19	B	20	C
21	D	22	D
23	C	24	D
25	D		