



Land Degradation

Land degradation otherwise known as the loss of the productive capacity of soils is a global challenge that affects both developed and developing countries. As the global population continues to increase, so does the demand for land to produce food. Land degradation has profound consequences for food and water security, poverty, mass migrations, and increased vulnerability of affected areas to climate change. Recent estimates show that over 99.7 percent of our calories is produced by land but globally, 23 percent of land is no longer productive and 75 percent has been transformed. The pace at which this conversion is taking place is alarming and threatens the very foundation that supports our existence. In the last 6-7 decades, more than 35 percent of farming land has been degraded due to human induced activities. Notable drivers of land degradation particularly in Africa include mining, infrastructure and urban expansion, fuelwood collection, charcoal production, excessive use of chemical fertilizers, illegal logging, overgrazing of forested landscapes, etc. To cater for the global population which is projected to reach ten billion by 2050, an extra 593 million hectares of agricultural land will be required. If land conversion for agriculture continues at the current rate, only 10 per cent of land will be left in its natural state by 2050. This is a barrier to sustainable development.

Facts and Figures:

- The wellbeing of more than 3.2 billion people has been affected by land degradation.
- Nearly 12 million hectares of land are degraded annually, with more than 40 percent of the worst cases in Africa.
- With over 1.3 billion people trapped in areas with degraded agricultural land, the impact on small scale farming which is the predominant occupation is severe. Farmers in these areas have limited options for alternative sources of livelihoods.
- By 2050, the severity of land degradation and climate change is predicted to reduce global crop yields by an average of 10 percent and up to 50 percent in some regions.
- The global community is losing up to 5 percent of potential agricultural GDP due to land degradation. This is equivalent to USD 490 billion per year in lost income.
- Sustainable land management and restoration can generate up to USD1.4 trillion per year of economic benefits and this is an indication that investments in land restoration and rehabilitation to meet food production and economic growth demands will be key to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Actions around the world:

- An Impact Investment Fund for Land Degradation Neutrality: [Learn more](#)
- Best practices in sustainable land management: [Learn more](#)
- How Nuclear Techniques are being used to control erosion and land Degradation in Madagascar: [Learn more](#)
- Land Degradation Neutrality. Why it matters, how it's done: [Watch now](#)