

Quick Facts on Drylands, Deserts, Desertification and Land Degradation

Open Value of Drylands for Livelihoods configuration options

Value of Drylands for Livelihoods¹

- Over 2 billion people live in the world's deserts and drylands
- 46% of global carbon is stored in drylands
- 44% of all cultivated systems is in drylands
- 30% of all cultivated plants came from drylands

Improvements²

- 16% of degraded land was improved in 1981-2003
- 43% was in rangelands
- 18% was cropland

Impact of Desertification and Land Degradation³

- 24% of the land, globally, is degrading
- 167 countries affected by desertification
- 28-27 billion tons of fertile soil is lost every year
- 12 million hectares of land, an area the size of Benin, are lost every year
- Land lost could produce 20 million tons of grain

Drivers of Desertification and Land Degradation

- There is no direct cause and effect in the process of land degradation in the drylands. The drivers of desertification interact in complex ways. They change over time and vary by location
- Direct drivers are climatic, especially low soil moisture, rainfall patterns and evaporation
- Indirect drivers are mostly human derived, and include poverty, technology used, global and local market trends and sociopolitical dynamics. Poverty is both a cause and consequence of land degradation

Solutions

- Applying sustainable land management practices to combat desertification and to recover and rehabilitate land; soil, water and vegetation
- Sustainable land management refers to the multi-functional use of land, and is contrasted to mono-functional land uses
- The application of SLM has been shown to increase yields by between 30-170%

¹ All data from 2005 *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* otherwise clarified

² Data from 2010, GEF-STAP, *New Science, New Opportunities for GEF-5 and Beyond*. Report to the 4th General Assembly.