



10<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative, the partners of the Initiative are pleased to invite you to the official launch and presentation of the ELD reports, during the 70<sup>th</sup> UN Summit on **24<sup>th</sup> September, UN headquarters (Conference Room: 7) in New York.**

The ELD Initiative highlights and facilitates discussions on the economic value of sustainable land management. Land is an underperforming asset in the global economy and land degradation threatens the growing need and availability of fertile lands and land-based ecosystems, and the benefits humanity derives from it. Competition for access to increasingly scarce resources such as healthy and productive soils and water is accelerating, and is further intensified by population pressures, climate change, and resource demands.

The aim of the ELD Initiative is to integrate the economics of land as a fundamental part of policy and private sector decision-making. Research by the Initiative shows that global losses of ecosystem services through land degradation cost between 6.3 and 10.6 trillion USD annually while 1.4 billion USD annually could be gained. Highlighting a great opportunity this also indicates the need to re-align policies and emphasize the economic relevance of terrestrial ecosystems. By increasing awareness about the costs and benefits of land and management choices, more strategic and economically rewarding decisions can be taken by decision makers at all levels.

For example, the adoption of sustainable agroforestry measures in Mali is estimated to create a 13 USD benefit for every dollar invested. This is especially relevant in view of the discussions on the Sustainable Development Goal 15, addressing sustainable land management and a land degradation neutral world in particular.

The presentation of the ELD reports during the 70<sup>th</sup> UN Summit will therefore specifically address actors and senior decision-makers involved in the approval of the Sustainable Development Goal decisions. Keynote Speakers by international high-level speakers will frame discussions on the role of land for economic national prosperity and development in the context of the SDGs.

Please find attached a detailed agenda of the meeting. We sincerely look forward to receiving your confirmation of attendance, and appreciate your time and consideration in advance.

If you have any questions about the event or the ELD Initiative, please contact the ELD Secretariat directly.

Yours Sincerely,

**Achim Steiner**  
UNEP Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

**Monique Barbut**  
Executive Secretary United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

**Stefan Schmitz**  
Commissioner German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

## Agenda

### “Land Solutions: An Economics of Land Degradation Presentation”

24<sup>th</sup> September, New York

10.30h – 13.00h

Venue: *Conference Room 7 - UN headquarters*

<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic/Speaker</i>
10.30h – 11.00h	Opening session and keynote speech The economics of land degradation in the context of the SDGs  Land and Environment for Development  <i>Ibrahim Thiaw (Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP))</i>
11.00h – 11.15h	Why land matters: Food security and the role of productive land to support the SDGs  <i>Stefan Schmitz, Commissioner, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development</i>
11.15h – 11.30h	The need for national and local solutions: How addressing land degradation in the context of climate change adaptation could transform local governance in LDCs  <i>Luc Gnacadja, Special Representative of the LoCAL Programme Board Past Executive Secretary of the UNCCD Former Minister of Environment and Urban Development (Benin)</i>
11.30h – 11.45h	Assessing the value of land: Scientific knowledge as the foundation for sustainable decision making  <i>Robert Costanza (ANU)</i>
11.45h – 12.00h	Addressing the need of decision makers: ELD for policy makers  <i>Stacey Noel (SEI International) and Richard Thomas (CGIAR-ICARDA)</i>
12.00h – 12.45h	Panel discussion <i>Topic: Land in the SDGs beyond SDG 15.3</i> <i>Speakers: Ibrahim Thiaw, Richard Thomas, Stefan Schmitz, Anne Juepner (UNDP) Naoko Ishii(GEF), Pavan Sukhdev (GIST), Omar Ramirez (Dominican Republic)</i>
12.45h – 13.00h	Closing remarks