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## 8 RESTORING DEGRADED LAND

### IMPORTANCE

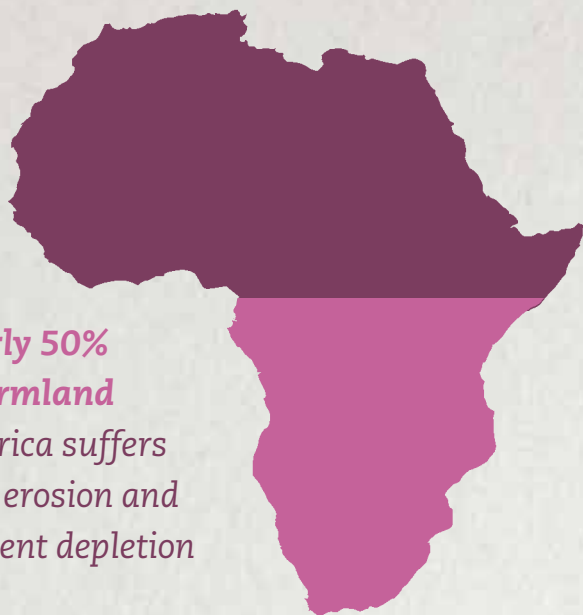
Land is becoming increasingly scarce and degraded in many areas of the world, threatening food production, water supplies, livelihoods and climate resilience. We are literally losing the ground beneath our feet.

### PROBLEM

Land can be restored, and agricultural and livestock production increased, using known technologies. However, powerful institutional and economic constraints limit adoption, and the unsustainable intensification of agricultural and livestock production undermines recovery, biodiversity and income equity. Decisions increasingly must be made between competing land uses, and short-term and long-term benefits.

“Land has been perceived as a resource that can be freely degraded. We need to move towards an understanding of land as natural capital and an important foundation for poverty alleviation.”

LUC GNACADJA, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE U.N. CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION



**Nearly 50%  
of farmland  
in Africa suffers  
from erosion and  
nutrient depletion**

**One-fourth of the world's surface  
is already degraded and 24 billion tons  
of soil are lost to erosion every year**



## WHAT WLE IS DOING

WLE provides evidence of where, how, why, and how much to invest in degraded areas. This evidence can be used to design restoration programs, monitor progress and recommend policy changes. WLE's farm-level interventions are integrated within larger ecosystems to balance the needs of households and nations for food, energy, clean water and income. WLE works with farmers to adapt different technologies such as soil fertility and salinity management, and soil and water conservation. WLE uses participatory games, remote sensing and modeling to bring decision-makers together to discuss the costs, benefits and trade-offs of different approaches. For instance, WLE works with The Nature Conservancy in the Tana basin in East Africa – a primary source of water for people, crops, livestock and hydropower – to inform public/private investment in ecosystems. WLE partners engage in the global agenda on land degradation, working closely with the FAO's Global Soil Partnership, the Global Soil Forum, the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative and the new International World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies.

## Expected Outcomes

### By 2017

- ◆ WLE's objective is to reduce land degradation and increase resilience of small scale farming communities in sub-Saharan Africa and other hot spots across the globe. WLE will work with decision makers in at least 6 countries to trial options to rejuvenate ecosystem services, and design programs to restore degraded soils and landscapes.

### By 2025

- ◆ WLE will have influenced the investment of USD 50 million in regenerating degraded agro-ecosystems, benefiting 2 million farmers, 50% of whom are women. These investments will reduce degradation rates by 50% on over 5 million hectares of land. Countries where WLE works will be on track to monitor progress and achieve sustainable development goals on land degradation.

**Sources** Sources Water, Land & Ecosystems, U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, U.N. Environment Program

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