



## The big picture: Landscape Degradation in Africa

- “Over 70 percent of people living in sub-Saharan Africa depend on forests and woodlands for their livelihoods” (UN Environment).
- Africa loses about 2.8 million hectares of forests each year and about 50 million hectares of land are affected by degradation (FAO 2016).
- Temperatures across all African countries are rising faster than the global rate, and in some areas, at double that rate. Since the 1970s, drought frequency and intensity has increased, driving land degradation. Most climate models project that future rainfall variability will increase over most areas (IPBES 2018).
- Estimates indicate that about 20 percent of Africa’s land surface - 6.6 mil. km<sup>2</sup> -- is degraded due to soil erosion, salinization, pollution and loss of vegetation or soil fertility (IPBES 2018).
- “Desertification affects around 45 percent of Africa’s land, with 55 percent of this area at high or very high risk of further degradation” (UNEP 2015).
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 70 percent of households are dependent on wood energy. Up to 90% of the energy households use is from woodfuel, maintaining the drive for deforestation (German Development Institute 2016).
- Overgrazing and over-cultivation lead to the conversion of 351,000 hectares of land into desert each year (UNEP 2015).
- Degrading natural resources reduces employment opportunities for at least 11 million young Africans entering the job market every year. (UNCDD 2018).
- 65 percent of Africa’s cropland is affected by land degradation (UNEP 2015).
- 3 percent of Africa’s gross domestic product is lost annually from soil and nutrient depletion on cropland (AFR100).
- Land degradation in sub-Saharan Africa mainly affects agricultural areas (31 percent of all agricultural land), woodlands/shrublands (28 percent) and grasslands (17 percent) (PROFOR 2011).
- Land degradation is considered a key development challenge in main international conventions such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), the Kyoto Protocol on global climate change (Genesis et al, 2017).
- Over 20 to 30 percent of mangroves in West and Central Africa have been lost over the past 25 years, mainly because of deforestation caused by wood collection to use for cooking fish, urban encroachment, mining, chemical contamination, lack of legislation and climate change (Ajonina et al, 2018).

### Landscape restoration: Potential and successes

- About 14 percent (4 million km<sup>2</sup>) of Africa’s land area is protected, including 6 percent of biodiversity-rich tropical evergreen broadleaf forests. (IPBES 2018).
- Approx. 115 million hectares of land has potential for wide scale forest restoration and 600 million ha

for restoration in both forested and agricultural landscapes. (PROFOR 2011).

- “Forest Landscape Restoration can restore ecosystem services and landscape functionality, boost and stabilize land use productivity and enhance resilience to climate change through the restoration of forests and tree cover outside of forests” (AFR100).
- “More than 20 African countries are committed to restore 100 million hectares of forest landscapes by 2030” through the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative as part of the Bonn Challenge (AFR100).
- By 2030, the Great Green Wall Initiative aims to restore 100 million hectares of currently degraded land, capture 250 million tonnes of carbon and create 10 million jobs in rural areas. At 780 million hectares, the proposed size of the wall, is twice the size of India and would cover an area populated by 232 million inhabitants (UNCCD, 2018).
- In 2018, Action Against Desertification is preparing to restore 18,000 hectares of land in six African countries — Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal (FAO 2017).

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