



GLF AFRICA RESTORING AFRICA'S DRYLANDS

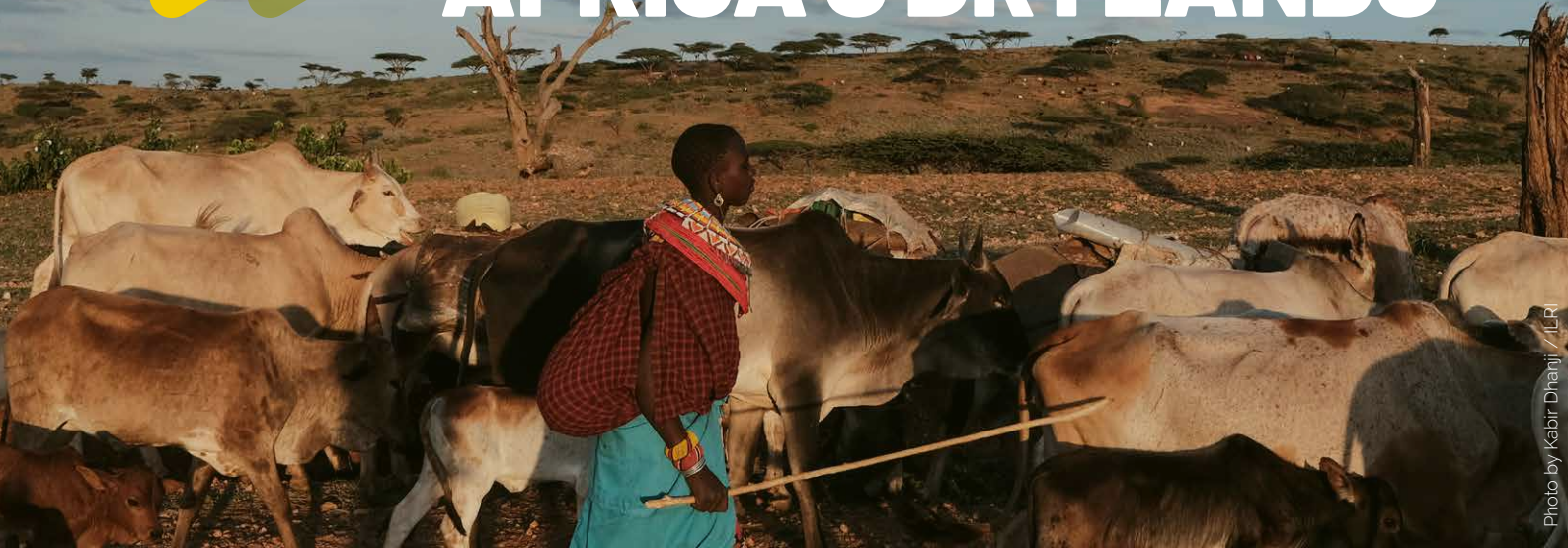


Photo by Kabir Dhanji / IRI

**ACCELERATING
ACTION ON THE
GROUND**

DISCOVER MORE GLF AFRICA 2-3 JUNE 2021

The context

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), almost half of Africa's surface is categorized as drylands. Africa's drylands are home to more than 525 million people building their livelihoods mostly on rainfed agriculture and pastoral or agro-pastoral livestock husbandry. Therefore, restoring Africa's drylands is pivotal to securing food and nutritional security, and contributing to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Africa's drylands harbor productive farmlands and rangelands that sequester carbon, maintain ecological functionality and biodiversity. They provide households with priority products such as energy, water and food, provide youth with income-generating activities, support pastoralist communities with fodder for their livestock and rural and urban dwellers with a variety of ecosystem services including safe and reliable water. Sustainable landscapes are built on resilient livelihoods and stable governance, which are fundamental to regional peace and stability, and offer valid alternatives to out-migration.

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

GLF Africa: Restoring Africa's Drylands will be held in the beginning stages of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**, which runs from 2021 to 2030. The Decade calls on the international community, civil society, businesses, politicians, and individuals to **prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide**. Africa is taking up the challenge and aims to restore at least **100 million hectares of land by 2030**.

This ambitious target contributes towards the African Union Agenda 2063, the Bonn Challenge, the Sustainable Development Goals, UNCCD's Land Degradation Neutrality targets, and other domestic and international targets. If successfully executed, the **AFR100** will make Africa the champion of forest landscape restoration.

Why the drylands?

Based on the Aridity Index, drylands are defined as arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas. They represent about **43 percent of Africa's land surface** and are home to about 50 percent of the continent's population, including a disproportionate share of its poor. Drylands are rich in biodiversity and can host different land use types, such as farmland, rangeland, dryland forest, or for nature conservation. Drylands provide food, fodder, fiber, and fuel, while their soils sequester tons of carbon every year. Drylands provide jobs and livelihoods for millions of people, including a population of young people estimated to reach 1.3 billion by 2030.

They offer great potential for sustainable and equitable development, and the achievement of the SDGs. Capitalizing on global frameworks such as the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and its Land Degradation Neutrality facility (LDN), regional initiatives such as **the Great Green Wall**, AFR100, and a wealth of projects such as the EU-funded **Regreening Africa** program is going to be crucial to realizing AFR100 commitments. Meanwhile, **local, sub-national and national scaling strategies** are needed to restore the vast degraded areas in the drylands and realize their full potential.

However, despite high ambitions, in most African countries landscape degradation continues to outpace landscape restoration efforts. Each year, more natural resources are lost than gained, and more agricultural lands are subject to declining productivity. As a result, more land is converted into farmland, at the expense of natural ecosystems and the services that these bring. Africa's drylands are especially prone to degradation due to intensification of agricultural production, mining, infrastructure development and urbanization, and further exacerbated by climate change. Yet the benefits of taking action against land degradation outweigh the cost by up to seven times. **Research has shown that inaction may cost countries around US\$490 billion per year**, while action to reverse land degradation could generate benefits worth up to US\$1.4 trillion.

The restoration of drylands offers a wealth of opportunities. There is ample evidence that restored farmland, if managed well, contributes to higher yields, enhanced food security, more jobs and higher incomes. Restored grassland and pasture enhances animal and human health, livestock production, and contributes to a revival of rich pastoralist cultures across Africa. Sustainable restoration of drylands, however, requires an integrated approach that takes into consideration its complex socio-political, ecological and economic context. This demands truly coordinated efforts with multiple actors and bundles of actions to restore food systems and value chains, and transform lives. Involving local knowledge-holders such as livestock producers and farmers, pastoralists, youth and elders, civic organizations and local governments in planning, implementing and monitoring restoration efforts is key to success.

COVID-19 impact

Fast action by African governments has prevented some of the extreme health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic seen elsewhere. Yet, the fragile economies of Africa's drylands have been among those hardest hit by the direct and indirect impact of the pandemic. According to **FAO**, the countries suffering most have faced a 30-50 percent decline in livestock exports, sharp declines in external remittance flows, an increase of 20-50 percent in imported food prices and a breaking-down of valuable agricultural supply chains. The threat of famine has reappeared, and restoration is therefore even more essential. "The lessons from the 2014 Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa are clear," says FAO. "While health needs are an urgent and primary concern, we cannot neglect livelihoods and food security-related impacts, or we will face a food crisis within the health crisis."



Restoration can only succeed by involving communities and giving them the chance to use their traditional knowledge.



Daniel Kobei
 Founder of the Ogiek Peoples' Development Program
 @ GLF Nairobi 2018

What the GLF Africa conference aims to achieve

The 2021 GLF Africa conference will focus on existing practices in dryland restoration, and identify the best ways for scaling these up. GLF is convening a global dialogue to leverage the evidence, build partnerships, spread innovative propositions, and generate support to help to make the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration a success. During the conference, GLF and partners will address the need for an integrative approach to landscape restoration, to achieve productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient landscapes and ecosystems across the continent, starting with Africa's drylands and their huge potential.

To achieve all of this, GLF will build upon its successful **One World - One Health conference**, which demonstrated how interdisciplinarity can successfully attain optimal health for people, animals and the environment. There is plenty of collective experience with drylands restoration, as there are many local and regional partners interested in sharing their successful practices and wishing to co-invest.

The GLF Africa conference will also highlight and build on the many successful regional local initiatives, while also focusing on the value of, learning from and addressing, the challenges that are inherent to multifunctional landscape approaches. These challenges include: a persistent prejudice towards viewing pastoralism as a problem instead of an opportunity; continuous claims and conflict around grazing zones and pastoralist corridors; landscape fragmentation by national and sectoral boundaries hampering integrated action; and poorly designed business and investment models leading to competition over land and water resources.

Proposed conference objectives and themes

GLF Africa aims to provide the following:

- **Evidence** that dryland restoration can be successful, if carefully designed and implemented in a coherent and participatory manner.
- **Deeper insights** into the knowledge gaps, the technical and institutional hindrances, and the misleading paradigms that hamper progress on the ground.
- **Practical guidance** to public and private actors supporting dryland restoration, to accelerate action on the ground.
- **A solid set of policy recommendations** to inform the strategic design and implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and adjacent policy frameworks on dryland restoration in Africa.



Indigenous women's rights cannot be separated from the rights of their communities. Realizing the land rights of women is realizing the land rights of the community.



Milka Chepkorir
Member of the Sengwer Indigenous group in Kenya and representative of the Forest Peoples Programme
@ GLF Nairobi 2018



When talking about the private sector, we cannot forget about the small actors; farmers' cooperatives are key partners at the field level in influencing communities.



Hiwot Workagegnehu Tafere
Senior Advisor, German Development Cooperation (GIZ), Ethiopia
@ GLF Nairobi 2018

The specific conference themes will be defined by partners and participants through a transparent process of co-creation and agenda-setting during the coming months, and will feature the following:

Showcasing successful restoration practice and technologies:

- What defines success for locally practiced technologies, such as farmer- managed natural regeneration, rangeland improvement, improved rainfed and climate-effective approaches such as agropastoralism and agro-ecology?
- Where do these technologies work well, and who benefits from the results?

Measuring success:

- How can we measure, monitor, report and evaluate successful ecosystem restoration, and how do we harmonize the currently fragmented measurement and policy instruments, to show that drylands can be successfully restored?
- How can satellite imagery and remote sensing techniques help to prove that restoration works?

Thinking about scale:

- What is needed to scale many locally owned and successful restoration models to larger geographies and regional and country policies? What would be the role of regional bodies and policy networks in this?
- How can smartly designed financial products assist in bringing local successes to a higher level of implementation?

Access and ownership of farmland, grazing land and trees:

- Who actually owns Africa's land, and who controls access to and use of natural resources such as grass, water, land and trees? What about land tenure regimes, and how do these relate to transhumance networks and corridors for free passage of livestock?

- What is the role of foreign direct investment in land use, and how can we address the complicated issues surrounding 'land grabbing'?

Full inclusion of women and youth:

- What is the position of women and youth in land, water and tree tenure/rights, and how can the next generation of African farmers and pastoralists be assured they will have quality land and resources?
- How can women and youth be the game changers for sustainable and inclusive land use in Africa's future?

Novel landscape arrangements and partnerships:

- Across Africa, novel landscape initiatives and partnerships are emerging. How well are these initiatives and partnerships in restoration policy design and implementation?

Restoration business and finance:

- Restoration is increasingly considered a business venture, from small start-ups to large business investments in land rehabilitation and commodity chains. What is the best process to ensure that restoration business is built on consensus amongst different land users at play?
- What is the role of remittances in creating green economic opportunities and green jobs, especially for Africa's growing youth population?

Restoration education for all:

- Capacity development of all actors is vital to ensure success. How to ensure that all actors have access to the professional skills that they need to successfully restore?
- Which capacities are needed for successful restoration, and what could be the best mechanism to make these capacities available for those in need?

Regional initiatives spotlighted

Expect conversations on a new phase of the **Great Green Wall** for the Sahel and the Sahara Initiative, including a program for restoration of 100 million hectares of degraded land while creating 10 million green jobs by 2030. The Great Green Wall, launched in 2007 by the African Union, aims to develop a 7,000-kilometer barrier stretching from Senegal to Djibouti, to halt creeping desertification via a trans-continental mosaic of green, productive landscapes. The new phase involves US\$16.85 billion in international pledges for development of the Wall, which is just 4 percent complete.

Focusing on capacities is key

Under the multi-party umbrella of GLF's online learning platform, the **Landscape Academy**, a start was made towards enhancing access to online and offline capacity development and education. Building on this, the conference will take steps to more coherent restoration education through formal and informal education worldwide.

The lessons and experiences gathered from on-the-ground stakeholders will be the ingredients for a tailored digital learning journey, which will strengthen the capacities of Africa's youth, together with the Youth in Landscapes initiative (YIL) and partners. **GLFx** will kick-start a new network of independently organized local actors committed to restoring Africa's dry landscapes – to be showcased at the conference and designed to last well beyond the conference itself.

Who is this event for?

GLF Africa aims to change the paradigm, from a story of dramatic degradation to a reality of net positive restoration across Africa and beyond. To this end, GLF Africa is expected to convene more than 5,000 people, including practitioners, farmer organizations, Indigenous Peoples, community leaders, researchers, policymakers, financial investors, global and regional media, private sector, civil society organizations, interest groups, youth groups, activists, conservation and development organizations who are engaged in dryland restoration in Africa. Building on the successful **GLF Accra conference** in Ghana in 2019, it will connect local experience up to the highest levels of global policy making, to bridge the policy-practice divide. Existing knowledge will be shared, discussed and upscaled, while knowledge gaps will be identified and addressed. All of these measures share the ultimate aim of effectively reversing our global history of ecosystem degradation, with its high cost for human livelihoods, climate resilience and regional political stability.

Innovative youth leadership

According to the **United Nations**, people aged 15 to 24 years old represent nearly 20 percent of Africa's population. By 2030, it is expected that the youth population in Africa will reach 1.3 billion. Young people are not only one of the largest demographics in Africa, but also bring the greatest enthusiasm, creativity and potential to innovate. Youth are also among those who are taking the most action, bringing their landscape knowledge and skills into practice, as they are increasingly engaged in shaping a more sustainable world. Therefore, in collaboration with the Youth in Landscapes initiative (YIL), GLF Africa will gather young people before, during and after the event. These activities will nurture intergenerational dialogue on integrated landscape management and governance and explore opportunities to support the development of eco-preneurship and sustainable livelihood options, with a special focus on Africa's drylands.

What is GLFx?

GLFx, a global community by the Global Landscapes Forum, connects people to projects, incubates or accelerates initiatives, and enables knowledge sharing with a focus on improving landscapes from the ground up. Members join **independently organized chapters** that meet locally to take action and **online communities of practice** (CoPs) to share knowledge and learnings.



We're beginning to see young people across the world really lobbying and advocating for change in their communities. They're saying, 'You're either with us, or just get out of our way.'



Musonda Xoliswa Mumba
Director, Rome Centre for Sustainable Development Nature, Climate and Energy, UNDP
@ GLF Biodiversity 2020



We need to see agriculture as opportunities... opportunities for jobs, for women and closing the gender gap, and for youth particularly.



Amath Pathe Sene
 Environment and Climate Lead for West and Central Africa, UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
 @ GLF Accra 2019

GLF partners, Charter Members and anyone involved in GLF Africa will contribute insights and content and are invited to join the GLF Africa Communications Committee. For more information, please contact **GLF Communications Coordinator:**

Melissa Angel
m.kayeangel@cgiar.org

Ways to participate

The event will be packed with plenaries, interactive sessions, structured networking, virtual tours, documentary screenings, press conferences, private break-out rooms and more. A dedicated media seminar for journalists from across Africa and a social media bootcamp will develop capacity and maximize the reach and impact of the event.

There are multiple ways through which you can participate – by hosting and/or attending plenaries, launchpads and interactive sessions, sponsoring a virtual tour, inspirational talks or Landscape Talks — to name just a few. To learn more, please contact GLF Global Assistant Coordinator **Judith Sonneck** (j.sonneck@cgiar.org).

Digital communications, outreach and engagement: changing the global narrative on drylands

This conference will leverage the communication and digital marketing capacity of GLF and CIFOR-ICRAF, plus 30 **GLF Charter Members**, engaged partners, and the networks of conference speakers and participants to help change the public perception of drylands and bring broader attention to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The building blocks for this narrative include diverse digital and social media campaigns, as well as human stories that bring to life the complex systems of Africa's drylands. All content will be disseminated in English and French to fully engage regional and international audiences, with a focus on attracting and retaining a large audience, specifically in Africa.

16 GLF social media ambassadors will be reporting on the conference live from Senegal to Tanzania, the length of the Great Green Wall. This cohort of young volunteers will use their own channels on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn to spark meaningful conversations on the landscape approach to addressing environmental, social and health challenges. In total, the 2021 social media ambassador program consists of 34 Ambassadors, who hail from 24 different countries across the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia.





You cannot tell people to stop doing what is feeding them if you do not give them an alternative.



Basiru Isa
Representative,
Indigenous Peoples
Major Group
for Sustainable
Development
@ GLF Accra 2019

For any information regarding GLF Sponsorship Packages and Partnership Engagement, please contact **GLF Engagement and Growth Coordinator**:

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A growing global online dialogue

The **2020 Bonn online conference** convened 5,000 people and reached over 50 million people on five continents through social media platforms. Similarly, the **2020 Biodiversity online conference** attracted 5,000 people, with more online participants, virtual meetups and social media reach. By using low bandwidth digital conferencing technology, we will facilitate wide accessibility through mobile devices, to ensure broadest possible participation in GLF Africa by those living in remote or data-poor areas. Through our purposely designed conference platform, participants across Africa will be encouraged to connect, and organize subgroups and pandemic-safe face-to-face meetups wherever they are. This blended format makes for a more inclusive forum, while cutting carbon dioxide and other emissions – in contrast with in-person events.

Sponsorships Opportunities

Over the past eight years, GLF has reached close to 1 billion people across the globe and established itself as the largest forum on integrated and sustainable land-use management. GLF is supported by its **Charter Members**, 30 of the world's leading developmental organizations, including the World Bank, World Wildlife Fund, World Resources Institute, and Rainforest Alliance. Brands that support GLF are associated with a movement that has to date engaged 7,400 entities – international organizations, governments, universities, corporations, and community groups. GLF conferences have been attended by 200,000 participants from 185 countries, and the GLF's youth program has involved more than 60,000 future leaders across the world under the age of 35.

Platinum, gold, silver, and bronze sponsorship packages are available, as well as custom-made and exclusive sponsorships, such as sponsoring a community of practice, a GLFx chapter, a learning product or particular youth activities.

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Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum, having reached almost 1 billion people across the world and with the backing of its founders – the World Bank, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) – is well-placed to facilitate and help guide these discussions and share knowledge in interactive digital spaces, leading the way for the conferences of now and the future.

Charter Members: CIAT, CIFOR, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, EcoAgriculture Partners, EFI, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, ILRI, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, RRI, SAN, UN Environment Programme, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, part of Wageningen Research, WFO, World Agroforestry, World Bank Group, WRI, WWF International, Youth in Landscapes Initiative

Funding partners



Federal Ministry
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