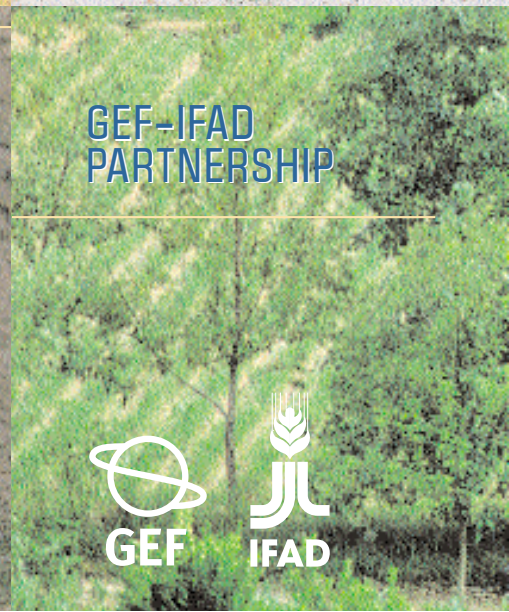
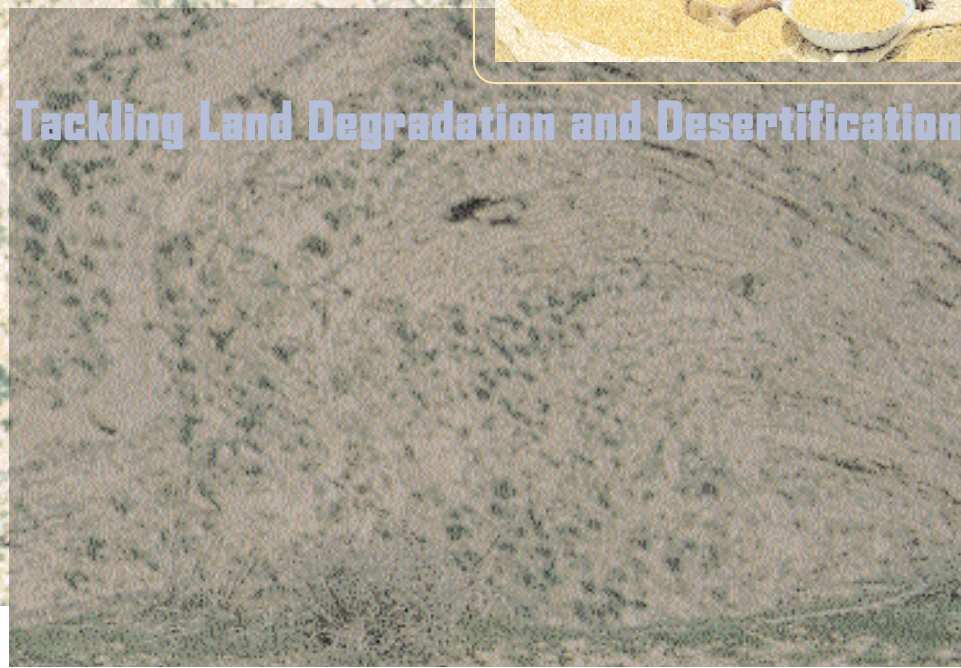


# Tackling Land Degradation and Desertification

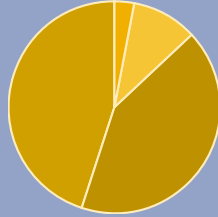


GEF-IFAD  
PARTNERSHIP



### Some figures:

1 035 million hectares (ha), are affected by human-induced soil degradation.  
Of this total:



- 45% is affected by water erosion
- 42% by wind erosion
- 10% by chemical deterioration and
- 3% by physical deterioration of the soil structure

Water erosion is the dominant form of degradation in semi-arid areas and dry sub-humid regions, and wind erosion is dominant in the arid zone.

The largest area affected is in Asia and the Pacific, with about 550 million ha. In Africa, an estimated 500 million ha of land have undergone by soil degradation since about 1950, including 65% of the region's agricultural land. Land degradation affects about 300 million ha of land in Latin America. In Europe, 157 million ha are affected by water and wind erosion alone. In North America, about 95 million ha are affected.

In China alone, between 1957 and 1990, the area of arable land was reduced by an area equal to all the crop land in Denmark, France, Germany and The Netherlands combined, mainly because of land degradation.



## DESERTIFICATION A GLOBAL ISSUE

Desertification\* occurs in drylands, which span a third of the earth's land surface in over 110 countries. It influences the lives of about 500 000 people – the so-called environmental refugees – including many of the world's poorest and most marginalized populations. Each year 12 million hectares (ha) are lost to deserts. That is enough land to grow 20 million tonnes of grain.

Land degradation, in turn, threatens the livelihoods of a billion of earth's inhabitants. Degradation caused by overcultivation, overgrazing, deforestation and inefficient irrigation affects an estimated 20% of the world's drylands, an area as large as China.

Combating desertification, and land degradation more generally, is a war that can be lost, but must be won. Desertification is often the result of human activity and can therefore be prevented or controlled by human effort. Because of its magnitude, desertification is a global issue, and as such can only be addressed through a global partnership. This brochure is about the formation of such a partnership between the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).



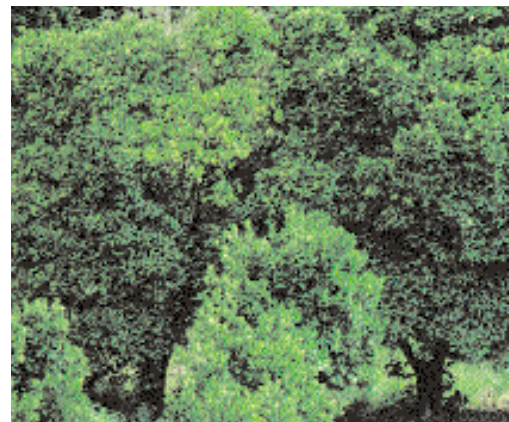
\*The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification defines desertification as "land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities".

## THE GEF-IFAD PARTNERSHIP

Both the GEF and IFAD unequivocally endorse the principle of partnership. They hold that strategic collaboration, linked to a common purpose, broadens the scope and impact of activities to improve the global environment and address land degradation in the context of sustainable development. Through partnerships both organizations can benefit from perspectives and experience beyond their horizons, mobilize additional resources and combine forces to encourage international action to meet global environmental objectives.

Over the past decade, the GEF has established itself as a major catalyst for improving the global environment. It was created to link local and global environmental challenges and national and international efforts to preserve the global environment. The only new funding source to emerge from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, the GEF focuses on biodiversity, climatic change, international waters, ozone depletion, persistent organic pollutants, and preventing and controlling land degradation.

IFAD, for its part, is the one United Nations agency with the exclusive task of reducing poverty and fostering household food security in rural areas. Its defining strengths are the promotion of community-based natural resource management and targeting of the world's poorest people, especially in Africa.



## Soil Degradation by Region in susceptible drylands, 1990s

Million hectares

	Water erosion	Wind erosion	Chemical deterioration	Physical deterioration	Total
<b>North America</b>	38.4	37.8	2.2	1.0	79.4
<b>South America</b>	34.7	26.9	17.0	0.4	79.0
<b>Europe</b>	48.1	38.6	4.1	8.6	99.4
<b>Africa</b>	119.1	159.9	26.5	13.9	319.4
<b>Asia</b>	157.5	153.2	50.2	9.6	370.5
<b>Australasia</b>	69.6	16.0	0.6	1.2	87.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>467.4</b>	<b>432.4</b>	<b>100.7</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>1 035.2</b>

Source: United Nations Environment Programme

## Soil Degradation by Degree in susceptible drylands, 1990s

Million hectares

	Water erosion	Wind erosion	Chemical deterioration	Physical deterioration	Total
<b>Light</b>	175.1	197.2	44.3	10.8	427.3
<b>Moderate</b>	208.5	215.4	31.4	15.0	470.3
<b>Strong</b>	79.0	18.0	24.2	8.9	130.1
<b>Extreme</b>	4.8	1.8	0.8	0.0	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>467.4</b>	<b>432.4</b>	<b>100.7</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>1 035.2</b>

Source: United Nations Environment Programme



As host to the Global Mechanism, which has responsibilities under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), IFAD is uniquely placed to link projects dealing with land degradation, which have global environmental benefits, to poverty reduction and development concerns.

Both the GEF and IFAD have a proven record of innovative, cost-effective and replicable programmes. The GEF's US\$4.2 billion in grants has leveraged US\$11 billion in additional financing, for more than 1 000 projects in 160 developing countries. IFAD's commitment of US\$3.5 billion has supported dryland development and fought land degradation in 115 countries.

Thus, when the GEF Council expanded the opportunities for other agencies to work on GEF projects in 1999, an alliance between the GEF and IFAD was only natural. IFAD has a history of collaboration with two of the GEF's implementing agencies – the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank – and has worked in parallel with the third, the United Nations Environment Programme, on key projects addressing land degradation. The partnership with IFAD will enable the GEF to strengthen its portfolio, to place renewed emphasis on smaller countries in Africa where land degradation is more severe, and to bolster capacity-building efforts for global environmental action. In a world where 90 million more people must be fed every year without destroying the natural resource base on which future food production depends, the GEF-IFAD partnership is a win-win situation.





World Bank

## EXAMPLES OF GEF-IFAD COLLABORATION

**Dealing with degradation in Rwanda.** About half of Rwanda's farmland shows evidence of moderate to severe erosion. Two thirds is acidic and exhausted, but continually cultivated because farmers have nowhere else to go and cannot afford to let their land lie fallow. Partly because of the recent history of genocide, displacement and repatriation, forested areas have been reduced by almost half in less than a decade.

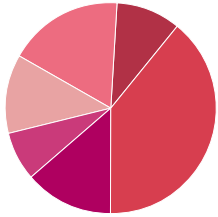
The country's Rural Sector Support Programme will help rehabilitate 4 000 ha of the most severely degraded farmed wetlands – 80% of the total 5 000 ha in need of rehabilitation. With GEF financing, IFAD is helping to create a biodiversity information system that will track changes in the physical, ecological and socio-economic conditions in and around the critical ecosystems where the programme is implemented. Conservation and sustainable use of natural resources will be enhanced through community-based integrated ecosystem management. Such management plays a critical role in rural livelihoods and provides protection for a variety of biological resources of high global value.

**Tackling poverty in Honduras.** Honduras, with 75% of the population living below the poverty line, is the third-poorest country in Latin America. Its extensive rural poverty is mainly the result of the unsustainable use of soil and plant resources, leading to degradation of the ecosystem structure and functions, declining productivity, food insecurity and increased vulnerability to climatic extremes and other phenomena. Policy and legislation prior to the 1990s encouraged deforestation and *de facto* poor soil and water management.

The National Programme for Local Development (PRONADEL) carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture and funded by IFAD and the GEF, aims both to reduce rural poverty and to promote the sustainable management of local natural resources. The programme will pilot integrated ecosystem and watershed management for sustainable rural development in three areas in Honduras. Among its main objectives are carbon sequestration, the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and the protection of national and international hydrological resources in the three areas. The programme will also serve as a model for activities outside protected areas throughout the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, which encompasses Central America and part of Mexico.

## Global Land Area:

Total land area:  
13 049 million hectares



- 39.2% Humid
- 13.6% Cold
- 7.5% Hyperarid
- 12.1% Arid
- 17.7% Semi-arid
- 9.9% Dry sub-humid

Source: UNEP

## THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND THE GLOBAL MECHANISM

The CCD aims to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, particularly in Africa. The convention recognizes that the people of the drylands themselves hold the keys to combating desertification, and that the eradication of poverty is a precondition for success. The CCD entered into force in December 1996; today 179 countries acknowledge it as a legally binding framework to tackle land degradation and promote sustainable development in fragile ecosystems. The Global Mechanism was established under the convention to "promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, on a grant basis, and/or on concessional or other terms, to affected developing country Parties". Given that the GEF covers only the incremental costs of activities to improve the global environment, development assistance is an important source of funding. The Global Mechanism therefore has a unique opportunity to assist developing countries in mobilizing complementary funding from bilateral and multilateral non-GEF development agencies for the development components of sustainable land management projects.



# MOVING FORWARD TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF DESERTIFICATION

Two very significant steps are foreseen in the near future for the GEF-IFAD partnership to combat desertification. The first is the heightened collaboration between the GEF, the Secretariat of the CCD, the Global Mechanism set up under the Convention and, of course, IFAD, both as host of the Global Mechanism and as a leader in this global effort. The second development is a recommendation by the GEF Council that land degradation be approved as a new GEF focal area. The recommendation will be discussed at the GEF Assembly, which will meet in China in October 2002.



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