

How the G20 Global Land Initiative is Addressing the Challenges of the Southwest at the Global Scale

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Land degradation of Earth's land surface due to human activities is already causing adverse effects on over 3.2 billion people worldwide, and this situation is expected to worsen as the impacts of climate change intensify. Land degradation is a widespread and systemic issue that affects all regions of the world and can manifest in various detrimental forms, such as chemical contamination, pollution, salinity, soil erosion, nutrient depletion, overgrazing, deforestation, and desertification. Desertification, a specific type of land degradation occurring in arid areas, currently affects more than 2.7 billion people.

The rapid decline in land quality often results from a flawed economic system characterized by an inefficient food production system. This is compounded by other practices that pollute and degrade the land, yielding short-term economic gains that primarily benefit a few individuals at the expense of the broader population.

In an international domain, various commitments such as the Bonn Challenge; The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100); UNCCD's Land Degradation Neutrality; UN Convention on Biological Diversity's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework; as well as the Nationally Determined Contributions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate have been established by countries committing to restore land.

As a significant development in the domain, the leaders of the G20 Member Countries, under the Saudi Presidency, in November 2020 launched the Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats to prevent, halt, and reverse land degradation (Global Land Initiative or GLI). They declared: "Building on existing initiatives, we share the ambition to achieve a 50 percent reduction of degraded land by 2040, voluntarily." The Riyadh Leaders' declaration is the boldest articulation for land restoration yet. A 50 percent reduction in land degradation translates to about 1 billion hectares of land to be restored by 2040.

This session will highlight the objective and work of GLI, the theory of change. Furthermore, the discussion will underscore the significance of fostering technical partnerships across various sectors, including international organizations, the private sector, civil society, and academic institutions, all working together towards a shared objective. Finally, GLI welcomes the opportunity to explore synergies and engage in discussions about potential collaborative endeavors.

Website: <https://g20land.org/>

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