



African Soil Seminar | 28-30 November 2016

**SOIL RESTORATION FOR ACHIEVING THE 2063 + 2030 AGENDAS IN AFRICA:
LINKING GLOBAL AMBITIONS TO LOCAL NEEDS**

Chairs' Conclusions by **Wanjira Mathai**, Director, Partnerships for Women's Entrepreneurship in Renewables (wPOWER), Wangari Maathai Institute (WMI) and **Alexander Müller**, Managing Director TMG. Think-Tank for Sustainability and Study Lead TEEBAgriFood

The year 2015 marked the adoption of historic agendas for Africa at both the continental and global levels. At the continental level, African countries have adopted Agenda 2063, the 50 year Transformative Agenda for Africa and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan. At the global level, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both frameworks aim to transform current development paths towards inclusive growth, sustainable development and peace and security for the continent. They rest on human rights and call for good governance, inclusive societies and access to justice. Only one month ago, in October, the United Nations celebrated Africa Week 2016 highlighting the importance of a coherent and integrated approach for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UNFCCC COP 22 in Marrakech gave further impetus to the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions.

We are meeting here at a crucial time in response to an invitation by African delegates to the Global Soil Week 2015! Africa will make or break the 2063 and 2030 Agendas. The experience of the Millennium Development Goals has shown how uneven the progress across the continent has been. Some of the major challenges, in terms of poverty, energy and food insecurity and environmental degradation can be found in the continent. Droughts are becoming more frequent and intense. The El Nino drought of this year affected the food security of more than 30 million people. At the same time, Africa presents the most potential to transform our future and eliminate hunger and food insecurity. The co-chairs are noting the leadership provided by the African Countries who already presented their progress reports to the High-level Political Forum and invite others to join. At the Global Soil Week 2015, African actors invited the Global Soil Week to organize a regional event in Africa. The 200 participants of this seminar are an expression of the interest in and the need for such a platform. The co-chairs thank the Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Kenya and the NEPAD agency for co-hosting this seminar. The active participation by delegations from other African countries and India is an encouraging sign for South-South learning in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. The co-chairs also congratulate the co-hosts for their pro-active role and leadership in fostering soil rehabilitation for food security.

Making these agendas work will require soil rehabilitation. Soils and land are directly or indirectly addressed by seven of the seventeen SDGs. To respond to these linkages soil rehabilitation programmes need to be designed and implemented with a view to the nexus of food, water and energy security. Soil rehabilitation that addresses the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups and that supports maintaining ecosystem services is crucial to achieve the 2063 and 2030 Agendas

and for the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement. If well designed and implemented, they can make “Leaving No One Behind” a reality.

Investments in business-as-usual agriculture are unlikely to bring about the transformational change agreed by member states. Business-as-usual agriculture is unlikely to offer the responses we need to maintain soil health and achieve the development goals under a changing climate. Instead, we should be asking what are appropriate approaches that could attain the food, water and energy security nexus.

Building on the discussions at the seminar, we draw the following conclusions of crucial importance for inclusive and sustainable development in Africa:

- 1) Programmes for soil and landscape restoration need to reach the most vulnerable population groups, in particular women and youth.** Women comprise up to 50% of the agricultural labour force in parts of Africa, exceeding 60% in certain countries. Programmes must take into account that women already bear the majority of the agricultural workload. Implementation of technologies must be done in a way so that it increases women’s capacities to make their voices heard. About 200 million people in Africa are aged between 15 and 24 which makes Africa the continent with the youngest population in the world. Soil rehabilitation programmes must respond to their needs offering a future in rural areas, in particular by offering jobs. We had enlightening discussions with engaged youth to unearth the reasons for such low interest by young people to work in agriculture. We learned that the trends observed in Sub-Saharan Africa leading to continued youth growth and urbanization are affected by a perception that working in agriculture is a punishment. However, agriculture is much more than production. Youth can be offered different types of engagement across the value chain that may be much more attractive. It is important to tap into this “new young agriculture” and support youth to get engaged. We heard extremely inspiring and successful examples from youth-led initiatives from Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Nigeria. Soil rehabilitation programmes that are tailored to these needs will make up-scaling more likely. Soil restoration initiatives need to address the diverse factors that shape farmers’ land management decisions in order to create conditions that enable them to apply SLM practices. This includes improving tenure rights, access to capital and inputs, access to inclusive, empowered and empowering extension services as well as addressing aspects from wider contexts such as access to social and health security. Food security policy-making that targets the participation of youth needs to go beyond standard processes. We need youth specific policies. Youth tend to engage in policy-making by networking, engaging in activism, campaigning, youth initiatives and internet mobility. Any “youth-oriented framework” must think of appropriate incentives to engage youth in public under these new and flexible formats.
- 2) Climate change increases the need for soil rehabilitation measures.** Climate change aggravates existing development challenges and poses new threats to sustainable development. Land management technologies that enable the triple win of food security, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change do exist. However, it is crucial to understand that there can never be one silver-bullet. There are trade-offs between these goals. What is decisive is the process of developing and identifying technology packages that fit particular agro-ecological conditions. This process must be driven by land users and give a strong voice to farmers, women and youth in particular, throughout all stages.
- 3) Without security of land tenure and rights specifically for vulnerable and marginalized people, soil rehabilitation programmes will not contribute to leaving no one behind.** Land tenure regimes on the ground often discourage investments in soil rehabilitation or leave intended beneficiaries at the risk of being deprived of their land. Responsible land

governance is pivotal to respond to these threats. Land governance and sustainable land management must go hand in hand. The use and dissemination of SLM technologies must be accompanied by secure land rights. Despite robust legal frameworks, enforcement and implementation are often the main issue to be tackled. One important way to trigger this process is disseminating, synthesizing and translating legal texts to make them accessible and easily comprehensible to local and rural populations. Beyond the national dimension, sharing experiences within regions and across countries can be another valuable strategy to accelerate such process at regional and sub-regional levels. The SDGs, notably SDG1 on poverty eradication and SDG2 on ending hunger, can be achieved in Africa by finding the right balance between modern and customary law. In particular, it is important that the latter can be adapted in a way that improves and enhances the current land tenure regime. In a time of shrinking democratic space in many places, the implementation and monitoring of voluntary instruments such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land (VGGT) need strategic alliances among a broad variety of actors to ensure that the human rights principles on which they are based are truly recognized. The role of National Human Rights Institutions and human rights' civil society groups in the implementation and monitoring processes of the VGGT and the 2063 and 2030 Agendas need to be strengthened. Multi-actor processes led by these organizations can also assist in furthering the necessary inter-ministerial coordination to ensure that responsible land governance, agricultural development strategies and soil rehabilitation programmes are aligned.

- 4) Financial instruments, including blended finance, must be designed to reach and benefit food insecure people and reward farmers' investments in soil rehabilitation.** The Addis Ababa Action Agenda foresees blending of public and private resources to achieve the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. We must be aware that different sources of financing will serve different soil restoration objectives. Private financing of large-scale landscape restoration is yet to prove whether it lives up to achieving the ecological and social development goals. Investments must serve the needs of vulnerable and marginalized people. Monitoring is necessary in order to guarantee that these investments are meeting the requirements of soil restoration programmes aiming to increase food security and poverty alleviation. Appropriate methodologies need to be developed to that end. The design of investment programmes for soil rehabilitation must therefore be linked to the monitoring and follow-up and review processes of the 2063 and 2030 Agendas.
- 5) Inclusive monitoring and follow-up and review mechanisms are indispensable to achieve the 2063 and 2030 Agendas.** The 2063 and 2030 Agendas address sustainable development in its three dimensions, economic, ecological and social. Implementing these complex agendas characterized by inter-linkages and possible trade-offs between the goals and targets requires monitoring and follow-up and review mechanisms. They support learning and ensure close feedback loops. The requirements to monitor the large number of goals, targets and indicators of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 are immense and often go beyond the existing resources and capabilities of statistical agencies. For some SDGs (e.g. SDG 5 on gender) there is many times a lack of data. It is therefore vital to define areas to be monitored quantitatively or qualitatively. Monitoring and follow-up and review mechanisms must build on different sources of knowledge, scientific and traditional. One opportunity is to collect data via mobile technology. Existing peer-review mechanisms in the region such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) must be supported as they can help to achieve improved accountability and integrated policies. National Human Rights Institutions and their national reports can assume a pivotal role to monitor the human rights principles on which the 2063 and 2030 Agendas and the VGGT are based.

- 6) **Research for development is crucial for the successful implementation of the 2063 and 2030 Agendas.** The implementation of the 2063 and 2030 Agendas needs to build on the latest available research findings. Research programmes need to be tailored to the needs of development actors. To successfully contribute to the implementation, the knowledge needs by Government officials, Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations should become the starting point of research.
- 7) **Cooperation and coordination between the various actors and soil restoration initiatives is key.** There is a range of national and regional soil restoration initiatives and programmes. The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), the Great Green Wall Initiative, the Africa-wide Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security (3S), the Adaptation of African Agriculture and the African Resilient Landscapes Initiative (ARLI) are prominent examples. Cooperation and coordination of these endeavours as well as continuous exchange of experiences that enables mutual learning are key to achieve progress on national and local levels and promote synergies across scales and sectors in the region.
- 8) **A global thematic review on land and soil assumes a catalytic role in supporting soil restoration initiatives.** A global thematic review on land and soil under the umbrella of the High-level Political Forum offers the opportunity to address the linkages between the soil and land related Sustainable Development Goals and targets. It assists in addressing the responsibility dimension of developed countries and supports the principles of empowerment, accountability and inclusion of the 2030 Agenda. As the review of an integrated and cross-cutting implementation of the 2030 Agenda can be described as “uncharted territory”, a global thematic review will also further the learning processes that are necessary for its implementation.

Inspired by the discussions, we wish that participants share the results of this seminar broadly. The upcoming meeting of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme offers a key opportunity in this regard. Let us sustain this momentum together!

Nairobi, November 2016