



Protecting global soil resources for future generations

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The latest Status of World's Soil Resources report has highlighted that soils are increasingly under pressure by numerous human induced degradation processes in most parts of the world. The limits of our planetary boundaries concerning vital soil resources have been reached and without reversing this negative trend there will be a serious lack of necessary soil resources for future generations. It has been therefore of the highest importance to include soils within some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) recently approved by the United Nations. Sustainable development can not be achieved without protecting the limited, non-renewable, soil resources of our planet. There is the need to limit on-going soil degradation processes and to implement extensive soil restoration activities in order to strive towards a land degradation neutral (LDN) world, as called upon by SDG 15. Sustainable soil management needs to be placed at the core of any LDN strategy and therefore it is of highest importance that the recently approved Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM) of FAO get fully implemented at National and local scale. Sustainable soil management is not only relevant for the protection of fertile soils for food production, but also to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to preserve the large soil biodiversity pool. Therefore the VGSSM are not only relevant to FAO, but also to the climate change convention (UNFCCC) and the biodiversity convention (CBD). An integrated assessment of the current land degradation processes and the available land restoration practices is needed in order to fully evaluate the potential for effectively achieving LDN by 2030. The on-going Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment (LDRA) of the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) will provide the necessary scientific basis for the full implementation of the necessary measures for achieving the planned SDGs relevant to land and soils by 2030.