

14 April 2021

Excellency,

Sequel to my letter dated 8 February 2021, circulating the concept note for the High-level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought, to be held on Thursday, 20 May 2021 at 10 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall, I have the honour to enclose herewith the provisional programme.

The High-level Dialogue will include an opening segment, three panel discussions with interactive question and answer sessions, a plenary segment and a closing segment. In light of the urgent need to generate momentum and raise ambition for land as a key entry point within COVID-19 recovery strategies to build back better, Member States are encouraged to participate in the plenary segment at the Heads of State and Government or Ministerial level, via pre-recorded video statements.

The list of speakers for the plenary segment will open for inscription on Wednesday, 21 April 2021, at 10 a.m. until Friday, 7 May 2021, at 5 p.m. For inscribing on the list of speakers, please contact the General Assembly Affairs Branch (email: [galindo@un.org](mailto:galindo@un.org) with copy to [gaspeakerslist@un.org](mailto:gaspeakerslist@un.org)).

The time limit for statements will be three minutes for individual delegations and five minutes for statements delivered on behalf of groups of States. The list of speakers will be compiled in accordance with established practices of the General Assembly. The provisional list of speakers, to be circulated on Monday, 10 May 2021, will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis, based on the level of representation. In view of the limited time available for the plenary segment, pre-recorded video statements will be played without introductions by the representatives physically present in the General Assembly Hall. Further details on the guidelines for submission of the pre-recorded video statements will be circulated separately.

For further information, your office may contact Mr. Mohammed Amin Shaker ([mohammed.shaker@un.org](mailto:mohammed.shaker@un.org)) and Ms. Sara Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Ahmad ([sara.alahmad@un.org](mailto:sara.alahmad@un.org)).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Volkan BOZKIR

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



Provisional Programme  
 PGA High-Level Dialogue  
 On Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD)  
 Thursday 20 May 2021, 10am – 6pm EST



<b>10:00am-10:30am</b>	<b>Opening Segment</b>
<b>10:30am-10:40am</b>	<b>Setting the Stage: the Global Status of Land</b>
<b>10:40am–10:45am</b>	<b>Video on the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration</b>
<b>10:45am-11:30am</b>  Panel: 30 minutes Q&A: 15 minutes	<p><b>Panel 1: Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) to Accelerate COVID-19 Recoveries and the Decade of Action</b></p> <p>The General Assembly has identified SDG.15.3 as an SDG accelerator and integrator. Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality is essential to address the loss of half all agricultural land, and prevent losing more arable land in the coming years. This would risk plunging millions of farmers into poverty and contributing to forced migration and conflict. The urgent adoption and implementation of LDN targets by all countries, upscaled ecosystem restoration, food systems reform and mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction are necessary in order to sustainably secure land’s vital resources for generations to come and accelerate the entire 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>The international community must unite to address these threats. Thus far, 123 countries have committed to setting voluntary targets and securing high-level commitments to achieve LDN. For too long, desertification, land degradation and drought issues were a blind spot for the international community and treated as regional or local concerns. Yet land solutions have the potential to power COVID-19 recoveries and accelerate environmental action.</p> <p><u>Guiding Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can LDN accelerate the 2030 Agenda, ecosystem restoration, and food systems reform in light of COVID-related food shortages, and guard against future systemic health or environmental risks and cascading hazards?</li> <li>2. How can the achievement of LDN contribute to economic recovery and building back better in the post-Covid-19 era?</li> <li>3. What actions can facilitate universal adoption and implementation of LDN targets by all member states?</li> </ol>

	<p>4. What local, regional and multilateral mechanisms can support sustainable consumption and production patterns to support LDN implementation?</p>
<p><b>11:30am-1:00pm</b></p>	<p><b>High-Level Plenary: Statements by HOS/G and Ministers</b></p> <p>Member States are invited to focus their statements on contributions to the overall vision, goals and targets of addressing Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought and achieving Land Degradation Neutrality. In this regard, Member States are encouraged to outline national and regional challenges, policy responses and commitments, and announce partnerships, new multistakeholder initiatives and development cooperation.</p>
<p><b>3:00pm-3:35pm</b></p> <p>Panel: 15 minutes Q&amp;A: 20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Panel 2: Urgent Global Cooperation on Land to Deliver the Future We Want</b></p> <p>General Assembly Resolution 75/218 has recognized that “land-based solutions, as part of nature-based solutions, constitute promising options to evaluate and consider in connection with sequestering carbon and enhancing the resilience of people and ecosystems affected by desertification, land degradation, and drought, as well as adverse effects of climate change”.</p> <p><u>Guiding Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can increased action on the interlinkages between land, biodiversity and climate, including LDN implementation, support socio-economic recoveries and building back better?</li> <li>2. What synergies can be achieved between commitments and initiatives Member States and stakeholders made during the Summits on Biodiversity and Climate Action, at the local, regional and international levels, along the path to the UNFCCC COP26, UNCCD COP15, and UNCBD COP15?</li> <li>3. What more can Member States and stakeholders do to incorporate LDN into Nationally Determined Contributions and future commitments under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework?</li> </ol>
<p><b>3:35pm – 3:40pm</b></p>	<p><b>Videos from Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives</b></p>
<p><b>3:40pm – 4.25pm</b></p> <p>Panel: 30 minutes Q&amp;A: 15 minutes</p>	<p><b>Panel 3: Unlocking Land’s Potential for Inclusive Sustainable Development</b></p> <p>Over 1 billion people are employed in global agriculture, representing 1 in 3 of all workers. Landholders with secure tenure are more willing</p>

	<p>and able to invest in their land, supporting agricultural productivity, wealth generation, civic participation, and the rule of law. For every dollar spent on land restoration – including through low-skilled and labour-intensive shovel-ready projects – at least \$9 of economic benefits can be expected. However, even though forests and agriculture hold more than 30% of the solution to the climate crisis, they currently receive less than 3% of climate finance.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Some of the most promising pathways to maximize and capture the benefits of land restoration include formalizing and respecting land tenure rights for indigenous and small-scale producers, including female farmers, who are responsible for between 60-80% of food production in developing countries; and combating drought and forest fires, including through reforestation and sustainable forest management practices. This panel will highlight some of the best practices, cutting-edge technologies, and innovative funding and business models needed to achieve progress on these fronts.</p> <p><u>Guiding Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What must be done to secure the financing needed for DLDD, including making existing funds more accessible?</li> <li>2. What mechanisms can be used for upscaling technology and capacity building cooperation at the local, regional and multilateral levels for greater drought and wildfire early warning, prevention, mitigation and implementation efforts?</li> <li>3. How can the tenure rights of women, small land holders and indigenous peoples be better secured, and their institutional, technical and financial capacities strengthened?</li> <li>4. What existing multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships must be upscaled to achieve these goals? What additional partnerships are needed to accelerate implementation efforts?</li> </ol>
<p><b>4:25 pm – 5:50pm</b></p>	<p><b>High-Level Plenary:</b> Statements by HOS/G and Ministers (continued)</p>
<p><b>5:50pm-6:00pm</b></p>	<p><b>Closing Segment</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/publication/financing-sustainable-land-use-people-and-planet>