

## 17 SDG15 Life on land

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### Lecture Overview

- I. Brief Description of the SDG 15: Summary of targets & indicators and links to other SDGs
  - Q1A: **What is SDG 15** and why does it matter?
  - Q1B: What does SDG 15 entail in terms of **targets & Indicators**?
- II. Q2: **How much progress have we made** concerning this particular SDG since the launching of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2016?
- III. Q3: What are the **key challenges** in implementing this particular SDG?
- IV. Q4: Are there **good examples in implementing this SDG goal**? Please give an example where young people have been active in contributing to this SDG Goal?
- V. Question 5: What actions do you **suggest for young people** to engage or participate to achieve this SDG Goal?

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- I. Brief Description of the SDG 15: Summary of targets & indicators and links to other SDGs

Q1A:

What is SDG 15 and why does it matter?

1. SDG 15 aims to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
2. The land is where we live, grow our food, and extract natural resources . It originally had productive terrestrial ecosystems creating the web of life upon which we depend
3. With a population of 8 billion, we are the most invasive species
4. We have altered three quarters of all land

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5. Land mammal biomass is 33% humans, 65% livestock and only 2% wild animals.
  6. Farmed bird biomass is 30 times that of wild birds.

7. Our present food system can only feed 3 billion people sustainably, but it drives deforestation and degrades soils.
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8. The way we farm, transport and consume food affects more planetary boundaries than anything else. Agriculture is one of the biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. It is also the biggest driver of deforestation, biodiversity loss and the creation of vast dead zones in our streams, lakes and oceans from excess fertilizer.
  9. Agriculture is not working for people either, with 9% of our global population severely food insecure at one extreme, and 8% of deaths globally attributable to obesity at the other. Our food systems need a comprehensive redesign to be regenerative and sustainable within planetary boundaries
  10. Restoring the productivity of the land and its ecosystem services is essential to our future

Q1B:

What does SDG 15 entail in terms of targets & Indicators?

1. There are 9 SDG15 substantive targets and 3 about processes (with indicators in parentheses)
  - 15.1: Ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands (proportion of forest area and of ecosystems in protected areas)
  - 15.2: Promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation (progress towards sustainable forest management)
  - 15.3: Combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation- neutral world (proportion of degraded land)
  - 15.4: Ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development (protected areas for mountain biodiversity; mountain green cover)

- 15.5: Reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species (Red List Index of endangered species)
- 15.6: Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from and access to genetic resources (countries with relevant legislative, administrative and policy frameworks)
- 15.7 End poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products (proportion of illegal traded wildlife)
- 15.8 Prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate priority species (countries with relevant national legislation and resources)
- 15.9 Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts (progress towards agreed national targets)
- 15.a Financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems (official development assistance and public expenditure)
- 15.b Finance sustainable forest management with incentives to developing countries for conservation and reforestation (official development assistance and public expenditure)
- 15.c Combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities (proportion of poached or illicitly trafficked wildlife)

## 2. Links to other SDGs

- The SDGs are a coherent whole with many interrelationships built in. Some examples agriculture provides most of our food (SDG2)
- water for human uses, and waste purification (SDG6) comes largely from the land
- land provides resources for decent work SDG8 and industry SDG9 cities and communities SDG11 all occupy and depend on land
- the land, forests and vegetation are critical determinants of climate SDG13
- activities on land result in major inputs to the ocean (SDG14)

## II. Q2:

How much progress have we made concerning this particular SDG since the launching of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2016?

### 1. Progress in SDG15?

- SDG15 is the worst performing of all the SDGs, stagnating with major remaining challenges in all regions of the world
- None of the previous goals and targets have been met

## III. Q3:

What are the key challenges in implementing this particular SDG?

1. Climate change is having a severe impact on land and its resources and ecosystem services
2. Soil degradation is widespread and accelerating: many parts of world are already seriously degraded
3. Expanding agriculture for food, energy and other resources is destroying nature
4. Crisis in biodiversity with 1 million species threatened with extinction
5. Forests are diminishing rapidly in Latin American and Sub-Saharan Africa, But forest coverage ratio in Europe, North America and some parts of Asia increased from 2000 to 2020.
6. Lack of political will due to vested interests, corruption and short-term perspective

## IV. Q4:

Are there good examples in implementing this SDG goal? Please give an example where young people have been active in contributing to this SDG Goal?

### 1. Regenerative Agriculture

- Many efforts at regenerative agriculture or permaculture are demonstrating that it can be **more productive, nutritious and sustainable** for rural communities than industrialized agriculture, but multinational agribusinesses do not see it as sufficiently profitable
- Farming in Africa's Sahel region isn't easy, but new technologies, such as this half-moon ploughing technique, boost rain-fed harvest and make soil more permeable for planting (SDG Report 2022)

### 2. Good youth examples

- Vanuatu
  - a. Vanuatu was hit by cyclone Pam in March 2015. The level 5 cyclone

passed over the island of Tanna and destroyed almost all its infrastructure.

- b. The day after the cyclone, without waiting for outside help, the youth in the villages who had learned in their Bahá'í communities how to organize service projects, were already removing debris from the roads and helping families to recover possessions from their ruined houses.

- Vanuatu again

- a. the junior youth on Tanna(one of the most populous islands of Vanuatu) who saw how depleted their coral reefs and fisheries were, and convinced the adults and village chiefs to recreate fishing reserves like the ancient taboo areas. The fish resources rebounded, an example featured at Climate Change COP27 in Egypt in November 2022
- b. The youth got the whole community behind them, and when the chiefs of the village created the no fishing areas, they saw that they worked. The whole community benefited

- Kenya

- a. Three years ago, 14 young women and men founded an ecological agriculture group in Murang'a, north of Nairobi, Kenya. Today their farm of 7.5 ha provides food security and opportunities for a better life, with restored soil and no pesticides.

#### V. Question 5:

What actions do you suggest for young people to engage or participate to achieve this SDG Goal?

1. Actions for young people

- Read your local reality and ask what can your community do better to care for the land and its resources
- Learn about ecological or restorative agriculture or permaculture, and apply it on your land, in your garden, or in urban plots or green spaces
- Help to plant trees
- Spend time in nature and learn to love it and protect it
- Educate children to appreciate nature and be kind to animals
- Never litter, dispose of your wastes carefully
- Join local waste clean-ups and other service projects
- Turn away from materialism and the consumer lifestyle
- Try to live simply, meeting your needs but not what exceeds them
- Repair and recycle things rather than just throwing them away

- Eat nutritious food rather than fast food, and avoid wasting food
- Learn about where your food comes from and what environmental and social impacts were involved in its production and in bringing it to your plate
- Minimize your use of water