



Media Release

For Immediate Release: Issued by the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) at a progress briefing on the IPBES Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment, during UNCCD COP13 in Ordos, China, on 7 September 2017

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Land Degradation & Restoration: Better Evidence-based Information Critical to Achieve Global Goals

- **World's 1st comprehensive evidence-based assessment report on land degradation on track to be launched in March 2018**
- **Prepared by more than 100 international experts from 45 countries over 3 years**
- **Will provide key evidence to help decision makers halt & reverse land degradation**

Ordos, China – Leading world experts today in China presented an update on the first comprehensive evidence-based assessment of global land degradation and restoration, to be launched next March by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' (IPBES).

At the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP13), Professor Bob Scholes (South Africa) and Dr. Luca Montanarella (Italy) said the forthcoming report, designed to help decision makers worldwide choose better options to halt and reverse land degradation, will be a landmark resource in this critical issue area.

Prof. Scholes and Dr. Montanarella have co-chaired the assessment process over the past three years, leading a group of more than 100 leading international experts from 45 countries.

Initiated at the request of Governments and the UNCCD, the IPBES report will bring together the best-available science, knowledge and evidence to help decision makers reduce the environmental, social and economic risks and impacts of land degradation.

“Land, air and water are the cornerstones of life on Earth,” said Prof Scholes. “To sustain the vitality of our global ecosystem, we must better understand the value and health of our natural assets and how to halt and repair the damage being done to them.”

“There are very few places on Earth that provide a better example than Inner Mongolia’s Kubuqi Desert of how land can be restored to the benefit of both people and the environment,” said Dr.

Montanarella. “The IPBES assessment report will explore at a global level the effects of land degradation on the quality of life, as well as what drives land degradation, its impacts, responses and the best methods to tackle its causes.”

Dr. Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary of IPBES, added: “The assessment will support countries by examining the implications of land degradation and restoration in order to achieve global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, including the target on land degradation neutrality, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Paris Agreement on climate change.”

At a total cost of just under \$1 million, the IPBES report draws on more than 3,000 scientific papers, Government reports, indigenous and local knowledge and a range of other sources. It has also benefitted from a process of rigorous scientific peer review – with more than 7,300 comments received from more than 200 external reviewers, including Governments.

Welcoming the progress that has been made on the report, the UNCCD Executive Secretary, Monique Barbut, said: “We eagerly anticipate that the IPBES assessment will add to the engaging and dynamic evidence base that clearly links the health and productivity of land to overarching human security, so that we can all make better decisions.”

The IPBES assessment report on land degradation and restoration is expected to be approved by representatives of the 127 member Governments of IPBES during the 6th annual session of the IPBES Plenary, due to be held in Medellin, Colombia, from 17-24 March 2018.

A primer with additional information about the **IPBES Assessment of Land Degradation and Restoration** is available at: www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/ldr_primer_en.pdf

The UNCCD’s **Global Land Outlook** is available online in all six UN languages at: www.unccd.int.glo

Note to Editors:

IPBES is an independent intergovernmental body, established by member States in 2012. It provides policymakers with objective scientific assessments about the state of knowledge regarding the planet’s biodiversity, ecosystems and the benefits they provide to people, as well as the tools and methods to protect and sustainably use these vital natural assets. To some extent IPBES does for biodiversity what the IPCC does for climate change. For more information about IPBES and its assessments visit www.ipbes.net

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