Land Degradation and Restoration Research Needs

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www.ipbes.net

UN environment

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

UN DP
Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment

- **>150 leading international experts** from 55 countries over three years

- More than **4,000 publications** (scientific papers, Government reports, indigenous & local knowledge and other sources)

- Refined by over **7,300 comments** from external reviewers, scientific bodies, and Governments

- **SPM and full report** can be found at: https://www.ipbes.net/assessment-reports/ldr

The assessment report on
LAND DEGRADATION AND RESTORATION
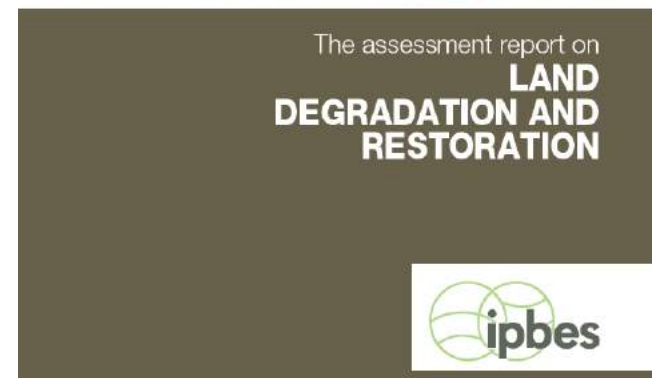
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What this presentation will touch on

1. Key IPBES-LDRA findings

2. Some thing we could not asses, because of inadequate prior research

3. Emerging high priority issues, as revealed by the LDRA

1. Key findings

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- You can find instances of land degradation in virtually **every ecosystem type in the world**, and in every country.
- The severity and **consequences vary**, depending on the **social** and **ecological context**, and **when** the degradation took place, but in total are a major burden on human wellbeing and threat to the existence of other species.
- The problem is **ongoing and worsening**, rather than improving, as the demands we place on land increases and its capacity to satisfy them is progressively and persistently weakened.
- Present policy and civil society efforts to address the problem have demonstrated that it is **possible to make a difference**, but the current level of effort is far below that required to turn the situation around.

2. **Some non-findings**
things we would have liked to have said, but did not have enough supporting information

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Just how much land degradation is there?

Despite decades of study, hundreds of reports, we still can't answer this question definitively

The key problem is differing and incompatible definitions of degradation

IPBES LDRA was given an agreed definition which partly solves the problem:
-persistent decrease in ecological function, ecosystem services and biodiversity

But: you need to distinguish between transformation and degradation,
and Treat the impact on biodiversity separately from those on function and services

Global comparison requires that each instance includes the following attributes
Type: eg deforestation, forest degradation, wetland drainage, soil erosion…
Area affected, separately by different classes of
**Severity** – what is the % reduction in ecosystem services, function or biodiversity
Spontaneous recovery rate – how many years to 90% recovery if left alone

3. **Emerging issues**

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The success of many international concerns depend critically and halting and reversing land degradation.

Aichi targets

Food Security

Climate Change

Land

Biodiversity

Desertification
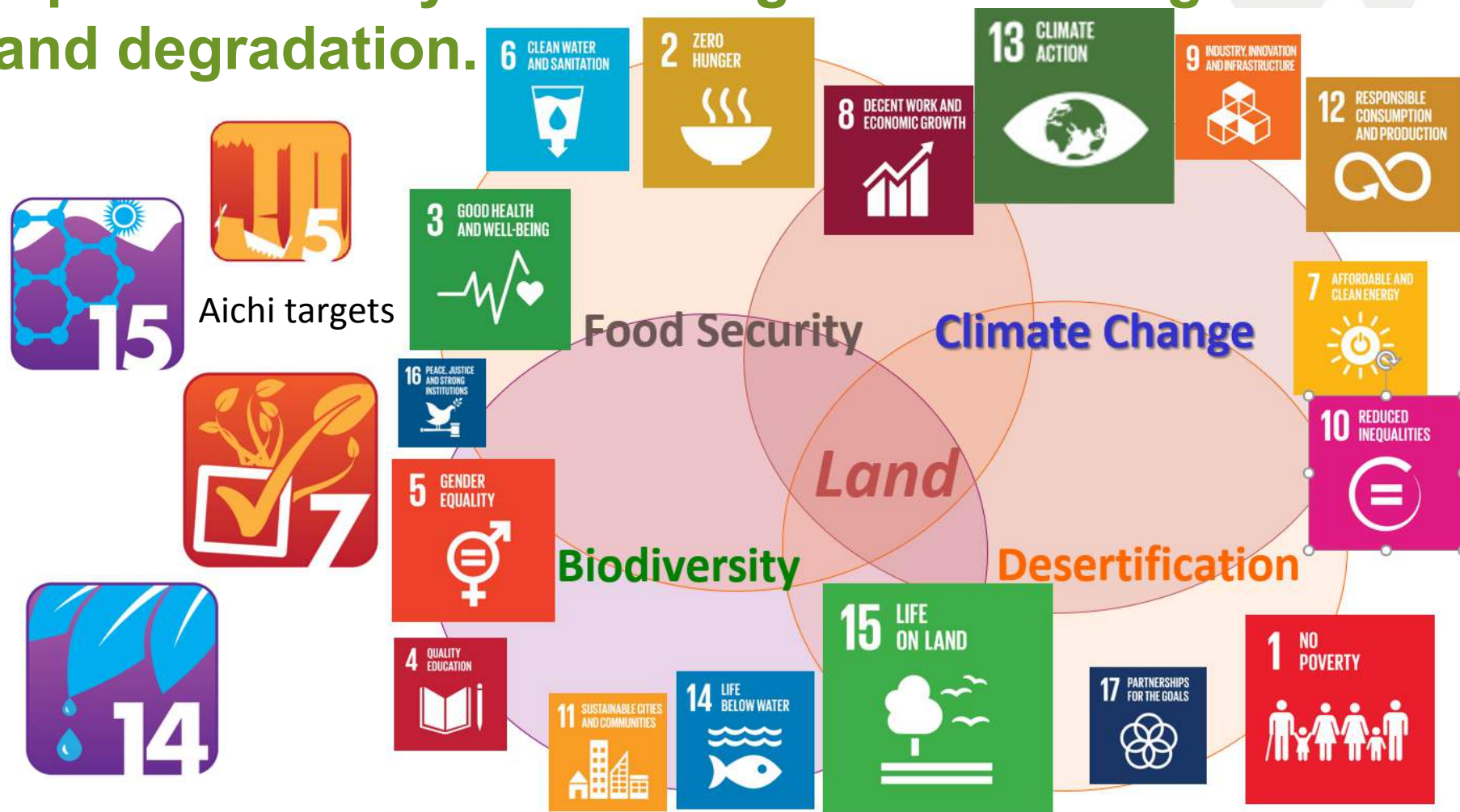
Research gaps

- The changing relationship between people's worldviews and their perceptions of degradation
- Non-domineering but rigorous ways of engaging with 'non-scientific' knowledge systems
- The causal relationships between degradation, conflict and migration