Land Degradation Neutrality is part of the SDGs: At the UNCCD COP12, held in Ankara (October 2015), country Parties reached a breakthrough agreement to link the implementation of the Convention to the SDGs in general, and target 15.3 in particular, which states: “By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world”. Target 15.3 has therefore become a strong vehicle for driving UNCCD implementation. Other SDGs are closely related to this target, including indicators on soil and land, such as SDG 2 - End hunger and achieve sustainable agriculture; SDG 6 - Protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes. This includes identification of impacts of land degradation in the provision of ecosystem services. The GEF is committed to support countries to implement the Convention and facilitate coordinated investments in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) to achieve LDN.
Desertification is nowhere more serious than in the NENA region. Soil erosion results in losses of soil nutrients, loss of soil organic carbon and declined productivity. Approximately 60% (135 million ha) of soil is eroded by wind, which can result in Sand and Dust Storms (SDS) under certain conditions, and causing losses of about USD 13 billion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) every year. Growing population and the increasing demand for red meat has led to significant increases in the numbers of livestock, leading to overgrazing and rapid degradation of rangelands. Primary and natural forests diminished by 13.8% over the period 1990–2015. Socio-economic and political dynamics can contrubute to land degradation. Land degradation interacts with other processes in ways that undermine the sustainability of household livelihoods and increases the likelihood of migration.

FAO is developing options to avoid further degradation and to support the restoration of already degraded lands. These include sustainable land/soil management (SLM/SSM) policies and practices, including corresponding assessment, planning and management tools. All actions are supported through participatory scaling-up strategies and policies. Experiences and lessons on the role of SLM to combat land degradation are available at local, sub-national, national, regional and global levels. Land use planning is a key tool to support decision-makers at various levels and to guide the allocation of land to optimum uses. FAO implements integrated landscape management and land resource planning approaches for promoting SLM. The Voluntary Guidelines on Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM) provide guidelines on how to implement SSM and reverse soil degradation.

There are many examples of initiatives and projects to promote sustainable management of land resources, with various lessons and recommendations coming from different scales and agro-ecosystems, such as:

- Rangeland management and rehabilitation.
- Terracing and water-harvesting techniques and sustainable integrated land use systems.
- Gum Arabic trees integrated into farms and pasture lands.
- Digital soil mapping, soil laboratory networks and SLM scaling up.
- Participatory land resources planning to support the scaling out and mainstreaming of SLM.
- Conservation practices to increase land productivity.
- Community watershed management to increase productivity and conservation.
- Sand dune stabilization.
- Decision-support land-management and planning at national, sub-national and local levels.