The Status of soil resources, needs and priorities towards sustainable management in Swaziland

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Location and Area

- Swaziland is an independent monarchy in Southern Africa. It is boarded by the Republic of South Africa in the North, South, west and Southeast while on the east there is Mozambique. It has a total area of 17 363 Km^2.

Topography

- The country is divided into four agro-ecological zones from west to east, based on elevation, landforms, geology, soils and vegetation.
- Westernmost is the Highveld covering almost 30 percent of the total land area East of this is the Middleveld covering about 28 percent of the total land area and to the east of this lies the Lowveld covering 33 percent of the total land area. The fourth region is the Lubombo Escarpment covering 9 percent of total area.

Climate

- Swaziland has a subtropical climate with summer rains. About 75% of the precipitation falls from October to March. The climatic condition ranges from sub-humid and temperate in the Highveld to semi-arid in the Lowveld. The national long-term average rainfall is 788mm per year. The highest annual rainfall of 1,250mm occurs in the Highveld. Temperatures vary from 12 – 28°C in the Highveld and from 18 – 37°C in the Lowveld

Land Tenure

- There are two major Land Tenure in Swaziland. The Title Deed Land (TDL) is privately owned land and is used mainly for ranching, forestry or estate production of crops such as pineapples. It covers about 46% of the country. The Swazi Nation land (TDL) which is land held in trust by the King for the Swazi people, covers the 54 % of the country.

Land Use

- The Major land use are rainfed and irrigated crop production and livestock grazing, 50% of the land is communally grazed, 19% under commercial ranching. Plantation forestry covers about 8% and parks and nature reserves covers 4% of the land area

Major challenges

- Land degradation(eg,nutrient leaching, soil erosion)
- Deforestration
- Overgrazing
- Soil acidity

Needs and priorities

- Soil conservation(agronomically,mechanically)
- Liming
- Fertiliser subsidies
- Rational land use practises
- Update of soil maps and land use maps
- Use of remote sensing and GIS
- Aforestration

Thank you