

Media Update

15 June 2023

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

“HER LAND. HER RIGHTS: ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND LAND RESTORATION GOALS”

17 June 2023

Excellencies, friends.

We depend on land for our survival. Yet we treat it like dirt.

Unsustainable farming is eroding soil 100 times faster than natural process can restore them.

And up to 40% of our planet's land is now degraded:

Imperiling food production;

Threatening biodiversity;

And compounding the climate crisis.

This hits women and girls the hardest.

They suffer disproportionately from the lack of food, water scarcity, and forced migration that result from our mistreatment of land.

Yet they have the least control.

In many countries laws and practices block women and girls from owning land.

But where they do, they restore and protect it: increasing productivity; building resilience to drought and investing in health, education and nutrition.

Equal land rights both protect land and advance gender equality.

That is why this Desertification and Drought Day puts the focus on “her land, her rights”.

I urge all governments to eliminate legal barriers to women owning land, and to involve them in policymaking.

Support women and girls to play their part in protecting our most precious resource.

And together, let's stop land degradation by 2030.

Thank you.
