SUMMARY REPORT OF CRIC15 PRESENTATION

On Wednesday October 19th, at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Matthew Cooper, Data Manager of Vital Signs, presented the GEF-Land Degradation Monitoring Project at the CRIC 15. Three of the four project pilot countries were present, namely Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Twenty-eight people heard the presentation, 11 of whom were women.

Mr. Cooper introduced the project and reviewed its various approaches that are intended to help address the lack of robust methods, data, and consistency in reporting trends of land degradation to the UNCCD and the GEF. In addition to evaluating and recommending robust methods, the project is focused on providing an open-sourced toolbox that will help alleviate challenges in assessing land degradation and will facilitate reporting. The project will also concentrate on building capacity, taking gender into account, so that the tools and methods developed can be used widely and effectively within each pilot country.

Dr. Ulrich Apel and Mr. Jean-Marc Sinnassamy of the GEF Secretariat provided additional supportive remarks at the end of the presentation. Questions from stakeholders followed, including from representatives of Tanzania, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe and Morocco. Most are addressed below:

HOW WERE THE PILOT COUNTRIES FOR THIS PROJECT CHOSEN?

We chose pilot countries based on two sets of criteria. The first set would help us create a toolbox that is globally applicable. These countries have a varied range of types of land degradation, land cover features, climate or agro-eco zones, land use and management regimes, as well as social contexts.

The second set of criteria was based more on feasibility, including the ability to get GEF funding. We wanted to choose countries that would maximize the synergies of this project with other GEF programs, especially with the food security IAP. We also wanted to choose countries where we already had established partnerships on the ground, so we could better understand each country contextually. Such partnerships play a large role in how we can verify our methods.

HOW CAN MY COUNTRY GET INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT'S FUTURE WORK?

The toolbox we are developing will be available for use by all countries, not only by the pilot countries. If you would like to be notified when the toolbox is available and receive periodic updates on the project, please email

our Project Manager, Tristan Schnader at tschnader@conservation.org. We are currently working on updating our website to allow future partners and stakeholders to register online for our email list.

HOW DOES THE PROJECT APPROACH MEASURING DEGRADATION, GIVEN THAT THERE ARE SO MANY POTENTIAL DRIVERS OF DEGRADATION, FROM POOR POLICIES TO AGRICULTURAL MISMANAGEMENT?

Although it would be impossible to measure all the drivers of degradation, by using very high resolution satellite imagery (50 cm), and *in situ* data, and by consulting with local stakeholders, we aim to identify different types of degradation, as well as their drivers.

HOW IS THIS PROJECT LINKED TO THE LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY (LDN) TARGET PROGRAM?

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 163 targets. Goal 15 calls for countries to "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss." According to the UNCCD, "many countries currently lack the necessary methods, data and expertise to set baselines and monitor and report on progress against land degradation." Target 15.3 addresses land degradation neutrality, i.e., the commitment to avoid land degradation. Land productivity is one of the proposed sub-indicators for SDG target 15.3, and thus is central to the LDN target program. Our project is developing a robust indicator of land degradation. The tools we are developing will help countries set baselines of land productivity, detect and validate changes in land productivity, and provide national data that can help support supplementary indicators within the LDN target.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE PILOT COUNTRIES ACCOUNT FOR ALL OF THE VARIATION IN ECOREGIONS AND FORMS OF DEGRADATION FOUND THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT?

Although our target countries do not encompass every ecoregion found in Africa, the four countries are heterogeneous and incorporate a range of soil, vegetation, climate, land use and degradation types. In addition, the toolbox will be available for all countries to use.

ARE YOU SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FROM ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES OR FROM ONLY THE PILOT COUNTRIES?

Ultimately, we are producing a toolbox that can be used globally and we welcome interest in our project. However, our project only has funding to support workshop participation from pilot-country stakeholders with the required technical expertise. Depending on space and infrastructure, we may be able to accommodate additional participants who have their own funding to participate. If you have funding and are interested in being considered to potentially participate, please email us at GEF-LDMP@conservation.org, and we would be happy to explore the possibility of your attendance.