



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Land Management
as a Best Practice to Enhance Rural Development
in the ESCWA Region
Beirut, 25 – 27 March 2009

Sustainable Land Management in the ESCWA Region*

Sustainable Development & Productivity Division
Sustainable Agriculture & Rural Development Team

UN-ESCWA

* Document prepared by Mr. Rami Ahmad Zurayk, ESCWA Consultant.
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Outline

- I. Introduction: overview and relevance of SLM to ESCWA
- II. SLM: objectives, scope and limitations
- III. Challenges limiting the implementation of SLM in ESCWA
- IV. Options available to implement SLM
- V. Case studies and lessons learned
- VI. Conclusion and recommendations

I. Introduction: overview and relevance of SLM to ESCWA

3

What is SLM?

- The sustainable land management (SLM) approach **integrates** land, water, biodiversity, and environmental **management** to meet rising **food and fiber** demands while sustaining **ecosystem** services and **livelihoods** and assuring the long term potential of these resources (WB, 2006).

4



SLM importance

- 75 percent (%) of the world's poor live in rural
- Changing world landscapes
- Food crisis 2007-2008
- Poverty reduction, environmental preservation and SLM are highly relevant interlinked strategic goals



Importance in ESCWA

- Limited water
- Agriculture still important in most countries.
- Fragile, degraded lands: 15.3 million hectares farmland degraded. Losses US\$5 billion of agricultural revenue per year
- Rural livelihoods
- Community participation
- Indigenous knowledge



Fragile
Mediterranean
Semi-arid
Ecosystem,
Tubnah Village,
North Jordan

7

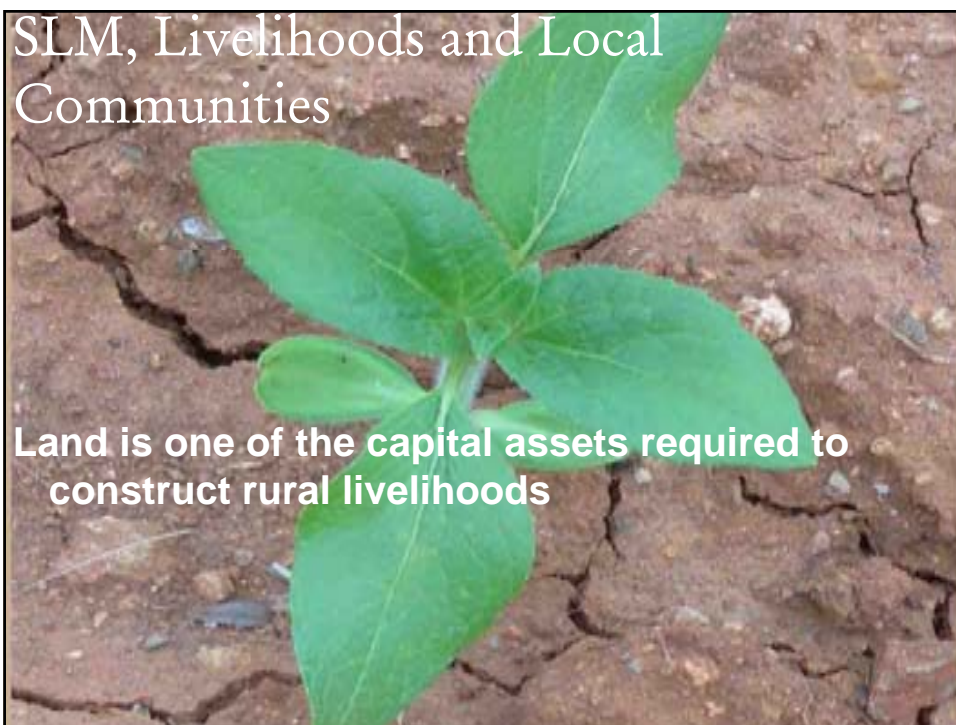


Severe Drought affecting Coffee Plantation (Yemen)

8



Salinity induced by irrigation in the Euphrates basin in Syria 9



SLM, Livelihoods and Local Communities

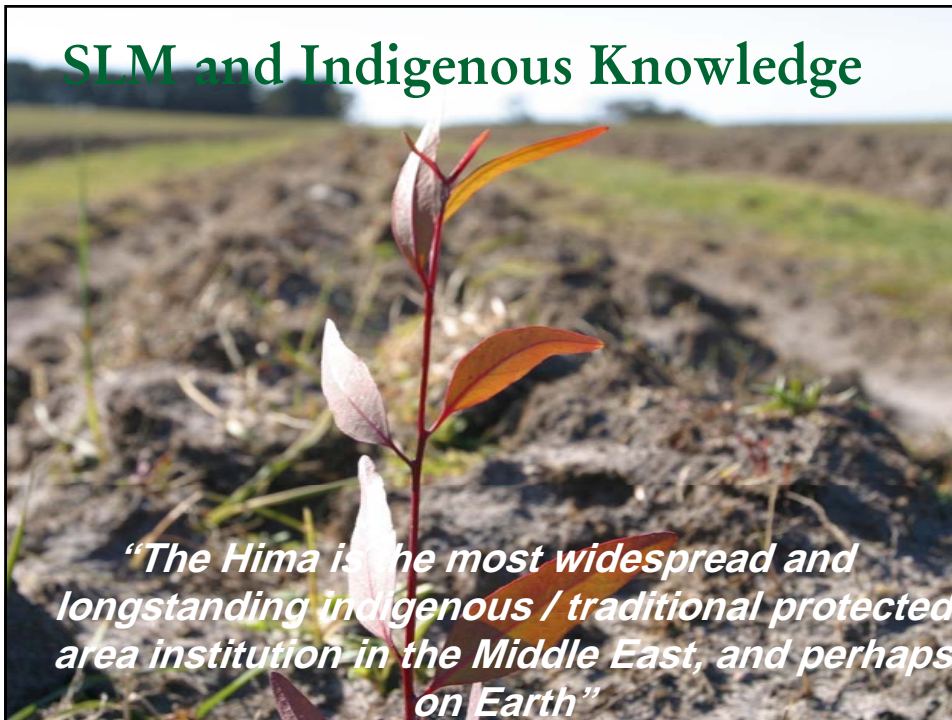
Land is one of the capital assets required to construct rural livelihoods

SLM and Community Participation



Community Communication in Hawf, Yemen: Civil society and Women groups

SLM and Indigenous Knowledge



“The Hima is the most widespread and longstanding indigenous / traditional protected area institution in the Middle East, and perhaps on Earth”

II. SLM: objectives, scope and limitations

13

SLM in ESCWA

- Sustain the ecosystem of the marginal drylands
- Enhance livelihoods
- Adapt agriculture to climate change

Objectives and scope of SLM (CDE, 2008)

Sustainable Land Management – Fields of Observation

Level	Dimensions of sustainability			
	Institutional	Socio-cultural	Economic	Ecological
Household (including farm plot level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and knowledge • Access to natural resources • Household strategies • ... 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income, assets and consumption • Labour and workload • Land management and farming system • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of natural resources • ...
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local leadership • Local institutions • Producer and self-help organisations • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender issues • Conflict management • Innovation • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets, prices and credit • Public property • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use • Water resources • ...
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social & economic disparities • ... 		
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, training and extension • Land and water rights, tenure • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in social values • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities / migration • Infrastructure • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land cover • Off-site effects • ...

15

Limitations of SLM in ESCWA

- **Policy** level: Absence of appropriate policies legislations and incentives, as well as with the failure to mainstream SLM in land use planning and in rural development.
- **Technical** level: Need to invest in new technologies and to approach resource management as a system rather than as a series of discrete actions. Paucity of data for planning, M&E.
- **Community** level: Relevance of SLM not always apparent. Difficulty of scaling-up and replicating experiences. Unrealistic expectation-building

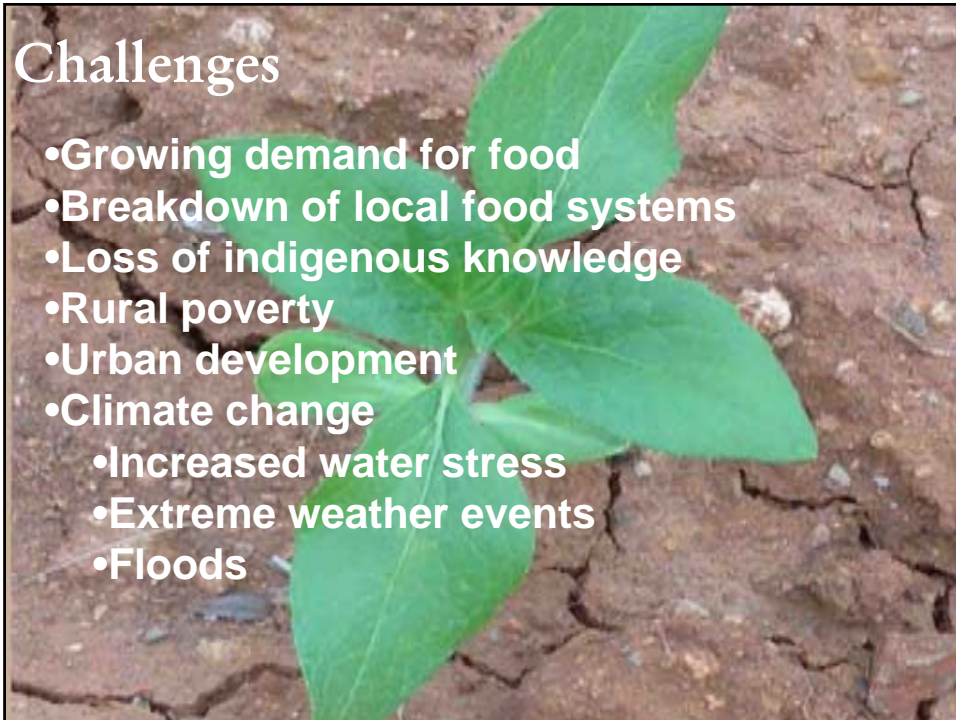
16

III. Challenges limiting the implementation of SLM in ESCWA

17

Challenges

- Growing demand for food
- Breakdown of local food systems
- Loss of indigenous knowledge
- Rural poverty
- Urban development
- Climate change
 - Increased water stress
 - Extreme weather events
 - Floods



Factors limiting the implementation of SLM in ESCWA

- **1-Insufficient sharing of knowledge and technology.** *Solution:* Improving the access to clear and easily understandable land management techniques, small credit schemes
- **2- Inadequate policies and weak institutional governance.** *Solution:* Strengthen decentralized management and participatory governance of natural resources.

19

Factors limiting the implementation of SLM in ESCWA

- **3- Economic and financial limitations.** *Solution:* Mainstreaming of environmental concerns into production program, policies, and cross-cutting sectors
- **4- Social and behavioral motivation.** *Solution:* Rural literacy and education, especially environmental education, must be supported and promoted as a priority in achieving sustainable development goals.

20

The Jordanian Case (GEF, 2008)

- Jordan has only about 5% of arable land and has a high water deficiency. Its limited natural resources are a major challenge altering its agricultural productivity. This challenge is being aggravated by 22% of land degradation due to overpopulation. Therefore, promotion of SLM is essential for agricultural purposes. However, the following barriers obstruct the mainstreaming of SLM:

1- Lack of effective knowledge information and management

2- Institutional and Governance Barrier

3- Economic and Financial Barrier

21



Agrobiodiversity Protection and Soil Conservation in Bseira, Jordan

22

IV. Options Available to implement SLM

23

Dealing with unsustainability

- Understand the processes leading to the adoption and implementation of unsustainable land use practices.
- Triggers of unsustainable land use:
 - Land users are unaware of the consequences of land use activities
 - Land insecurity prevents investment in SLM
 - Poverty prevents investment in SLM
 - Rapid population growth leads to cultivation of marginal land
 - Rapid population decline leads to neglect in maintaining protective practices
 - Policy failures create market imperfections, poverty, and degradation

24

Changing the way we use land

- INM
- IPM
- Organic Farming
- Conservation Farming

This will depend on:

- Skills
- Knowledge
- Policies

25

Innovative Approaches

- Farming systems-based approaches
- Livelihoods-based approaches
- Value chain-based approaches

26

V. Case studies and lessons learned

27





Traditional Method for Rain Water Harvesting

29

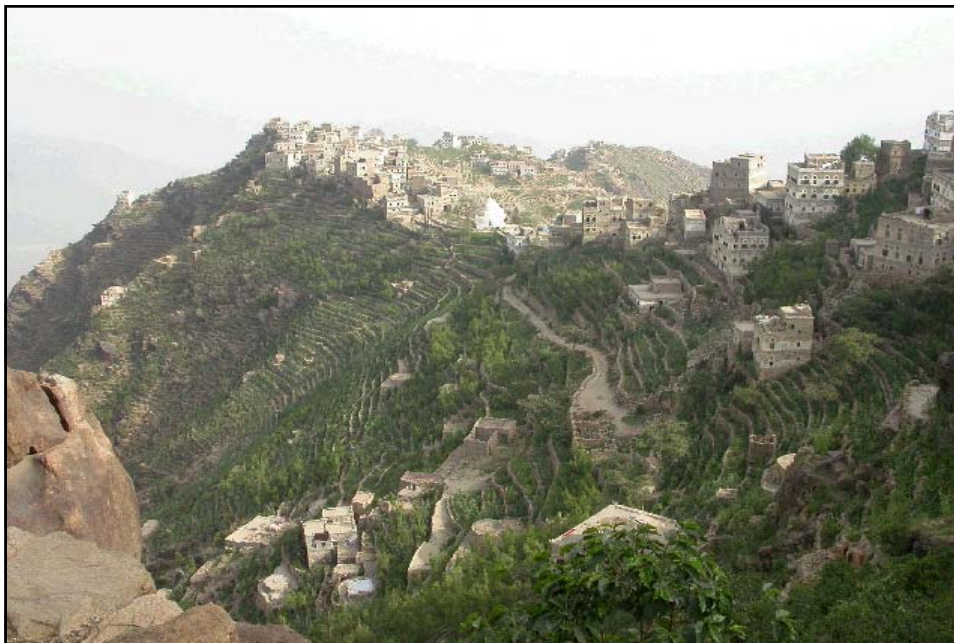


Water Catchment Area [Land resources conservation through rain water harvesting, Al-Ghaileen Village, Bura district, Hodiedah Governorate, Yemen³⁰]



Rehabilitation of Natural Rangeland in Al Mujib Reserve, Jordan

31



Coffee grown in terraces as rainfed crops (Al Ghaileen Village, Yemen)



Management of the southern sector of Al-Shouf Cedar Reserve in collaboration with local communities (Niha, Mrusti, Jibaa and Khraibi) ³³



Soil and Water Preservation (“Bridges” Traditional Techniques) ³⁴

Lessons Learned

Strategic goals

1. Food security and sovereignty are issues of **local, national, regional and global** concerns. They can only be achieved sustainably in **stable ecosystems**.
2. Sustainability requires **collective** efforts. These require **policy** interventions that facilitate and encourage the local **governance** of land resources.

35

Lessons Learned

3. Economic and environmental interests must be **integrated** with other **livelihood** concerns. Here, the importance of **off-farm income** to support SLM must be recognized.
4. **Agriculture** is gaining renewed prominence as an important part of the **solution** of environmental degradation and rural poverty. SLM is required more than ever.

36

Lessons Learned

5. There is a **need for rigorous monitoring** of the effectiveness of SLM. Reliable land quality **indicators** are required for guidance.
6. Farming must strike a **balance** between the need to increase productivity, needed by farmers and society, and the need to sustain ecosystems. This may be achieved through **improved management methods** rather than through the adoption of high input crop varieties and the associated technological package.

37

Lessons Learned

7. An **enabling policy environment** that empowers farmers and land managers remains essential. Governance and decentralization of resource management must be achieved.
8. SLM should address the **multifunctionality of rural landscape** rather than just farming and food productions. Land managers are truly the stewards of the rural landscape, and their contribution has to be recognized at the environmental, economic and cultural levels.

38

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

39

Blue Print for Regional SLM Initiative

- Make SLM a **local concern and a national responsibility** through mainstreaming in poverty reduction and rural development strategies.
- Approach SLM as an **integrated development plan** rather than as a series of technical options.

40

Blue Print for Regional SLM Initiative

- Institutionalize collaboration between land users, technical experts and policy makers for the purpose of identifying, monitoring and addressing resource degradation. These can take the form of users' networks.
- Foster knowledge-sharing platforms between local, regional and global actors for the exchange of good practices and of lessons learned.

41

Blue Print for Regional SLM Initiative

- Intensify locally-based research in order to improve the understanding of the ecological, social and economic causes of degradation.
- Promote the development of appropriate technologies that are responsive to change.

42

Blue Print for Regional SLM Initiative

- Regularly evaluate the progress of SLM projects and programs through the development of locally relevant **indicators and M&E processes**.
- Encourage **long term commitment** to SLM by research and development institutions.

43

Conclusions and recommendations

- Investigate and adapt **local innovations** and indigenous knowledge in SLM.
- Prioritize **prevention and mitigation** as essential components of SLM technical programs.

44

Conclusions and recommendations

- Develop **locally appropriate methods** for the **social, cultural and economic valuation** of land and ecosystems. Use to promote SLM with policy makers and policy advisors.
- Create an **enabling environment** for SLM by addressing issues of **market opportunities**, legislation and security of **land use rights**.

45

Blue Print for Regional SLM Initiative

- Develop an **appropriate, non-market distorting incentive scheme** to promote SLM in regions where poverty is a barrier to investment in SLM.

46

Need for a Comprehensive Capacity Building Program

- Land Users
- Researchers
- NGOs and Civil Society
- Donors
- Policy makers

47



48