

Side-Event

How to Encourage Innovative Capacities to Achieve Land Degradation Neutrality?



When: 9 March 2015, 13.00- 15.00

Where: Met 10 Room

Main Side-event Objectives:

Building on the approaches taken by CGIAR's three systems research programs and the newly established network of networks of dryland scientists, the aim of this event is to generate a critical discussion of how these approaches can be used to foster greater innovative capacities of land users and policy makers in order to achieve land degradation neutrality. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify and illustrate promising examples of partnerships that build capacity to innovate in agro-ecosystems critical for rural livelihoods.
2. Identify and probe key challenges to building inclusive innovation in these systems.
3. Debate implications for the SDGs and actions needed by governments, development agencies, and the UN system to support inclusive innovation.

Moderator: Dr. Richard Thomas, CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems

Overview

Drylands' smallholder farmers and pastoralists, operate in a complex reality where a range of social and biophysical processes interact and affect their livelihoods. Reorienting the dynamics of these integrated systems towards desirable outcomes, such as reducing poverty, eliminating conflict and improving livelihoods, is essential for sustainable development.

For this to happen, new partnerships must be forged amongst the range of research, development, civil society, private sector and public stakeholders in these systems. The research community needs to appreciate the skills inherent in dryland populations and to design research and capacity building activities that complement and significantly enhance these skills by generating and dissemination appropriate information based on sound system analyses rather than promoting components without a clear understanding of the context in which they can work and be adopted at large scales of impact..

At the same time innovation platforms need to be created that add to value chains by encouraging diversification and local income generation by harnessing local and 'scientific' knowledge that, when combined with responsible private sector investment, will result in local clusters of economic activity incorporating other livelihood options such as renewable energy, ecotourism, artisanal goods and biodiversity for pharmaceuticals and medicinals.

For such transformations, resilient dryland systems with the capacity to adapt to changing conditions, are essential.

Fostering this capacity to innovate is critical to progress in many of the focus areas of the SDGs, especially in improving agricultural livelihoods, promoting sustainable agriculture, restoring terrestrial ecosystems and implementing global partnerships to sustain development.

Place-based agro-ecosystem research, involving researchers, development workers, farmer groups, civil society, the private sector and policymakers, can increase the impact of development policies and investments on the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, and the resilience of natural resource systems on which they depend.

