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# International Biodiversity Day 2023: Message by UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw

19 MAY 2023 | STATEMENT | BIODIVERSITY

On International Biodiversity Day, we stand at a pivotal moment. We are at a point where we have the power to strengthen life on Earth, or let it decline.

The theme "From Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity" is challenging us to turn our commitments into tangible actions.

The natural world is a magnificent tapestry.

A grand masterpiece painted with a palette of countless species, and ecosystems.

Nature is the source of our existence.

Nature, including Land, provides us with the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the medicine that heals.

But this complex symphony of life stands on a precipice.

Changes in how we use land are predicted to have the most devastating impact on biodiversity by 2100.

Consider this: although land covers less than 30 per cent of the Earth's surface, it is home to a staggering 85 per cent of all species.

These lands support a rich variety of ecosystems that provide essential goods and services that sustain life on our planet.

Yet the threads of this tapestry are fraying.

If we continue on our current path, the cheerful songs of birds or the buzzing of bees may become sounds of distant past.

The peaceful sight of a lush grassland or a healthy wetland may be relegated to a souvenir.

These trends are not only leading to the loss of biodiversity, but they are also exacerbating climate change.

Today we are called to action.

We must harness the power of synergy, a power where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Synergies, like the harmony of a finely tuned orchestra, exist where commitments intersect under binding multilateral agreements and voluntary commitments.

Here, at the nexus of land governance, management, and restoration, we find a melody that can restore balance.

The crises of land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change are interconnected, and their effects are felt in our societies, ecosystems, and economies.

The path to harmony lies in conserving, managing, and restoring our ecosystems and land resources. That's where we can strike the right notes for the healthier planet.

The Rio Conventions alongside the Sustainable Development Goals, form a symphony of resilience and sustainability.

Harnessing synergies requires an orchestra in harmony.

We need to integrate these agreements into our national plans, harmonizing our actions for a better future.

With the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework in late 2022, we have a roadmap for a harmonious future.

In support of this Framework, the UNCCD released a Synergy Brief on this year's Biodiversity Day, 22 May.

So far, concerted action has been insufficient to address the interlinked biodiversity loss and land degradation crises, the brief suggests.

Preventing the degradation of ecosystems and rehabilitating or restoring degraded land and soil are cost-effective responses that can safeguard biodiversity and improve rural livelihoods, while reducing the growing environmental risks to our societies, economies, and the natural world.

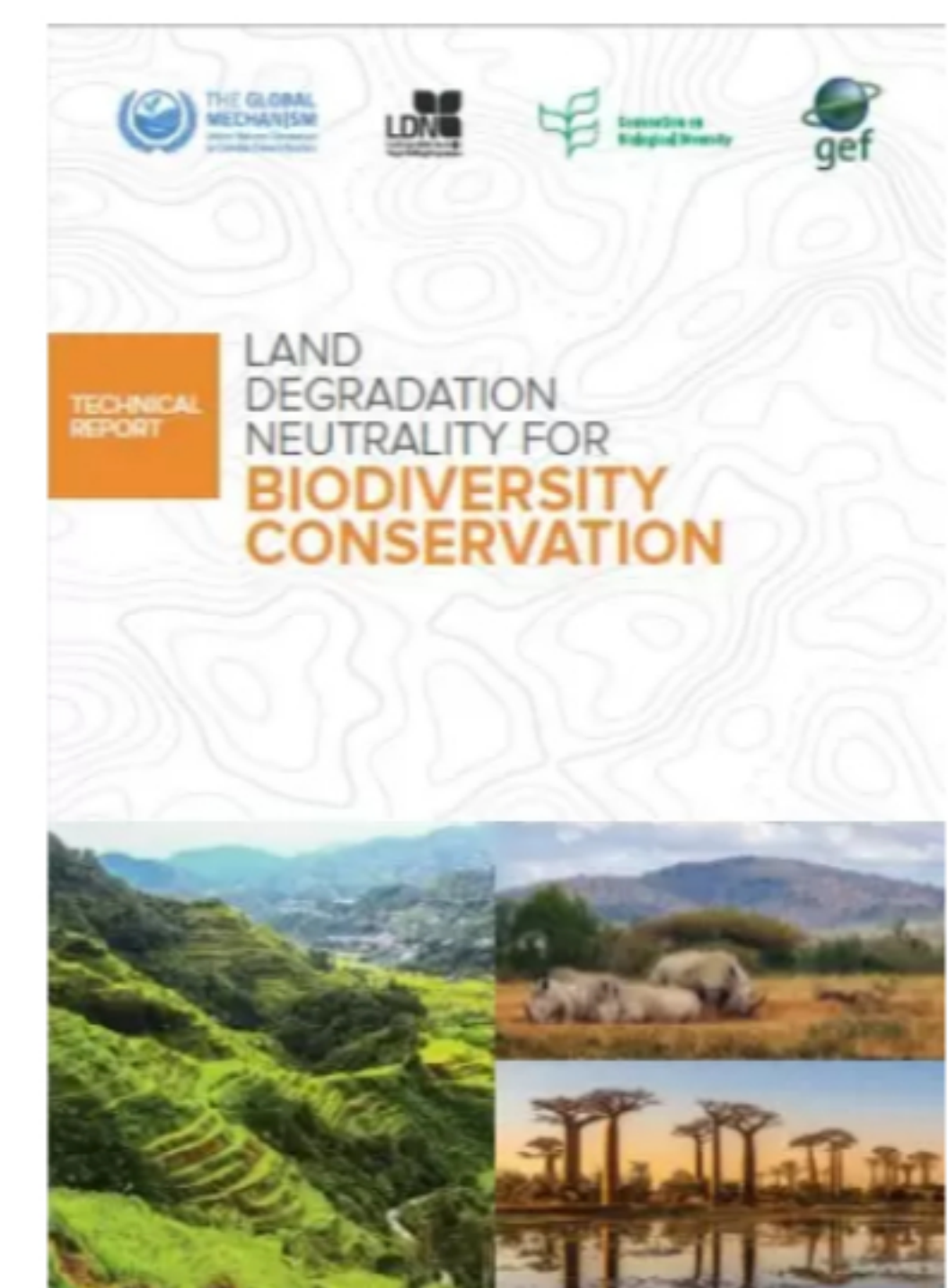
So, on this International Biodiversity Day 2023, let us rise to the challenge.

Together, we can turn the silence of biodiversity loss into a symphony of life.

A symphony that will echo through the ages.

Thank you!

## Publications



### Land Degradation Neutrality for biodiversity conservation: How healthy land safeguards nature

The report "Land Degradation Neutrality for Biodiversity Conservation: How Healthy Land Safeguards Nature" highlights how LDN can address the priorities of both the CBD and the...