**UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030**

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**2.1 Farmlands**

**20% of croplands show stressed or declining productivity**

Farmlands sustain human life. They provide us with food, fibre and other essential products and also supply biodiversity habitat, economic opportunities and spiritual and cultural benefits (UNCCD 2017).

At least two billion people depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods, particularly poor and rural populations (Searchinger et al. 2019; Abraham and Pingali 2020), and over 90 per cent of our calories and protein originate on land (FAOSTAT 2021)

Farmland degradation is reducing crop and livestock yields.

While farmland degradation typically involves harm to soils (FAO and ITPS 2015), it can also result from the loss of wild species that provide pest control and crop pollination (Dainese et al. 2019).

Roughly 80 per cent of global arable land is impacted by at least one form of degradation, such as aridity, vegetation decline, soil salinization and loss of soil carbon.

Soil erosion alone affects roughly one-fifth of farmlands worldwide and is estimated to have increased by 2.5 per cent between 2001 and 2012, primarily due to deforestation and cropland expansion (Prăvălie et al. 2021).

Estimates project that land degradation could reduce global food productivity by 12 per cent, causing food prices to soar by up to 30 per cent by 2040 (Noel et al. 2015; Kopittke et al. 2019).

Approximately 12 million hectares of severely eroded croplands in the European Union contribute to an annual loss in agricultural productivity of EUR 1.25 billion (Panagos et al. 2018).

In the USA it is estimated that the decline in soil fertility in maize fields costs farmers over half a billion dollars per year in extra fertilizer (Jang et al. 2020).

In China, where only 14 per cent of the land area is suitable for crop production, over 50 per cent of cultivated land has experienced degradation (Deng 2016).