



Greening with mangroves in drylands and beyond

26 July 2024, 9:30–10:45 hrs (CEST)

Sheikh Zayed Centre, FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy

Organizer: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Co-organizer: Government of the Saudi Arabia

Brief introduction

The event will be organized to celebrate the [International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem](#) on 26 July in conjunction with a parallel Workshop on Mangroves held on the same day in Saudi Arabia. The event will aim to promote awareness on the role of mangroves in sustainable development, livelihoods and climate response with a focus on the dryland countries, including within the Saudi Green Initiative. Saudi Arabia, the event co-organizer, is implementing an ambitious mangrove planting programme recognizing mangroves as an essential biological barrier to protect biodiversity and prevent erosion in the coastal areas as part of the Saudi Green Initiative.

Saudi Arabia is hosting UNCCD COP 16, 2–13 December 2024, in Riyadh, where restoration of degraded forest lands, including mangroves, will be part of the deliberations.

Countries and partner organizations will share perspectives on elevating the profile of mangroves as an ecosystem-based approach at national, regional and global levels, given the role of mangroves in meeting commitments under the Paris Agreement, Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, Land Degradation Neutrality target and various ecosystem restoration commitments including UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the Bonn Challenge.

The event will also seek to enhance collaboration among partners working on sustainable mangrove management, conservation and restoration. It will provide an opportunity to highlight FAO's and Member countries' work on mangroves, including those related to

climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable forest management, forest monitoring and integrated coastal management, and enhanced local livelihoods including in forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, and call for strengthened partnerships going forward. The event will consist of two keynote presentations, followed by an interactive, moderated panel and a plenary discussion.

Background

Mangroves provide essential ecosystem services that contribute significantly to the livelihoods, well-being and security of coastal communities. Despite the numerous benefits they offer, mangrove forests are among the most threatened and vulnerable ecosystems worldwide.

Throughout the last decade, FAO has spearheaded forty mangrove-related projects, spanning twenty-eight nations. These have focused on several thematic areas, including but not limited to sustainable management, livelihoods, policymaking, capacity development, conservation, restoration, knowledge and awareness raising, and investment.

Among the recent publications related mangroves, FAO's 2023 report, ["The World's Mangroves 2000–2020"](#), stands out as the first global study to integrate local expertise in a sampling approach to identify mangrove areas and changes. In order to better integrate sustainable management, conservation and restoration of mangroves in strategies to address climate, biodiversity, food security and nutrition, as well as livelihoods, countries require improved assessment of mangrove extent, degradation, changes over time, drivers of change and valuation of ecosystem services provided by mangroves.

The necessity of identifying areas with the most urgent needs for mangrove restoration is also highlighted. Countries emphasize the role of mangroves as a potential solution to coastal resilience, as efficient carbon sinks and storage, and sources of sustainable livelihood.

The objectives of the event are to:

1. promote awareness on the role of mangroves in sustainable development, livelihoods and climate response
2. share perspectives on elevating the profile of mangroves in development and climate strategies at national and global levels with a focus on dryland countries; and
3. enhance collaboration among partners working on sustainable mangrove management, conservation and restoration.

Side event agenda, speakers and format

Format: In person; hybrid; webcast

Interpretation languages: **Arabic, English, French and Spanish**







Expected number of participants: 100+, including virtual participation




Moderator: Tiina Vahanen, Deputy Director, FAO Forestry Division

Agenda

Time	Item
09:30-09:35	Welcome: Zhimin Wu, Director, FAO Forestry Division
09:35-09:45	Keynote intervention: Khaled Alabdulkader, CEO of National Centre for Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification, Saudi Arabia
09:45-10:00	Keynote presentation: Musonda Mumba, Secretary General, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
10:00-10:05	Video: Work on mangroves in Saudi Arabia
10:05-10:30	Interactive, moderated panel: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Musonda Mumba, Secretary General, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands2. Sameer Ali Malaekah, Assistant General Manager, General Directorate of Forests, National Center for the Development of Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification, Saudi Arabia3. Indonesia4. Eduardo Vargas Pérez, Coordinador General de Conservación y Restauración, Mexico5. Mark Spalding, Senior Marine Scientist, The Nature Conservancy6. Vera Agostini, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, FAO
10:30-10:45	Plenary discussion: Q/A
10:40-10:45	Closing remarks: Tiina Vahanen, Deputy Director, FAO Forestry Division

Speaker's biography and pictures

Speaker's picture	Title, affiliation
<p>Tiina Vahanen</p> 	Deputy Director Forestry Division, FAO
<p>Zhimin Wu</p> 	Director, Forestry Division, FAO
<p>Khaled Alabdulkader</p> 	CEO, National Centre for Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification, Saudi Arabia
<p>Musonda Mumba</p> 	Secretary General, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
<p>Sameer Ali Malaekah</p> 	Assistant General Manager, General Directorate of Forests, National Center for the Development of Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification, Saudi Arabia
<p>Mark Spalding</p> 	Senior Marine Scientist, The Nature Conservancy

		
<p>Vera Agostini</p> 		<p>Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, FAO</p>
<p>Eduardo Vargas Pérez</p> 		<p>General Coordinator of Conservation and Restoration, Mexico</p>