



Australian policies on land restoration shortlisted for global award

Hamburg/Bonn, 20 July 2017 – The 2017 Future Policy Award has released a shortlist of the world's best policies for tackling land degradation, one of humanity's foremost challenges that undermines food security, livelihoods and the health of hundreds of millions of people.

The six shortlisted policies are from Australia, Brazil, China, Ethiopia's Tigray Region, Jordan, and Niger. The international 4 per 1000 initiative is also contending for the Future Policy Award.

The prestigious award, which focuses on a different area of policy progress each year, celebrates exemplary laws that create better living conditions for current and future generations.

For this year's award, the World Future Council teamed up with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to highlight laws and policies that contribute in two ways.

First, laws that protect of life and livelihoods in the drylands. Drylands cover close to 40 per cent of the Earth's land and are extremely vulnerable to over-exploitation, inappropriate land use and climate variability. They are among the most conflict- and drought-prone regions of the world.

Droughts, which are getting more severe, frequent and widespread with climate change, are common in drylands, and can amplify tensions within and between communities. In the last century, droughts killed more people than any other weather-related catastrophe.

Second, laws that advance Sustainable Development Goal 15, target 3, which is to combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

Political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all contribute to desertification. Without action to restore and rehabilitate degraded land, an estimated 135 million people are at risk of being displaced by desertification.

UNCCD's Executive Secretary Monique Barbut describes desertification as "a silent, invisible crisis that is destabilizing communities on a global scale."

In total, twenty-seven policies and initiatives from 18 countries were nominated. Australia's *Indigenous Protected Areas programme and Working on Country Indigenous Rangers programme* are shortlisted for the award of the world's best policies to combat desertification and land degradation. Indigenous Rangers are at the forefront of tackling environmental degradation right across Australia. 75 Indigenous Protected Areas now make up more than 44 per cent of the National Reserve System and have created the world's largest contiguous area of protected arid land.

Other shortlisted policies are Brazil's *Cistern Programme and the National Programme to Support Rainwater Harvesting and Other Social Technologies for Access to Water*, China's *Law of the People's Republic of China on Prevention and Control of Desertification*, Ethiopia's *Tigray Region Conservation-Based Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization supported by Mass Mobilization Campaigns and the Youth Responsive Land Policy More people less erosion*, the international 4 per

1000 Initiative: Soils for Food Security and Climate, Jordan's Updated Rangeland Strategy for Jordan, and Niger's 3N Initiative 'Nigeriens Nourishing Nigeriens' – Strategy for food security, nutrition, and sustainable agricultural development.

The winners will be announced on 22 August 2017. The award ceremony will take place during the Thirteen Session of the Conference of the Parties of UNCCD in Ordos, China, scheduled from 6-16 September 2017.

The Future Policy Award is unique in focusing global attention towards the most effective policies changing lives across the planet. The aim of the award is to raise global awareness for exemplary laws and policies.

The policy evaluation is based on the "Seven Principles for Future Just Lawmaking." Consequently, policies score high not only by promoting the sustainable use of resources but also by addressing equity, eradication of poverty, participation, and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

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The World Future Council

The [World Future Council](#) brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy-making. Its up to 50 eminent members from around the globe have already successfully promoted change. The Council addresses challenges to our common future and provides decision makers with effective policy solutions. In close cooperation with civil society actors, parliamentarians, governments, business and international organizations the World Future Council identifies "best policies" around the globe. The World Future Council is registered as a charitable foundation in Hamburg, Germany.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the only legally binding international agreement on land issues. The Convention promotes good land stewardship. Its 196 Parties aim, through partnerships, to implement the Convention and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The end goal is to protect our land, from over-use and drought, so it can continue to provide us all with food, water and energy. By sustainably managing land and striving to achieve land degradation neutrality, now and in the future, we will reduce the impact of climate change, avoid conflict over natural resources and help communities to thrive.