

# Soil, Food Systems, and Sustainability

## Reclaiming Nature Through Agriculture and Food Focused Agenda

**U**N Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030): Strategic Framework for Global Renewal represents a landmark global initiative, jointly spearheaded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to catalyse large-scale efforts aimed at reversing the degradation of the world's ecosystems.

This movement is not merely environmental in scope—it is a strategic intervention at the intersection of climate action, food security, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development. With ecosystems under unprecedented pressure from deforestation, pollution, urban expansion, and unsustainable agricultural practices, the Decade serves as a rallying call to governments, civil society, businesses, and individuals to restore the natural systems that underpin human well-being and planetary health.

### About the **AUTHOR**

**Dr. Nidhi Nagabhatla is Task Force Member, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Council; Member, World Agriculture Forum and Program Lead: Nature, Climate and Health, UNU CRIS**



It is a high-impact global initiative designed to catalyse transformative action across sectors to prevent, halt, and reverse ecosystem degradation. The Decade is mobilising governments, civil society, private sector actors, and local communities under a unified restoration agenda. These agencies serve as conveners, technical advisors, and facilitators of global collaboration. The initiative spans 10 years, aligning with the final decade for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and averting irreversible climate tipping points. This window represents a critical opportunity to embed restoration into national policies, investment portfolios, and development strategies.

### Ecosystem Restoration in Agricultural Landscapes

Agricultural lands are a focal point of this restoration agenda. Decades of intensive farming—characterized by monocultures, excessive tillage, chemical fertilizers, and pesticide overuse—have depleted soil fertility, disrupted water cycles, and eroded biodiversity. The Decade promotes a paradigm shift toward regenerative agriculture, advocating for practices such as crop rotation, agroforestry, integrated livestock systems, and the use of organic inputs. These approaches not only rehabilitate degraded soils and landscapes but also enhance resilience to climate shocks, improve yields, and support the livelihoods of rural communities. Moreover, the initiative encourages collaborative resource management, fostering alliances between farmers and pastoralists to share knowledge, optimize land use, and build social cohesion.

### Three summary points

**Agroecological practices:** Reduced tillage, organic fertilizers, and biological pest control.

**Diversified cropping systems:** Crop rotation, agroforestry, and integration of livestock.

**Collaborative resource management:** Strengthening alliances between farmers and pastoralists for shared stewardship of land and water.

Public engagement is a cornerstone

**Anchored in the urgency of climate resilience and sustainable development, this movement aims to restore the planet's natural systems — from forests and wetlands to agricultural lands — ensuring long-term ecological health and human prosperity**

of the Decade's strategy. Through the global campaign #GenerationRestoration, individuals and organizations are invited to become active participants in ecosystem recovery—whether by supporting flagship restoration projects, sharing knowledge and resources, or adopting sustainable practices in their own communities united under this banner. This campaign fosters awareness, advocacy, and behavioural change at scale.

The Restoration Resource Centre serves as a digital hub, connecting practitioners, educators, and policymakers with tools, case studies, and technical guidance to scale up restoration efforts. Emerging as a bold and timely response to the environmental crises of our age. It offers a structured framework for aligning national policies with global sustainability goals, unlocking green investment, and empowering communities to reclaim degraded landscapes. By restoring ecosystems, we restore the foundation of life itself—ensuring a healthier, more equitable, and more resilient future for generations to come.

This strategic movement recognizes the critical role food systems play in sustaining life—and emphasizes the urgent need to restore them within this decisive ten-year window, which aligns with the timeline for achieving the SDG agenda of 'food security for all' and 'leaving no one behind'.

A key focus of the Decade is agricultural restoration, addressing the diverse

impacts of intensive farming practices and to counter these, the initiative promotes sustainable land management techniques including crop rotation, agroforestry, natural fertilizers, and integrated livestock systems, all designed to improve soil health, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods. It also encourages collaboration between farmers and pastoralists to optimize resource sharing and resilience.

This 'Global Call to Action' to restore degraded ecosystems and put the world on a path toward a sustainable future, anticipating healthy ecosystems are fundamental, providing essential services like producing food, generating oxygen, filtering water, and sequestering carbon.

The decade presents strategic, policy-oriented version of your content, tailored for stakeholders, decision-makers, and institutional partners, join us #GenerationRestoration by using this hashtag to join a global community of individuals and organizations committed to restoring ecosystems. Support and amplify UN-endorsed restoration projects that demonstrate scalable models of success. These initiatives serve as proof points for policy replication and investment and learn about and support flagship initiatives being promoted by the UN Decade, which showcase successful restoration projects.

### Share Resources

Access and share resources from the Restoration Resource Centre, which connects users with practitioners, educators, and other resources. Write this in a strategic language. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration offers a vital and timely framework to harmonize national development agendas with global sustainability goals. It serves as a catalyst for unlocking green financing, fostering innovation, and strengthening the resilience of communities worldwide. This is more than a call to restore nature—it is a strategic opportunity to reimagine and rebuild food systems that nourish both people and planet. By empowering the communities who create and sustain these systems, we can transform this decade into a lasting legacy of renewal, equity, and ecological balance.