



Erosion-land use change-climate change nexus in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Vincent Kakembo

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa (vincent.kakembo@nmmu.ac.za)

Unlike many parts of the world where land recovery has been realised as a response to less dependence on land for a livelihood, soil erosion – mainly on abandoned cultivated and overgrazed communal lands in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa – has intensified. Land abandonment is attributed by most elderly land users to drought that hit the area in the 1960s. The interaction among land-degradation drivers – ranging from soil properties, topography, land-use changes and vegetation to local climate – has given rise to a self-amplifying land degradation feedback loop that has perpetuated severe forms of soil erosion. This has rendered the degraded areas particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts on water. The perpetual degradation calls for developing a dedicated policy on the management and rehabilitation of eroded lands. Restoration approaches should entail promoting discontinuity on eroded hillslopes. Communal farmers also have to be sensitised and empowered to take ownership of the land-restoration process.