

For specialized media

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**betterSoil e.V. and UN Convention to Combat Desertification COP15 sign cooperation agreement**

## **betterSoil e.V. reached important mile stone signing cooperation with UNCCD COP15**

**Healthy soils are the key to climate protection. betterSoil is committed to precisely this issue by developing appropriate business models. Now the initiators, based in Ulm, Germany, have scored a coup. Last Tuesday, the President of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and betterSoil signed a cooperation agreement with the aim of counteracting the loss of fertile soils and improving soil quality and fertility.**

**Abidjan/Ulm.** On July 25, 2023, betterSoil e.V. and the President of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification COP15 (UNCCD COP15), Alain-Richard DONWAHI, signed a cooperation agreement. The aim of the partnership is to pursue climate-positive agriculture by jointly counteracting the loss of fertile soils. The soil quality and its fertility will be improved. betterSoil and the president of the upcoming conference (COP15) in Abidjan agreed to work on national and international projects to improve soil health. This is to be achieved on the one hand by increasing the humus content and on the other hand with the help of the storage of CO<sub>2</sub> in the soil. The aim is also to increase farmers' incomes and protect biodiversity and the climate.

“By putting together our skills, knowledge and resources UNCCD COP 15 Presidency and betterSoil are committed to take up the challenge of rehabilitating and restoring degraded soils”, said Alain-Richard DONWAHI at the online meeting where the official cooperation agreement was signed. Promoting soil health benefits 14 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Farmers and companies alike should be involved in this. Farmers have an interest in harvesting more through better soil quality. What companies are concerned about is the stability of their supply chain. The CEO of betterSoil, Azadeh Farajpour, emphasized that increasingly extreme weather conditions such as droughts and heavy rainfall threaten the livelihood of many farmers. Further, business models of companies that import food, e.g. from African countries to Europe, such as coffee or nuts, are threatened. This value chain must function well for global food security.

Farmers and companies can only benefit from working with betterSoil and the UNCCD COP15 presidency. betterSoil develops recipes for soil improvement based on four principles: Soil Management, Agroforestry, Compost and Biochar. By collecting local biological waste, betterSoil produces a natural soil amendment – the betterSoil Booster – based on compost and biochar. The application of the booster is combined with specialized soil consultancy and the indigenous knowledge of farmers. Through this collaboration, there is a real opportunity to make supply chains more climate resilient, achieve a more stable harvest, and increase food security for a growing population.

In addition, certain European-based companies are required to report on their sustainability activities under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). German companies are even required to pay attention to water and soil quality under Article 9 of Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations in Supply Chains (LkSG).

Both parties, UNCCD COP15 and betterSoil feel responsible to raise awareness on these issues. This is because soils are not yet given the attention they need to make valuable progress on a large scale. Therefore, collaboration is also planned in terms of communication efforts.

**Background:** Currently, about 10 million hectares of fertile soil are lost every year due to desertification and land degradation. This is roughly the size of 14 million soccer fields. However, more than 90% of our food is produced on soils and the world's population is expected to grow from 8 to 10 billion people by 2050. The healthier the soils, the higher the food quality due to higher nutrient content. Improving soils also protects biodiversity and the climate system because good soils can store large amounts of carbon dioxide and water.

**UNCCD COP15:** Back in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was adopted to mitigate the effects of drought. The fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UNCCD brings together leaders from governments, the private sector, civil society, and other key stakeholders from around the world to advance progress on the future sustainable management of land. The UNCCD COP15 is led by its President, Alain-Richard DONWAHI, in Ivory Coast.

**betterSoil:** is an international company and organization that develops business models around healthy soils. Its headquarters is located in Ulm, Germany. Officially founded in 2021, betterSoil has already received significant support, including from Prof. Dr. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker (Honorary President of the Club of Rome), Dr. Franz Fischler (former EU Agriculture Commissioner), Dr. Mamphela Ramphele (Co-President of the Club of Rome), and Prof. Dr. Hans Joachim Schellnhuber (Founding President of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research). The founder of betterSoil, Azadeh Farajpour, launches national and international projects to improve soil quality for climate resilience, climate change mitigation, biodiversity protection and sustainable food production.

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