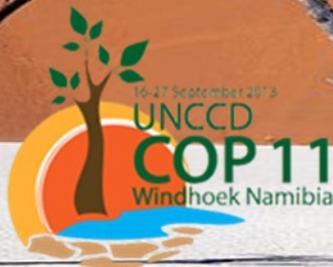


# Eco - newsletter



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Eco-newsletter has been published by Non-Governmental Groups at major conferences since the Stockholm Environmental Conference in 1972. This issue is produced by groups attending the UNCCD COP 11 in Windhoek, Namibia

## Resources mobilization is more than just funding, but harnessing the 'Power of Local Action and Knowledge'



... from the First CSO Open Dialogue Session of COP11 (Picture courtesy of Christian Hofer/GEF)

A fruitful and interactive Open Dialogue Session (ODS) between CSOs and the Parties was held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2013. This interactive session, ODS, was opened by Mr Thomas Tichelma (EU), who described CSOs as engineers and promoters of participatory approaches in the implementation of the UNCCD. The Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Mr Luc Gnacadja, highlighted the important role CSOs play in the UNCCD process, and urge the Parties to listen to CSOs' messages and concerns during COP11. The ODS was moderated by Mr Patrice Burger from the Centre d' Action et de Realisations Internationales (CARI). The topic under discussion was "Mobilization of resources to support the implementation of the UNCCD through building effective partnerships between national and international actors".

Presentations by Ms Marioldy Sanchez (AIDER, Peru), Ms Fatima Ahmed (Zenab

Women, Sudan) and Ms Eileen Ravin (Equator, Initiative) demonstrated how CSOs are not only mobilizing resources, but also how they are creating and building effective partnerships to support the implementation of UNCCD, at national level. At international level, presentations by Mr Sung-gil (Future Forest) and Christian Houdus (DRYNET) demonstrated how CSOs are mobilizing resources and building effective partnerships for the implementation of the UNCCD. All these presentations demonstrated that mobilizing resources is more than just funding, but harnessing the 'Power of Local Action', at the national level. Building effective partnerships at both national and international levels can be a useful resource and model for scaling up successful local practices.

After the presentations, the floor was opened to Parties. The Philippines, Egypt, Seychelles, Peru and Sudan, reported their successful

national experience with CSOs partnerships on land degradation and Sustainable Land Management issues. China, while recognizing the significance of CSOs, underscored the importance of private sector in DLDD – for instance, 100 Chinese firms created a fund for combating desertification. Turkey urged other Parties to increase their voluntary contributions to the Special Fund to enable and ensure active participation of CSOs in the UNCCD process.

In all their interventions in the ODS, Parties recognized the value of CSOs to the UNCCD process – noting that CSOs provide the vital link between the UNCCD (process and its implementation) and the local people. It is precisely this reason that most Parties, that intervened in the ODS, reinforced the need to invite and involve CSOs to the national coordination platforms for the UNCCD.

## Land Degradation 101

... what are the drivers?

CSOs made the following contribution during the High-Level Session started on Monday 23<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

As CSOs, we would like to bring to the attention of the UNCCD Parties to the drivers of land degradation. However before we do this, we would like to highlight with concern that in all the discussions here in Windhoek, and in all the documents prepared for this COP, the specific drivers of land degradation are hardly mentioned. Yes, it is mentioned that the drivers of land degradation can be both natural and human induced, and sometimes even

agriculture is mentioned. But the discussion around which types of agriculture are driving land degradation, and which ones contributing to sustainable land management is completely absent from the agenda.

At the same time we all know that land degradation is not caused by millions of small scale farmers and pastoralists. Land degradation is caused by unsustainable monocultures for short time gains, where abundant pesticides and patented expensive seeds, *inter alia*, are being used. The use of pesticides and patented seeds, *inter alia*, destroy the natural nutrient cycles of the soil. It is a myth that food security will be provided by agribusiness companies, as 70% of the food in the world is produced by small scale farmers, mostly women. An investment in supporting their practices has great potential to fulfill our right to food.

Another driver that we should be talking about is land tenure and the fact that many land users do not have secure land rights. When you do not know if you can use the land in the coming years, as a farmer, you will be hesitant to invest in sustainable land management such as planting trees, improving soil fertility and other practices that will only be profitable in the long term. In addition, securing land rights gives small scale farmers the opportunity to access important financial services to make these long term investments that are necessary for sustainable land management. In this regards, the voluntary guidelines for the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forest of the UN Committee on World Food Security is an excellent starting point for discussion.

Civil society notes with great concern that land degradation and sustainable land management are two topics that are not high on the national and international political agendas. In addition, the few initiatives that are taken are not backed by strong commitment of financial resources by the Parties. We as civil society feel that these issues should be the highest priority, as land is the basis for all life and provides the food for people.

The Rio+20-summit attempted to put these issues higher on the agenda through the introduction of the concept Land Degradation Neutral World. Yet, this concept is not fully defined and is open to different interpretations. This means that countries can claim that they are land degradation neutral, while large scale degradation is still ongoing. Most importantly, where are the people in this concept? Where is the voice of local people in dryland communities? Let us not only talk about land degradation, we need to remember that there are people living on these lands and who are depending on it.

In conclusions, CSOs would point out that the UNCCD is full of knowledge and resources that should be more actively used by the Parties. CSOs are urging the parties to secure the independence of the convention by ensuring that accredited observers are committed to sustainable livelihoods of communities in dryland and healthy ecosystems that can support the right to food for the next generations. Finally, we urge the Parties to take into account local realities by recognizing the important role of local communities in sustainable land management and food security. Further we urge the Parties to provide local communities with adequate financial support to invest in theirs and our common future. That is the future we want.

## Promotion of partnership among all stakeholders key to achieving LDNW

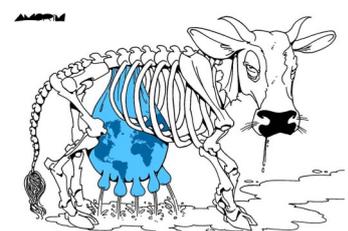
The 10th Round Table of Members of Parliament took place in Windhoek on 20 and 21 September 2013. The Round Table brought together 65 Parliamentarians from 18 countries to consider their contribution to the UNCCD implementation process and the achievement of a land-degradation neutral world in the context of the Post-2015 Development. CSOs were represented by two members at this meeting.

During the meeting an intervention was done by Ms Sahon Flan from the Network of Environment and sustainable Development in Africa (REDDA-NESDA) on behalf of CSOs. The contribution was related to the involvement of CSOs in parliamentarians' activities such as advocacy and awareness rising on DLDD. The eleventh item in the declaration by parliamentarians takes into account the contributions made by CSOs.

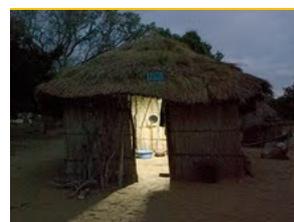
The eleventh item in the declaration by Parliamentarians states that *"In order to achieve a land degradation neutral world (LDNW) by 2030 at the latest, there is need to promote partnership building among policymakers and decision-makers, the business sector, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, youth and women's associations and the academic community"*. The declaration will be presented at the last plenary session at COP11.

## Cartoon Exhibition – Save the Earth

Future Forest is inviting all delegates to go and see how cartoonist show how our planet being attacked by desertification. The message of Save the Earth Cartoon Exhibition is simple – thus: 'Now is the time to save our planet from desertification'.



This Exhibition co-hosted by Future Forest and the UNCCD, and is taking place in the corridor that connects the plenary hall and the exhibition area. The cartoons displayed were donated by cartoonists from all around the world. The Exhibition aims to deliver the urgent message of our earth with simple but strong visual images.



Be sure to offset your UNCCD COP 11 travel by supporting a Namibian community solar project. **24** volunteers have already offset their COP11 travel by 16 September, 2013. When will you participate?