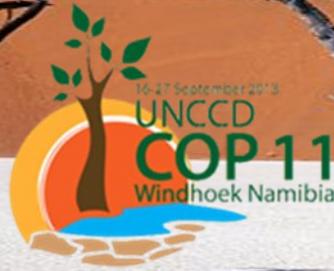


Eco - newsletter



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GEF can and should do more to Oil the Crunchy Engine fighting Land Degradation



The replenishment of GEF and the development process of GEF6 offer an opportunity not only to Parties to the UNCCD, but also CSOs and local communities fighting against DLDD, for new dialogue of developing an efficient and capable framework for making SGP and GEF projects drive the UNCCD agenda of LDNW.

Collaboration of the UNCCD with the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) was one of the agenda items in the CRIC meeting on the 18th Sept, 2013. Civil Society Organizations would like to commend GEF for the achievements thus far, especially in terms of making financial resources available to the Parties and other stakeholders to address the challenging issues of Land degradation.

However, CSOs would like to draw the attention of the Parties and the GEF

council to the allocation of funds to land degradation and its 1, 2, 3 and 4 subdivisions window. CSOs have observed with concern that the allocation to land degradation has not only been low compared to other GEF windows, but also hopelessly stable since the beginning of the pilot phase of GEF and until the GEF5. The funds allocated under the land degradation window are far behind compared to funds allocated to climate, biodiversity, international waters and cross-cutting areas. Even Persistent Organic Pollutants which joined GEF during the same year as the UNCCD has a higher allocation window.

CSOs seriously urge the Parties to the UNCCD to engage the GEF council to reconsider and increase the allocation of funds to the land degradation window.

We also urge the Parties to engage the GEF Council with the view of taking specific measures

to ensure that land degradation is considered as an essential ingredient in implementing the other windows particularly climate change (i.e., through adaptation and mitigation) and biodiversity.

CSOs also regret that the on-going proposals for GEF6 seem to tend towards the continuation of the current situation.

CSOs would also like to draw the attention of the Parties to the definitions of land degradation by GEF and the UNCCD. In our engagements with GEF under the auspices of SGP, land degradation is too often limited to soils degradation, and this seriously limits the understanding of the issues. We therefore call for the realignment of the definition land degradation by GEF

to that of the UNCCD, as this sometimes affects the accessibility of GEF funds for activities addressing land degradation.

Regarding ICCD/CRIC /report (12)/6 and the review of other documents under discussion for the reconstitution of GEF6, rapid analysis convinced us that the concepts discussed tend towards supporting industrial/commercial farming by using the concepts of "climate smart agriculture" or "green revolution" extensively outlined in document Small Scale farming and technical sustainable agriculture (such as agro-ecology) are almost absent from these documents. This is shocking given the GEF mandate. It is also marked by a nostalgic vision of 21st century agriculture. GEF should instead focus more its investment in smallholder agriculture which already produces 70% of the world's food and also to ecological agriculture to the benefit of fighting against land degradation and poverty especially in dry-lands.

We recall that a strategy of involvement of CSOs in GEF was adopted in 2012. We find that find the GSP (GEF micro financing) for CSOs works well, probably because of the simplified procedure. However this valuable program is too small and has so far committed only 6% of GEF funds via projects limited to \$50,000. This is not compatible with multi annual projects or consortium, and hence remains limited.

Medium-sized projects that were increased to \$2 million during the last GEF Council are the most appropriate for CSOs both in terms of amounts allocated and the process. The GEF evaluation and experience shows, however, that the executing agencies that hold empowerment, and therefore somehow the monopoly, seem less interested in this aspect of the project that does not meet their financial needs. Only 5% of the total budget of the GEF since its inception has been devoted to this type of project.

CSOs would also like to draw the attention of the Parties and the GEF council to signature programs currently under discussion where the approach of using funds from several windows seems interesting. However some aspects still remains murky.

For instance, within the signature program on food security in sub-Saharan Africa, we are concerned about the motivations of the partnership between GEF and AGRA whose support through some foundations make us fear the emergence of a private sector dedicated to genetically modified organisms and hybrid seeds which in our opinion does not address the concerns of the UNCCD.

In conclusion, the replenishment of GEF and the development process of GEF6, until June 2014, offer an opportunity not only to Parties to the UNCCD, but also CSOs and local communities fighting against DLDD, for new dialogue of developing an efficient and capable framework for making SGP and GEF projects drive UNCCD agenda of Land Degradation Neutral World.

Promotion and Strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions - the Rio Triplets



The RIO conventions have the same origin and are aimed to serve the global terrestrial ecosystems. On the ground the conventions are often perceived as juxtapose and competing – CSOs Demand Greater Synergy!

Be sure to offset your UNCCD COP 11 travel by supporting a Namibian community solar project.

23 volunteers have already offset their COP11 travel by 16 Sept. When will you participate?

Eco Newsletter is published daily by the CSOs attending UNCCD COP11. Give your articles, comments and feedback to editorial team: gmwalazambesi@gmail.com