

**PUT THE CSOs IN THE FRAME!**

**Civil society organizations urge their official country delegations and UNCCD to put the CSOs in the Strategic Framework of the UNCCD**

Accredited CSOs to the UNCCD organized a press conference on Monday at 14.00 on 11 September 2017, the opening day of the high level segment at the UNCCD COP13 in Ordos, China.

1. Ozgul Erdemli Mutlu, TEMA – Turkey
2. Marioldy Sanchez, AIDER - Peru
3. Tanveer Arif, SCOPE - Pakistan
4. John Chikomo, Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania - Tanzania

Moderator Nathalie van Haren, Both ENDS – The Netherlands

Ms Ozgul Erdemli Mutlu from TEMA – Turkey, Ms Marioldy Sanchez from AIDER - Peru , Tanveer Arif from SCOPE – Pakistan, John Chikomo from Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania – Tanzania spoke on behalf of almost 500 CSO.

Nathalie van Haren, Both ENDS started by using the opportunity to thank the Chinese authorities and the UNCCD Secretariat for organizing the COP13: "Firstly we would like to expressed sincere condolences to those who were badly hit by the Hurricane Jose in the Caribbean islands and Cuba as well as Hurricane Irma which reached Florida shores of the US. Extreme weather events continue to impact lives of millions of people every month. The floods and storms of the past few days must remind all Parties of the COP13 of the urgency with which we all, parties, international organisations, CSOs, and private sector must act to do what is needed: work together.

Nathalie van Haren continued: "We are grateful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the CSOs and share our inputs on the Strategic Framework of the UNCCD Convention in general, and on the land tenure rights and on SDG 15.3 more specifically."

**Put the CSOs in the UNCCD Strategic Framework (2018-2030)**

Ms. Ozgul Erdemli Mutlu from TEMA in Turkey started her speech by underlining that she did not speak on behalf of a few NGOs, but on behalf of more than 500 CSOs and several regional and international civil society platforms such as Drynet, and ReSaD.

She acknowledged the efforts of International Working Group (IWG) formed after COP12 in Ankara to formulate the joint Strategic Framework for the UNCCD work from 2018 to 2030. She pointed out that CSOs examined the draft UNCCD Strategic Framework and welcomed all the positive inclusions such as the gender and youth dimension and the LDN implementation. However, Ms. Ozgul Erdemli Mutlu also raised some concerns: "Let's remember that strategy is not only about where we want to get to, or the objectives, but also about how we will get there and who will collaborate in these efforts. She expressed the concern of the CSOs about the absence of mention of CSOs in the current strategic framework as partners to implement and monitor the strategic framework. The CSO community has been actively involved in the UNCCD activities since its start. CSOs work closely with indigenous and local communities, and support them in enhancing their capacities to manage land sustainably and address the impacts of climate change. They also connect local communities with policy processes, ensuring that the resultant policies are appropriate to respond to real challenges and opportunities. **We strongly request Parties to explicitly acknowledge the crucial role of CSOs in the UNCCD Future Strategic Framework. Please, bear in mind that CSOs were included in the current strategy and in the light of the contributions that they make globally to the implementation of the UNCCD there is no good reason to omit them from the proposed strategic framework.**

She concluded her statement by emphasising that CSOs are an integral part of the UNCCD and that merely mentioning "key stakeholders and UN agencies" in the Strategic Framework that is being negotiated at COP 13 is insufficient to ensure that the UNCCD strategy is adequately inclusive and participatory." It is a reality that **we as CSOs have had to consistently struggle to have our contribution recognized by all of the Parties. CSO have always been very important**

**to halt land degradation, to promote sustainable land management and to work directly with local communities. PUT THE CSOs IN THE FRAME."**

#### **Evidence and need for CSO participation: land tenure rights vital for sustainable land use and LDN**

Marioldy Sanchez from AIDER Peru continued by reflecting the impact of the contributions of CSOs within the UNCCD. CSOs have managed to put land governance on the agenda of the UNCCD. However, as land use rights are not yet included in the UNCCD decisions, specifically in the Strategic Framework, there is clearly more work to be done. Marioldy Sanchez reminded the parties that **access to, ownership and control over land are a precondition to ensure food security and sustainable land use, and to end poverty**. In line with the SDG targets 1.4, 2.3 and 5a, and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), CSOs urge that strong synergies be ensured within initiatives of the UNCCD by **promoting good land governance and strengthening legitimate and customary land tenure rights, as well as the adoption and implementation of the VGGT** in the decisions which will be made here at this UNCCD COP13.

#### **Agenda 2030 challenges for CSOs: Embrace the core Sustainable Development Goal principle to "Leave No one Behind"**

The alignment with the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) is much needed. Tanveer Arif from SCOPE from Pakistan, therefore encouraged the integration of SDG target 15.3 in the implementation of the UNCCD through the realization of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) by all Parties. In line with SDG key principles to "Leave no one behind" and the holistic character which stresses the need to align with other SDGs, the recognition of local communities as key players in the sustainable land use actions on the ground are crucial. **We therefore strongly encourage Parties to ensure the bottom-up participation of indigenous and local communities and CSOs in the LDN processes and in achieving SDG 15.3, in particular by its integration in National Action Plans, target-setting processes, financing mechanisms monitoring and reporting to ensure transformative action.** To reach SDG target 15.3, enhanced capacities related to achieving LDN are crucial, especially for national and local authorities, CSOs and community-based organizations. If capacitated, members of affected communities and local authorities can significantly contribute to achieving LDN and SDG target 15.3, for instance by integrating the LDN targets in Community Development and Land Use Plans.

#### **Request from the CSOs**

John Chikomo of Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania requested the UNCCD secretariat and the Parties to acknowledge the value of the CSOs as a crucial partner in the UNCCD Strategic Framework, to strengthen legitimate land tenure rights and adopt the CFS Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security (VGGT) in the decisions made here at this UNCCD COP13, and to guarantee the involvement of local communities and CSOs in the implementation of LDN, including the access to public and private finance for local communities and CSOs.

The press conference concluded by the three speakers repeating their call to the Parties and the UNCCD to **"PUT THE CSOs IN THE FRAME!"**

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***For more information and interviews with CSO representatives contact:***

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