



DECLARATION

Land, Biodiversity & Climate

Declaration of the 4th civil society gathering Désertif'actions 2019, Ouagadougou, 19 to 22 June 2019.

WE ARE THE LAND THAT DEFENDS ITSELF AGAINST DESERTIFICATION !

«Land degradation and desertification create a dividing line between possible promises for the future and an impossible future for more than a billion people.» It's in unbearable conscience.

Land degradation, the future at risk.

Faced with the increased insecurity in a growing number of countries covering arid zones, we refuse to let ourselves be frightened. By our presence and our work during this 2019 edition of Désertif'actions in Ouagadougou, we affirm our determination to oppose the forces of our commitment to fatality of destiny announced.

Our assessment of the situation in the Sahel is the exact overlap between the map of insecurity and that of hunger, under the pressure of increasing generations of people on the resources, which are estimated to be unable to satisfy in 2050 more than 13% of the population.

Our observation is that of the incessant search for new lands, which inexorably leads to clashes that feed other forms of destabilization. In view of similar situations around the world, we affirm that this is a lesson learned : many conflicts, origin of increasing population displacements and migratory flows, as well as many local and international instabilities, are rooted in the degradation of livelihoods and lifestyles directly based on natural resources, aggravated by failed governance.

In this context, how could we hide our concern at the growing attitudes of confinement and withdrawal seen in and by many countries in denial of history and their stated values, as the situation demands more than ever before greater cooperation in the area of governance, but also greater solidarity in the face of impacts that no one in the long term can claim to be spared...

We take note of the most recent scientific data from the IPCC reports on climate change and the real threat of a +6°C increase in temperature by 2100, of scientific data from the IPBES report and the real threat of an abysmal drop in biodiversity, of significant population growth in the face of a probable 30-50% decline in agricultural



production in the Sahel, and finally the threat of possible tipping points in climate change such as melting ice, thawing permafrost and changing ocean currents.

Taking note of this bad news means overcoming anxiety about an inconvenient truth. At this stage, we must give scientists the legitimacy to express their concerns and not risk that they give us a disembodied and underestimated view of the dangers.

Here in Ouagadougou, we are warning for the convergence of major factors that are aggravating land degradation and desertification!

And we declare that it is no longer time to seek for more evidence for the land, climate and biodiversity catastrophes taking place, but to act!

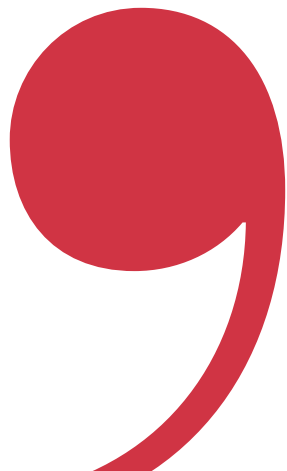
In the perspective of the negotiations of the fourteenth Conference of the Parties (COP14) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in New Delhi, India, in September 2019, we would like to have an effect on the decisions, in particular the challenges related to achieving the objective of a land degradation neutrality (LDN) as specified by target 15.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals and its tripod «avoid, reduce and restore» in order to keep all ecosystems alive including their “factory of life” that we are part of.

In this agenda, our contributions will go to the earth-biodiversity-climate links, to the earth-renewable energies link, to the rural-urban link, to the earth-health link.

We will take into account the results provided by the 145 countries that reported the status of land degradation in their territory.

We are determined to carry out the land tenure -related discussions that civil society for the first time has explicitly carried into the official agenda of the Conference of the Parties to Combat Desertification.

Our conviction is that we must mobilize the dormant forces of the earth with the forces that we are, actors of development, the forces active in agriculture, pastoral, oasis, island and many other contexts , all citizens of the world: **together, we are not the defenders of the land in the face of desertification, but WE are the land that defends itself.**





We take note of the priorities of the CSO panel of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in preparation for COP14, namely:

- Recognition by policy makers, financial institutions and others that community-driven initiatives at the grassroots level contribute to neutrality in land degradation.
- Land tenure security of communities in general and of women and young people specifically must be secured through a UNCCD COP14 decision on the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure.
- Participation of civil society and especially women's groups throughout the decision-making processes regarding Land Degradation Neutrality target and National Drought Plans is crucial to guarantee sustainability.
- Finance must be accessible and appropriate for civil society organizations supporting communities especially women in achieving LDN and/or monitoring the implementation of LDN projects.
- Transform our society so as to achieve greater sustainability and equity, especially gender equity.

During the three days of plenary sessions, panels and workshops, we shared our experiences and knowledge and evaluated what we had learnt. On this basis, we reaffirm our confidence in the solutions and capacities to take away barriers for sustainable land use by informed decision-making, accessible techniques and innovations, and scientific work, local knowledge and know-how to be shared and valued equally.

From our dialogues and exchange, we extract our key messages in this declaration and our detailed work and conclusions are recorded in the final report and the overall synthesis.

Our general recommendations are:

- Fix the gap between national laws, policies and commitments and the implementation and enforcement at the local level.
- Make sure that rights and interests of local communities and especially those of women, youth and pastoralists are guaranteed in policy discussion relevant to the governance and use of land and water and other natural resources.
- Engage with local communities before land use policy decisions are being taken, especially regarding large-scale investments like mining, agriculture and restoration projects.
- Promote agroecology and community-led initiatives in dialogues with policy makers, donors, CSOs and others.
- Support and facilitate participation of civil society and especially women's groups throughout the decision-making processes regarding Land Degradation Neutrality target and National Drought Plans is crucial to guarantee sustainability.
- Ensure that finance is accessible and appropriate for civil society organizations supporting communities especially women, youth and pastoralists in achieving LDN and/or monitoring the implementation of LDN projects.



The key messages from the workshop “Civil Society and the Great Green Wall Initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel: How to turn GGW into an operational framework of desertification combat?” are:

- Ensure joint actions of the Great Green Wall Initiative and Civil Society Organisations towards the creation of green jobs in agro-sylvo-pastoralist values chains.
- Improve communication and engagement between national Great Green Wall structures and civil society: communication should be structured, simple and frequent.
- Engage with policy makers working on the Great Green Wall Initiative at local, national, regional and African Union level and call on the African Union to significantly strengthen its political leadership.

The key messages from the workshop “Pastoralism in Drylands and combating desertification: Reaffirming its central role in combat against desertification” are:

- Recognize the territorial integrity of pastoralists, their rights, their roles and their invaluable expertise and prevent the fragmentation of their territories in the framework of recognition “Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCAs)” and actively engage with them for inclusive, sustainable governance and use of rangelands.
- Develop and mobilize the resources for multi-stakeholder alliances for the restoration of rangelands based on customary management systems of pastoralists that recognize the wealth of pastoralists’ traditional knowledge and practices, and support adequate mobile health, education and veterinary care services.
- Mobilize the people, communities, CSOs, authorities and international organisations to actively support and take action regarding the International Year of Pastoralists and Rangelands.

Key messages from the workshop “The implementation of land degradation neutrality : Anticipating land tenure governance future challenges” are:

- Practice responsible land governance by taking into account local contexts, by engaging with local communities, developing systems for mediation and conflict resolution over natural resources, based on traditional mechanisms by implementing the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure at all levels.
- Present community-led initiatives on sustainable land use and restoration as a contribution to land degradation neutrality to local authorities and national policymakers.
- Mobilise both public and private financial resources on a large-scale for community empowering activities and up-scaling and replication of community-led initiatives by CSOs.

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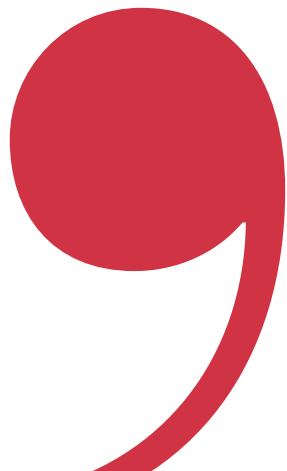
Key messages from the workshop “Multi-uses of water in Drylands : Improve integrated management of water resources” are:

- Prioritize water on public policy agendas and ensure that water resources are recognized as important social and economic public goods.
- Acknowledge the knowledge about and practices with water of local communities, and especially women, pastoralists and people living in oasis.
- Improve the dissemination and development of knowledge, data and information among communities, policy makers, scientists and in education curricula.

In Ouagadougou, on the blond and red lands of desertification, in this month of June 2019, our four days of constructive dialogues and exchange during Désertif'actions are the manifestation of **the refusal to give in to the forces mobilizing despair towards disastrous destinies: land degradation will not pass through us!**

Désertif'actions 2019 was co-organized by SPONG (Burkina Faso), CARI (France) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and was chaired by the Minister of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change of Burkina Faso with the support of the Prime Minister and Government.

The event brought together in Ouagadougou more than 370 people representing 240 organizations and from more than 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.





Sous la présidence de Son Excellence M. le Ministre de l'Environnement,
de l'Économie Verte et du changement climatique du Burkina Faso.

*Under the chairmanship of his Excellency the Minister of the Environment,
the Green Economy and the Climate change of Burkina Faso.*

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