

Summary of the CSO Panel Meeting (12th March 2020)

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Panel met for the first time on 12 March 2020, Thursday. The face to face meeting between the previous and new panel has not been done yet due to the international restrictions caused by COVID-19; nevertheless, the newly elected panel must begin with their functions.

All members of the panel introduced themselves and their organizations briefly. The CSO panel members elected its chair for the next biennium (Manon Albagnac) and co-chair for the next six months (Tcharbuaahbokengo NFINN to be followed by GRULAC, Eastern Europe and Asia representatives).

The panel members presented their ideas to be implemented while being members of the UNCCD CSO Panel. All members of the panel emphasized promoting the active involvement of CSOs and other parties in the implementation of the Convention, encouraging for the accreditation of local, national, and regional CSOs, increasing the communication and knowledge exchange among CSOs and raising awareness about UNCCD activities. The panel agreed to finalize their work program by 31st of March.

A short briefing has given on the background of the CSO panel, related decisions in COP9 (Decision 5) and the subsequent decisions of the COP (5/COP10, 5/COP11, 5/COP12, and 5/COP13) by the Secretariat. In order to get a clear vision about the constituencies. It is agreed that the Secretariat provide the complete list of accredited CSOs of all regions, as the CSOs regional members would like to communicate with their constituencies at regional level and their work plan for the next biennium. Moreover, members emphasized the importance of enhancing the communication and the engagement of CSOs and the need for increased engagement between Intergovernmental Organizations and NGOs.

Furthermore, the Secretariat presented the COP14 decisions that are relevant for the CSOs and emphasized the importance of the CSO panel to prepare a work program for the next biennium. In order to mobilize the CSOs and existing networks the panel will identify strategies to engage and bring more CSO accredited and active in different regions. In order to identify active organizations in regions, the panel emphasized the importance to establish some indicators which could be as simple as a check list.

In order to mobilize the CSOs involved in the UNCCD process, the panel agreed to find the links with other processes such as Climate Change, Biodiversity, and IUCN. The panel will be preparing a calendar of related events that could be included in the work program for this year.

The panel requested the secretariat to set up an online collaborative working system which shall include, monthly on-line meetings and sharing regular information (SharePoint platform). The

panel also agreed to prepare a newsletter that includes actions and activities of the Panel that could be distributed to all the constituencies to be published quarterly.

The next meeting of the CSO Panel on the work plan will be held on the 2nd of April at the same time using skype.