



# UNCCD CSO PANEL NEWSLETTER MAY 2020

Food. Feed. Fibre.

Sustainable production and consumption



17 June 2020

**DESERTIFICATION  
AND DROUGHT DAY**

Welcome to the second Newsletter of the new CSO panel,

During this time of global crisis, which affects all of us, in our ways of working and living, we would like to express our strongest solidarity with all of you.

Civil society organizations have always been in the front lines in times of crisis, to support affected populations. We have already received testimonials from organizations that quickly adjusted their actions to accompany their partners and beneficiaries to adapt.

We would like to continue to compile these inspiring stories **so please do not hesitate to write to us to tell us how you are coping with the situation, and how you are able to meet the needs arising among the communities you work with.**

All our organizations, accredited to the UNCCD, have repeatedly alerted governments and international institutions, to the imminent threat to ecosystems. As recently as last June following the Désertif'actions 2019 Summit (organized by the UNCCD, the CARI and the SPONG), the CSOs agreed on a declaration in which they “warned for the convergence of factors aggravating land degradation and that it is no longer time to seek for more evidence for the land, climate and biodiversity catastrophes taking place, but to act”.

Today we are facing together the consequence of the destruction of the soil and the biodiversity it harbors. As the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD expressed it in his letter addressed to the CSOs, “we are reminded of how much we depend on nature for our health, our food systems and our livelihoods”.

In the aftermath of this pandemic, going back to business as usual is unthinkable. We must ask ourselves how we can profoundly change our societies, in order to rebuild a partnership with nature, the only one capable of offering a future for us and next generations.

*Your CSO panel*  
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NEWSLETTER  
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On this second issue, we would like to present updates on the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) coming from the observer CSO representative within the SPI. Stay tuned!!

### **Update on the work of the UNCCD SPI**

Noel Oettlé, CSO Observer to the SPI

20 April 2020



#### **Background**

Since it was established in 2013 at COP 11, the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface (SPI) has provided the much-needed scientific underpinning for the Convention and enabled a discourse between scientists working on the other two Rio Conventions that has significantly contributed to achieving some of the desired synergies between the Conventions.

The mandate of the SPI was renewed and refined in 2017 at COP 13, and COP 14 approved the SPI work programme for the current biennium. The mandate will again be reviewed in 2023 at UNCCD COP 16.

The primary mandate of the SPI is to provide the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) thematic guidance on knowledge requirements for implementing the UNCCD. SPI information is available on this link:

<https://knowledge.unccd.int/science-policy-interface>

The list of members and observers of the previous SPI is available in this link, and will be updated by the end of the week to reflect the current SPI membership:

<https://knowledge.unccd.int/science-policy-interface/members-and-observers-science-policy-interface>

#### **SPI meeting in Bonn in February 2020**

In my role as CSO Observer, I attended the first meeting of the newly constituted SPI in Bonn on February 17 – 19 this year. Although the CSO member of the SPI is formally an observer, the ethos of the SPI is that everyone should be granted a full opportunity to participate and contribute.

The meeting focused on the work programme for 2020 -21 as agreed at COP 14. It was opened by UNCCD Executive Secretary Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw who warmly welcomed the participants and expressed strong appreciation for the work done by the Science-Policy interface (SPI), grounding the work of the Convention in sound scientific knowledge.

The meeting reviewed the decisions of COP 14 that are of importance to the SPI, including those related to the CRIC and National Reporting, the UNCCD communications strategy, the UNCCD gender action plan and mainstreaming gender into SPI products and the decisions on land tenure. A technical guide on the incorporation of land tenure considerations into DDLD is being prepared in collaboration with FAO and will be presented at the next COP for adoption by the Parties.

The meeting also considered how it would coordinate its activities with and share strategic information with other relevant UN scientific bodies including the IPCC, IPBES and the GEF STAP.

The main task undertaken at the February meeting was planning for the implementation of the SPI Work Programme for the biennium 2020-2021. Two important tasks given to the SPI by the COP are:

1. Provision of science-based evidence on the potential contribution of integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management to positive transformative change achieving LDN and addressing LDDD issues.
2. Provision of science-based evidence on the approaches for the assessment and monitoring of the resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems to drought, also considering the effect of climate change on drought risk.

Working teams were established at the meeting that will take this work forward in the course of the coming months. In terms of the first Deliverable, what is planned is a technical report providing science-based evidence of how, in the context of working to achieve or exceed LDN, integrated land use planning and integrates landscape management can contribute to positive transformative change, including examples of cases where these approaches have been applied.

Country Parties are interested in understanding what the experience of countries is, and this has been tabled at two COPs; however, at that stage it was still too early to do so, as LDN had not yet been adequately tested. Currently, 183 countries are engaged in LDN target setting, and of these, 90 have already set targets. Case studies will be invited so that they can be compiled by Sept- Oct this year and launched at the CRIC in December. The plan is that by January analysis will have taken place and a report produced by a consultant to be presented to the Parties at COP 15. The SPI will shape the ToR (Terms of References) for the consultant and review the report.

### How can you contribute?

As a global CSO community, our ability to shape emerging science-based policy and decisions of the COP depends on the quality of our contributions of evidence and innovative ideas to the on-going discourse. If anyone in the CSO community can contribute insightful experiences related to how integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management have contributed to positive transformative change while achieving LDN and more broadly addressing LDDD issues, please share these with me at: [dryland@global.co.za](mailto:dryland@global.co.za).

I look forward to hearing from you, and will be glad to discuss your questions, concerns and inspirations as regards to the SPI.



## Call for SPI observer alternate candidates!

The UNCCD secretariat is issuing a call for an alternate observer to the Science Policy Interface (SPI), representing the civil society organizations (CSOs) accredited to the convention.

Suitable candidates could be nominated by submitting **APPLICATION FORM** before **11 May**. The elected person will act as alternate of the current CSO observer to the SPI – Noel Oettle, Environment Monitoring Group, South Africa – until the end of 2021 and will become the fully-fledged CSO observer for the biennium 2022–2023. **Based on the principle of geographical rotation and gender balance, female candidatures from Asian as well as Eastern and European regions are encouraged to apply.**


**More information on** <https://www.unccd.int/news-events/call-spi-observer-alternate-candidates>

We believe in the power of communication. This newsletter is one of our tools to inform and keep up-to-date our partners and constituencies on the activities that we undertake following the mandate of the Conference of the Parties.

We look forward to stay in touch with you not only through this newsletter but also other means that you think are necessary. Please do not hesitate to share your publications, activities and posts.

Your CSO panel

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