

Summary of the CSO Panel Meeting (16th April)

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Panel had its third meeting on Thursday 16 April 2020.

This meeting was focused on the preparation of the CSO Panel work plan for 2020-2021. Reviewing each objective and activity of the work plan, the Panel members more specifically discussed the following topics.

The Panel members discussed and emphasized the necessity of active communication to keep update their constituencies. The panel agreed that the CSO Panel website and online platforms, such as email, can help bilateral communication.

The secretariat informed the members that online training platforms, such as UNCCD Capacity Building, can help to monitor accredited CSOs activities effectively. The Panel agreed and requested the information of the UNCCD Capacity Building Training to be shared with its constituencies to increase the involvement of CSOs in the process.

Moreover, the panel discussed the decisions of COP and related activities, which will be included in the work program of the CSO panel comprehensively.

The panel discussed the considering inclusion of key stakeholders such as local communities, indigenous groups, women, and youth in their work program. The panel emphasized that for some civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, there are challenging language barriers. Therefore, additional efforts may be done to ensure translation.

The Secretariat impress on the integration of VGGT into the UNCCD and LDN implementation. In that process, identifying challenges, facilitators, barriers, the involvement of CSOs such as indigenous people, vulnerable groups, local governments, pastoralists are some important elements to clarify the integration and consultation process. Panel members agreed to prepare a briefing note on Land Tenure and Sustainable Land Governance and will share and circulate these briefings in the CSO panel website and via email.

The panel requested information on the functions and activities of the Youth Forum. The Secretariat informed that the youth forum engaged in the issue of restoration, which also can be included in the work program of the CSO panel. The panel requested from the Secretariat to put in contact with youth groups and to have the participation of the Youth Forum representative in one of the future meetings of the panel to provide a briefing on the work carried out by the group and to have a discussion on ways to work collaboratively.

The panel agreed to give some thoughts on post-COVID-19 scenarios. Promoting the contract with nature and raising awareness of the link of the COVID-19 process and nature could be a starting point. The panel suggested considering and collecting the experiences of NGOs and CSOs during the COVID-19 times to conserve our nature by circulating two or three questions among their constituencies to create a two- or three-page story on this issue.

The panel renewed their requests on the participation of the IWG CSO representatives to attend a future meeting of the panel.

The next meeting of the CSO Panel on the work plan will be held on the 14th of May at 15:00 (Germany time), using Zoom. Sabina Gasimova will be chairing the meeting.