

UNCCD CSO PANEL NEWSLETTER 2020

July/August/September 2020



Dear Members of the Accredited CSOs to the UNCCD,

It is our pleasure to share with you the latest issue of our newsletter, that brings news related to land conservation and sustainable use of its resources.

This fourth issue includes news and work updates from the CSO networks, Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought (IWG), Science-Policy Interface (SPI), technical guide of FAO-UNCCD process, as well as the CSO panel workplan. Stay tuned!

As COVID-19 upends lives and livelihoods across the planet, many of us continue to cope with the fallout of the pandemic, mobilizing and building action to protect our lands, we would like to continue to compile these inspiring stories **so please do not hesitate to tell us how you carry on with the situation, and how you are able to meet the needs arising among the communities you work with.**

We look forward to staying in touch with you!

Your CSO Panel
Csopanel@unccd.int

IN THE FOCUS



Keep Coal financiers out of the GCF

Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation ([SMBC](https://www.smbc.com)) - the world's third largest lender to coal plant developers - has applied to be an accredited entity to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). If approved, SMBC will be able to submit proposals to and access funds from the GCF, which is the main financial mechanism of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

[The End Fossil Fuels in Asia](https://www.greenclimate.fund/boardroom/meeting/b26#videos) movement has led an international campaign to keep SMBC and Coal Financiers out of the GCF raising concerns to SMBC application before the 26th meeting of the GCF board (18-21 August 2020). These concerns have only been partially heard: as an outcome of the GCF meeting board, «SMBC will work to improve its accreditation application for consideration on the 28th board meeting (2021)».

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/boardroom/meeting/b26#videos>

Read more about the campaign: <https://endfossilfuelsasia.net/fossil-free-gcf>



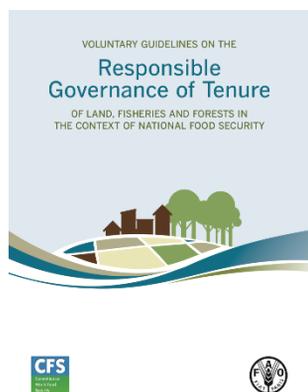
Work in progress: A technical guide to integrate VGGT into implementation of UNCCD and LDN

FAO and UNCCD embarked on the development of a technical guide for integration of [Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of land tenure](#) into the implementation of the Convention and of [Land Degradation Neutrality](#) (SDG 15.3).

This action follows UNCCD COP14 acknowledgement of importance of governance of tenure to achieve LDN ([decision 26/COP.14](#))

The objective of the technical guide is to make the linkages between the implementation of VGGT and the framework of the UNCCD LDN with the focus on identifying the enablers, barriers and benefits for creating an enabling environment between safeguarded land tenure and good land stewardship to meet the SDG. Keeping in mind the nexus of land tenure and land degradation, it will build mainly on existing knowledge and guidance of the VGGT and UNCCD LDN implementation and refer to case studies from countries that can illustrate the approach.

This process is conducted through several online consultations in which the UNCCD CSO panel is participating. The first consultations allowed to identify and comment on contributing factors and approaches to allow the integration of VGGT principles in the implementation of UNCCD and LDN, based on case-studies from several countries. Next consultation will focus on identifying the barriers and benefits for integrating land tenure security in combating desertification.



The technical guide will be finalized for a release during UNCCD COP15.

You can contribute more closely to this process by bringing case studies and illustrations on approaches and methods that allowed enhancing land tenure security through:

- Supportive policy and legislation
- Participatory approach in decision making, land planning
- Increased data availability on land use
- Conflict resolution
- Capacity building, etc.

Contact your CSO panel: csopanel@unccd.int if you wish to contribute.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS / CSO NETWORKS



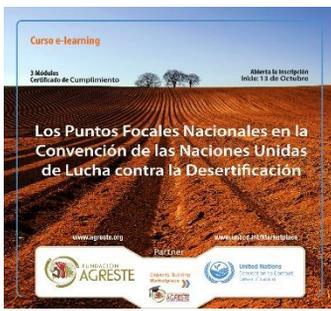
[Drynet](#) is a self-funded network that shares information, develops common positions of civil society organizations on issues relating to sustainable livelihoods and land use in the drylands and engages in the international discourse via the UNCCD. Drynet has launched a series of **podcasts “Good Food for a Better Normal”** in form of conversations with visionary experts from around the world, exploring some of the most pressing environmental challenges that relate to life on land, and the people who use the land to produce food. Listen to these podcasts [here](#), or download them on any podcast platform: just search for Drynet Podcast.



[The Groupe de Travail Désertification \(GTD\)](#) is a French platform for non-state actors engaged in combating desertification, coordinated by CARI association. It brings together NGOs, scientists, private organizations, and local authorities. Together, these members wish to mobilize public opinion, strengthen consultation and actions of development actors while influencing decision-makers. The GTD has published a new **survey paper on UNCCD intended for French-speaking actors**. Read the document [here](#).

[The Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism \(CELEP\)](#) is an advocacy group of European organizations and specialists partnering with pastoralist organizations and specialists in Eastern Africa. Together, they combine forces to **lobby their national governments and European and Eastern African bodies to explicitly recognize and support pastoralism and pastoralists in the drylands**. CELEP is organizing a series of webinars on pastoralism from September 2020 onwards, with both learning and advocacy objectives. Participate in the webinars through [here](#).





The Fundación Agreste is an NGO committed with the challenge of effective participation in environmental care, promoting initiatives aimed to expanding opportunities for Sustainable Development and strengthening civil society. Fundación Agreste is working with the UNCCD Capacity Building Marketplace making available a series of **e-learning courses to the Spanish-speaking public** and stakeholders. At this moment, the pre-registration is open for the course “Introduction to the role of National Focal Points in the UNCCD” (in Spanish: “Introducción al rol de los Puntos Focales en la CNULD”). More information (in Spanish) here: <https://cursos.agreste.org/cursopfn>



SABUKO (Society for Nature Conservation) is a nature conservation NGO based in Georgia dedicated to protect, conserve and restore wildlife in Georgia, increasing a sense of value for nature among the public and encouraging sustainable use of natural resources. Since 1 January 2019 SABUKO has been working on the **restoration of gallery forests and grasslands in the Lori river valley** and have

produced the [Overview of Pasture Management Legislation Report](#) as well as the [Overview of the Sheep Sector](#). The objective of the research was to highlight the current status of sheep sector and to identify the challenges in the mentioned sector today. Condition of the land cover over 748.1 ha in Chachuna Managed Reserve (total area 5032 ha) was evaluated within the project.



CREACC (Centre for Renewable Energy and Action on Climate Change) in collaboration with Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE) and [Centre for Gender Studies Bayero University Kano](#) will organize [The Digital Youth Forum for Environmental Sustainability Ambassadors](#) via Zoom on October 5th. The event is designed to complement Education for Sustainable Development (ESD’s) four thrusts especially by increasing public understanding and awareness on sustainability among the Sustainability Ambassadors. The Forum will be looking at how

Covid-19 impacted various youth efforts aimed at mitigating anthropogenic pressure and reverse the effect of climate change that directly affect livelihood of people living in the country. Register here: <https://forms.gle/L4YnX8wxK36K3z8D7>



CENN is an environmental NGO in the South Caucasus specializing in a number of areas including combating climate change, sustainable management of resources, building and developing healthy and prosperous climate resilient communities, and empowering women and girls to participate in creating inclusive solutions. Since 2015, CENN, together with the Austrian Development Cooperation, has been working to support Georgia’s young environmentalists by conducting a **nationwide environmental school competition known as the Niko Ketskhoveli School Premier**. With 700 schools having registered for the competition this year, 30 schools made it to the final round from a total of 12 regions

of Georgia, with each school implementing a range of environmental and social activities year round, earning them accumulated points. The competition aims to encourage youth to make positive changes for their communities in regard to social or environmental issues. The Niko Ketskhoveli School Competition is coorganised by the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture of Georgia; the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, and the Parliament of Georgia. For more details about the project please visit [here](#).



African region

- From 9-15 September Western Africa countries (Mauritania, Senegal Niger, Mali) suffered severe rains that led to [flooding of rivers and runoffs](#) causing a lot of property damage. During that period, zoom meetings were organized to deliberate on every aspect affecting the continent and countries, as well as discuss way forward.

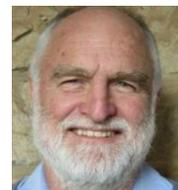


- Moptaste Comedy in collaboration with Limbe Sound Club and FOREP NGO held a tree planting event in Limbe, Cameroon on August 25.

SCIENCE NEWS / SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE (SPI)

Update on the work of the UNCCD SPI / Noel Oettlé, CSO Observer to the SPI

In the past months the SPI has not met physically or virtually, but the work of the SPI in fulfilment of its mandate (Decision 23 of COP14, relating to the work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2020–2021) has been carried forward by the Secretariat and SPI members. Some of the highlights of this work include:



The conceptualisation and recent launch of an international technology competition to design land use planning software to support well-informed land use decisions. This is part of the mandate of the SPI to provide science-based evidence on the potential contribution of integrated land use planning and integrated landscape management to positive transformative change, achieving LDN and address issues. See: <https://www.unccd.int/news-events/geo-ldn-initiative-launches-competition-design-land-use-planning-software-land>



An SPI contribution to the IPBES draft scoping report on the nexus assessment on the interlinkages among biodiversity, climate, water, food, energy and health. The challenge to be addressed by this assessment is how humanity can achieve good health as well as food and water security for all, without adversely impacting biodiversity, water quality or the climate. It recognises that viable policy options on how to simultaneously achieve the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are essential. The SPI members tasked to review the framing of the assessment submitted comments intended to strengthen the process.

A review of the IPBES Terms of Reference for 3 year Transformative Change assessment that should demonstrate how transformative change be used to achieve the CBD's 2050 Vision in the context of the SDGs. The intention is to understand what is currently enabling transformative changes, how these can be advanced and how obstacles to transformative changes can be overcome.

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 Intergovernmental Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on Drought through CSO-eyes: some comments on the current state of the UNCCD IWG on Drought

Nathalie van Haren, Both ENDS, The Netherlands

[The Intergovernmental Working Group \(IWG\)](#) on effective policy and implementation for addressing drought under the UNCCD is taking stock of existing frameworks including partnerships on drought preparedness and response, and considering options for policy, advocacy and implementation measures to address drought under the Convention.

The IWG is required by the UNCCD COP decision 23/COP14, that called for establishment of this IWG and provided its terms of reference. The IWG is expected to bring its findings and recommendations to the next COP15 in 2021. The IWG consists of 30 members and 3 alternates, namely, policy makers, researchers, focal points, scientists and CSO-workers.

Until now the IWG has done the following: the confirmation of the working group members; launch and organization of their review and consideration of the submissions and other relevant material; preliminary investigations in line with their terms of reference; and proposed next steps for completion of the review, stock-take and report on options as intended for COP15.

The IWG has established an organizational structure that incorporates a Chair, Co-Chair, Coordinating Committee and four task groups on:

1. Options for monitoring effective implementation and drought effects in ecosystems and communities
2. Vulnerability assessment for policy, implementation and partnerships in communities and ecosystems
3. Financial resources and incentives regarding Drought Risk Mitigation, Preparedness and Response
4. Policy and Governance regarding Drought Risk Mitigation, Preparedness and Response

Due to COVID19 restrictions, no in-person meetings have been held for the group members, but several full intergovernmental working group meetings, coordinating committee meetings and task group meetings have been held online. The cooperation in this group is due to the lack of in-person meetings between the IWG-members a bit challenging.



I am very happy to be participating in the IWG, and I really would like convey as many CSO voices and suggestions as possible towards the other IWG members. If you have concrete examples (both good and bad) regarding policy measures, knowledge development, communication styles, coordination between departments and/or between national government and local authorities, meaningful participation of communities and financial incentives for addressing drought effectively, please contact me directly at n.vanharen@bothends.org

CSO PANEL / 2020-2022 WORK PLAN



UNCCD CSO Panel has adopted a Work Plan for the biennium, committed to create a more conducive environment for civil society organisations' development. Our Work Plan sets out our best view of how we can most effectively and efficiently engage CSOs in the work of the Convention, draw attention of decision makers to the importance of safeguarding land rights and facilitate coordination, communication and collaboration among the accredited CSOs to ultimately achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN) in all regions. The work plan contains agreed activities for implementation and assumes full utilization of our current resources and capacity, taking into account the needs of different constituencies. The work of CSO Panel for the period of 2020-2022 will focus on following:

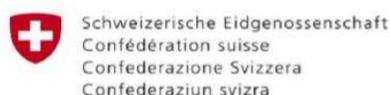
- **CSO Panel and UNCCD processes (governance):** Our work will focus on securing CSOs participation and representation in UNCCD, with a collective review of procedures when necessary. We also wish to encourage accreditation of more CSOs, by disseminating widely testimonies from CSOs on benefits of their participation to the Convention.

- **Communication and information sharing toward accredited CSOs:** We will seek to further inform and provide more support for the CSOs, engaging them with focal points, researchers, scientists, CSO-workers, national level policy makers, donors as well as highlight the CSO works and their LDN efforts through UNCCD / CSO panel websites, social media pages and mailing list.
- **Promote CSO preparation and involvement in CRIC, CST and COP:** As members of the CSO panel, we commit to organize preparation of the civil society prior to negotiations carried on in the UNCCD. This period will be very challenging with the uncertainty of holding international meetings and we must make sure that CSOs are not forgotten while adapting organizational modalities for the coming CRIC and COP.
- **CSO Involvement in implementing COP14 decisions:** Our work will focus mainly in seven decisions (2, 4, 5, 12, 14, 26, 31, and New Delhi declaration), and seeks to contribute to the strengthening of the CSOs and its involvement and interaction with other stakeholders to regional, national or subnational level related to land governance, land tenure and sustainable development included in the VGGT adopted in the COP.
- **Synergies between UNCCD and other UN Conventions:** UNCCD has an established mechanism and a network of partners in the entire UN System imbedded in various Treaties, Conventions and Protocols. We have identified them and anticipate participation at international, regional, or national levels working to enhance and strengthen the synergy among the over 27 UN institutions, including Rio Conventions and working report groups such as the IPBES, HLPE, IPCC, IWG on drought, envisaged to attract more action on the ground opportunities for accredited civil society organizations and their ability to procure direct funding to promote the objectives of the convention in all domains.

More information about our work can be found on the CSO page: www.csopanel.org



THANKS EVERYONE FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!



Swiss Agency for Development
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Previous issues of the newsletter available [here](#)