

## **UNCCD COP15 – Abidjan – Gender CSO Statement**

**13 May 2022**

*Delivered by: Dunia Baroud El Khoury of WADA Women's Association of Deir El Ahmar*

We wish to pay tribute to the colleagues absent from this meeting because of the COVID19 pandemic and to all the victims of war and violence, especially women and girls around the world. We urgently need peace, justice and a healthy, safe and sustainable living environment for all. Thank you for giving civil society the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion during COP15 that will impact the future of us all.

The respect and promotion of women's rights and human rights more broadly are at the heart of the implementation of the Convention's Strategic Framework.

In too many countries, women are still facing serious barriers when it comes to accessing land and other important assets, which are often of a legal nature.

Whether it be illiteracy and gender stereotypes that discriminate women in owning land or legal discrimination under customary law and other social norms, understanding and addressing these issues is critical for the implementation of the convention.

We support the recommendations of the UNCCD Secretariat and the corresponding roadmap, but they are not sufficient to ensure the mainstreaming of gender justice and ensure the full and effective participation of women and girls. It is also far from enough to guarantee their equitable access to all the benefits that sustainable land use can provide.

Therefore, we would like to share with you 4 suggestions for action:

1. Ensure that the Gender Action Plan is not a stand-alone within the COP discussions by also adding gender experts to the SPI and other subsidiary bodies within the UNCCD;
2. Foster active cooperation between UNCCD and UNWOMEN to ensure a more inclusive implementation of the Convention;
3. Make sure that the Gender Caucus and Youth Caucus reflect on the available documents and improve them where necessary;
4. Monitor policy impacts on vulnerable populations and disaggregate data to gender and age.

For millennia, women farmers have been the guardians and protectors of land.

We believe that empowering women at all levels is one of the strongest lever to implement the UNCCD and reach LDN. The UNCCD should therefore also consider the following 5 recommendations:

1. Promote capacity-building on leadership among women and women-led organizations.
2. More strongly facilitate the participation of women-led organizations in the COP and other global negotiation to raise their needs
3. Ensure regional cooperation, and South-South experience sharing, to improve women's abilities to disseminate their voices, needs and knowledge.
4. Establish a gender-sensitive financing and resource mobilization mechanism, which includes gender-specific budgeting within the UNCCD.
5. Finally, promote involvement of women in research institution to make sure their knowledge production and sharing is fostered.

We envision a world that is inclusive, kind, and nurturing, and the only way forward is to recognize and combat the injustices prevalent in our world today.

