

## CSO Closing Statement

Distinguished delegates,

I am [name] from [cso name], which is a CSO from [country], and I am honored to speak on behalf of 1200 representatives of civil society present here at COP15 in Abidjan

I would like to express our gratitude to the Secretariat of the UNCCD for its commitment to facilitate the collaborative interactions among Parties, international organizations and CSOs. We also want to thank the government of Cote d'Ivoire for hosting the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties of the UNCCD.

Over the past two weeks, more than one thousand two hundred representatives of civil society have actively and passionately participated in all stages of the agenda of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties. We organized two Open Dialogue Sessions that allowed us to better share realities from communities affected by desertification, land degradation and drought and foremost the innovative solutions they propose.

The COVID-19 pandemic has showed us that governments all around the world took urgent action. Regretfully, this is in sharp contrast with the urgency and action needed to combat desertification, land degradation and drought.

We, as CSOs, would like to provide recommendations which will help you to take the urgent actions that are needed.

These are:

### On gender:

- Ensure that the Gender Action Plan and its road map are not stand-alone documents within the COP discussions, add gender experts to SPI and other subsidiary bodies.
- Ensure that the four priorities of the Gender Action Plan are to be implemented by the Parties of the COP16: 1) women participation in decision making processes, 2) women economic empowerment, 3) Women equal land rights and access to resources, and 4) Women's access to knowledge and technologies.
- Invite the Gender Caucus and Youth caucus to reflect on the documents and to monitor policy impacts on populations in vulnerability conditions

### On sustainable land management and land restoration:

- Promote and support agroecological approaches and regenerative practices as solutions to implement the UNCCD and reach LDN, while contributing to synergize the three Rio Conventions.
- Promote and develop funding mechanisms to support knowledge and practice development of land users (specially for women, youth, indigenous peoples and pastoralist) together with scientists and CSO to improve and upscale agroecological approaches and regenerative practices.
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### On finance:

- Make sure that financial resources end-up at the place and with people where actions on drought, restoration and sustainable land use are being taken.
- Encourage financial institutions like national funds, donor countries, Global Environmental Facility, Green Climate Fund and International Fund for Agricultural Development, and philanthropies to support upscaling and replication of agroecological approaches and regenerative practices by engaging with civil society organizations supporting women, youth, and indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and local communities.

### On drought

- Humanize Drought ! give drought a human face and better understand the impacts of this disaster on the lives of children, women, men, farmers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, and local communities.

Considering that these people are vulnerable because of the magnitude of the situation they are in, we therefore, strongly encourage that UNCCD documents refer to them as “people in situation of vulnerability” and not as “vulnerable people”.

- Ensure better coordination of information-sharing, policies and budget allocation regarding drought preparedness and response among ministries and government agencies and also between the different governance levels from national via local authorities to local communities.
- By acting on the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in 2026 by the UN General Assembly in March 2022, promote mobile pastoralists strategies on mitigating, adapting to and living with climate variability and droughts, and recognize the role of sustainable pastoralism in reducing and responding to drought, restoring degraded rangelands and achieving land degradation neutrality.”

#### On Land rights and tenure:

- raise awareness on the Technical Guide at national and subnational level, by working under an intersectoral approach and engaging non-state stakeholders in the process and by requesting FAO, UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism to support capacity building and participatory workshops on the Technical Guide and the translation into local languages.
- Engage with local communities and especially those of women, youth, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and local communities so as to ensure that their rights and interests are secured in policy discussions relevant to the governance and use of land.
- Ensure coordination and coherence regarding Land Tenure in the Land Degradation Neutrality Programme, The Gender Action Plan Roadmap and the work of the Science Policy Interface
- Replace the term “vulnerable people” to “people in situation of vulnerability” in the UNCCD official documents related to land tenure.
- Encourage financial institutions like GEF, GCF, and IFAD, philanthropies and donor countries to engage with civil society organisations to support women, youth and indigenous peoples and local communities for its meaningful participation in the design and implementation of land tenure security strategies, including the implementation of the technical guide.

#### On CSOs participation to the UNCCD

- Support and facilitate participation of civil society throughout the decision-making processes regarding LDN target and National Drought Plans
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- Continue ensuring the active participation of CSO observers in the SPI.
- Ensure effective engagements and strong partnership between national governments and government agencies, communities, local authorities and the CSOs, in preparation and organization of COP16, and allow the CSO panel to be observer to the meetings of the Friends of the Chair.
- We encourage, the current and next COP presidents and the Group Friends of the Chair to take action for ensuring that the next COP agenda will be facilitating the active participation of parties in the Open Dialogue Sessions.

The COVID Pandemic showed us that WE, as an international community, are able to work together and take urgent action. We encourage the parties to actively engage with CSOs that are working closely with the communities where the practical actions on sustainable land management and restoration are being taken.

Thank you

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DO NOT READ: intervention drafted by : Amyia, Marioldy Sanchez Santivanez, Nathalie van Haren, ..., ....  
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