

Declaration of civil society organizations attending the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties

Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

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 we see on combatting desertification, land degradation and drought.

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

These are:

1. 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.
2. On sustainable land management and land restoration: promote and support agroecological approaches and regenerative practices as solutions for soil health, biodiversity, and adaptation and mitigation to climate change, and as a way to synergize the three Rio Conventions.
3. On finance: promote and develop finance mechanisms to support knowledge and practice development of land users together with scientists and CSOs to improve and upscale agroecological approaches and regenerative practices.
4. 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”.
5. 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.

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 as we are working closely with the communities where the practical actions on sustainable land management and restoration are being taken.

Thank you

DO NOT READ: intervention drafted by : Marioldy Sanchez and Nathalie van Haren