

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY SUMMIT
LAND, BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE

D'a désertif' actions

2019

SYNTHESIS DOCUMENT

+ 380
participants

+ 40
speakers

4
thematic
workshops

40
countries
represented

3
high level
panels

FROM 19 TO 22
JUNE 2019

OUAGADOUGOU
Burkina Faso

Along with organizing the Summit, Désertif'actions' purpose has always been to open the debate to a wider public through the organization of dialogue forums between the general public and development actors.

CONFERENCES AND DEBATES

In partnership with the French Institute of Ouagadougou

• «Agroecology against desertification, the power of life.»

Organized with IRD, Wednesday, June 19.

By pondering on the challenges and potentialities of agroecological practices, the panelists emphasized the complementarity between agroecology and food sovereignty (Blandine Sankara), the need to improve the performance of agricultural systems (Agrisud) and to extend existing practices to farmers (Yacouba Sawadogo).

• «The role and employment of youth in combating desertification: a possible future».

Organized with France Volontaire, on Thursday, June 20.

This conference proposed a cross-examination between the Desertification Convention and NGOs that encourage the involvement of young people in the fight against desertification (LCD). A short film presented the activities of the JUDEV association, which has been supporting young Burkinabes wishing to get involved in LCD actions for the past 10 years. The representatives of the Desertification Convention expressed their enthusiasm by reiterating the need for these initiatives to be better shared and known. They also pointed out that since 1994, the Convention has been working with a United Nations inter-agency group on the issue of youth as a vulnerable group. But the link between youth employment and sustainable land management still needs to be made...

«Young people are aware and able to ask themselves the right questions about what we need to do today and for the future. We have power because we are young. The problem is that the young people have lost hope, especially regarding the land.

(...) Local solutions exist, the important thing is to have the courage to dare.»

Aziaka Djatoube, representative of Africa on the panel of CSOs of the Desertification Convention

CELEBRATING TOGETHER IS AN ADDED SOCIAL VALUE!

Concert with Mariam Koné, Thursday, June 21.

We are convinced that nothing important can be done without celebration: the participants were therefore invited to celebrate the earth on the occasion of the music festival on 21 June; a concert offered by the organizers that allowed the Malian artist Mariam Koné to share her song DJA KELE about the need to rally for land, this song was the subject of a mobilising music video produced with CARI and ReSaD.

THE INTERNATIONAL DRAWING COMPETITION: DRAW ME THE GREAT GREEN WALL!

An essential moment of Désertif'actions since 2015: the international drawing competition. More than 30 international artists answered the call to relay a message of hope around the Great Green Wall of the Sahara and Sahel Initiative.

The 25 best drawings were exhibited for 2 weeks at the French Institute of Ouagadougou. They will be promoted at the next international meetings of the United Nations. The two winners of the competition are «Glez» and «El Marto».

INTERNATIONAL TREE EXHIBITION

Bangre Weogo Park, Saturday, June 22nd.

Désertif'actions was installed for a day in the in the Parc Bangre Weogo, to discover the 80 thematic stands of Burkinabe actors, enjoy musical activities and participate in conferences and debates.

• Conference with Both ENDS «The contributions of assisted natural regeneration (ANR) as a practice of sustainable land management»

The partners (NGOs and scientists) involved in the «Communities Greening the Sahel» project had the floor. The project aims at restoring land in three countries (Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal) over a 10-years period by accompanying rural populations in the practice of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR). By dispelling some preconceived notions, the debates highlighted the ecosystem benefits that trees bring to cultivated fields, and to people (especially women), as new incomes come from the processing and sale of these trees' products and by-products.

«As a researcher, I went to the «farmers' school» to learn about their practices and to cross-reference their knowledge with our scientific knowledge.»

Dr Abasse Tougiani, National Institute for Agronomic Research of Niger (INRAN)



ACTING ON SCALE, A CHALLENGE WITHIN REACH?

Land is at the crossroads of the multiple challenges of biodiversity loss, soil function degradation and climate change. These phenomena are interdependent and degrade entire ecosystems through their harmful effects by making territories vulnerable.

In the Sahel, which has been particularly affected by desertification for several decades, initiatives taken by States and their partners are integrating land:

- Climate Commission for the Sahel Region: an axis to restore degraded lands and ecosystems, exists as part of its investment plan;
- Great Green Wall of the Sahara and Sahel: it aims to strengthen communities through a synergy of actions to combat land degradation and biodiversity, and to adapt to climate change;
- Green Initiative for the Sahel: it aims to build a partnership for green agriculture in the Sahel. In their planning and implementation, these initiatives must take into account the local level, to amplify innovations co-built with all stakeholders, anchored in the territories and often based on traditional and ancestral knowledge.

Dans leur planification comme dans leur mise en œuvre, ces initiatives doivent prendre en compte le niveau local, pour amplifier les innovations coconstruites avec tous les acteurs, ancrées dans les territoires et reposant souvent sur des savoirs traditionnels et ancestraux.

The urgent need to converge funding

Despite numerous civil society initiatives, the trend towards land degradation has not been reversed. Funds exist at the international level to undertake actions to restore degraded lands (GEF, Green Climate Fund or LDN Fund), or at the state level (FIE Burkina Faso...). But they are not on the required scale, they are compartmentalized and their procedures are not easily accessible to civil society and local actors. Are they in the required urgency?

Develop the Desertification Convention into a space of convergence of initiatives, funding and actors

Elected members of the Convention Panel of Civil Society Organizations made five major recommendations:

1. Recognize the contributions of community-driven initiatives at the grassroots level;
2. Ensure land tenure security for communities, especially women and youth in COP14 decisions;
3. Strengthen the participation and capacity of civil society organizations in the implementation of UNCCD decisions, including on land degradation neutrality and droughts;
4. Ensure appropriate funding for community-led initiatives at the grassroots level;
5. Transform our society to achieve greater gender equity.

The positions formulated during Desertif'actions 2019 will be integrated into these recommendations, to be brought to the attention of decision-makers during COP14.

Agroecology is an effective approach and techniques for dealing with desertification. It is a path to food security for Sahelian and global populations. Faced with desertification in the Sahel, the urgency is to invest massively in agro-ecology!

The prevalence of severe food insecurity remains at rates close to 30% in Sub-Saharan and East Africa. In the coming years, the Sahel must be able to make a significant contribution to feeding the Sahel, while protecting its fragile soils. Agroecology can address these issues of agriculture and food, but also sustainable land management, resilience to climate change and biodiversity conservation. This transformation must be carried out in partnerships between States, civil society, scientists and donors. Initiatives such as the Alliance for Agroecology in West Africa (3AO), supported by ROPPA and the Green Initiative for the Sahel developed by France, should help to build these multi-stakeholder partnerships.

«Sahelian lands may only be able to feed 13% of their population by 2100 and fertile lands are lost at a rate of 23 hectares per minute»

I. Thiaw, SE UNCCD

THE GREAT GREEN WALL FOR SAHARA AND SAHEL INITIATIVE

Moving from a strategic to an operational framework

GGWSSI is a coherent strategic framework for action in terms of geographic scale. It is a relevant response to land, climate and biodiversity challenges, but the intensity of action remains very insufficient. It proposes a relevant approach for intervention, based on local authorities and territories. As a multi-country initiative, it can integrate cross-border issues such as water resources management or pastoralism.



While the institutions implementing the Great Green Wall recognize the major contribution of civil society, this mutual recognition remains insufficient in terms of cooperation in action, and ultimately undermines the effectiveness of the GGWSSI.

It is necessary to make the GGWSSI more visible and to promote synergies with other interventions on its path

Civil society claims its full place and role in the implementation of the Great Green Wall and the organizations wish to get involved. But how to properly identify a project's contribution to the Initiative? There is no simple and accessible framework for CSOs to formalize their voluntary contribution to the implementation of the Initiative.

Civil society has identified various criteria for characterizing projects, based on its experiences. The criteria to be applied are:

- Supporting its grassroots organizations;
- Reducing rural exodus and migration;
- Improving local governance of natural resources;
- Improving social cohesion;
- Generate green income and jobs;
- Be aligned between the objectives of the actions and the strategy of the GGW.



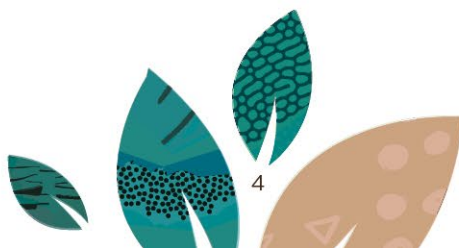
To value the contribution of civil society to the achievement of the Initiative, there is a need to improve simple and direct communication between national GGW structures, CSOs and their networks.

Communication tools and methods are identified but need to be strengthened for greater effectiveness:

- National or regional multi-stakeholder dialogue meetings on GGW: it is necessary to increase their frequency and to rely on organized civil society networks;
- A multitude of communication and information media are available, and can reach a wide audience: the national institutions of the GGWSSI must take hold of them and use them to make themselves better known;
- To capitalize and make visible the actions of CSOs, States and other actors, online databases associated with geographic information systems are relevant tools: it is essential to replicate them within countries and at the regional level.

Harmonized, structured, simple and frequent communication on the GGW will make the Initiative more understandable and improve its image, both within countries and internationally.

To this end, civil society reiterates its urgent call to the African Union to fully exercise its political leadership and to the Pan-African Agency of the GGWSSI to act as an operational arm.



PASTORALISM AND RESTORATION OF RANGELANDS

a dialogue of practitioners to increase investment
in the pastoral management of rangelands



Pastoralism, which relies on the mobility of herds to exploit scarce and scattered water and grazing resources over large areas, is an emblematic way of developing these resources in arid zones.

In these regions, pastoralism contributes significantly to economic and social development and to the food security of the population.

Well managed, herd mobility in drylands allows the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as the carbon sequestration in the soil. Pastoralism, which has been around for thousands of years, is adapted to cope with climatic variations.

THE WAY OF LIFE OF
+ THAN 2 BILLION
PEOPLE DEPENDS ON
PASTORAL AREAS
AND RANGELANDS!



The rangelands occupy nearly a third of the emerged lands. Their restoration and preservation can therefore contribute significantly to the achievement of sustainable development objectives.

It is time to recognize their uniqueness!

For the deployment of sustainable pastoralism, it is imperative to renew regional and global dialogue on the values of rangelands, opportunities for rangeland restoration and the role of pastoralists as guardians of landscapes.



To meet this challenge, it is necessary to strengthen the dialogue for the definition of restoration investments and structuring projects in the field of sustainable pastoralism by mobilizing:

- **Decision makers** who need to make a strong, coordinated commitment between countries and pay greater attention to resource governance and pastoralists' rights;
- **Pastoralists** who possess a culture rich in traditional knowledge to better manage the rangelands, and the civil society organizations that represent them;
- **Scientists** through the regular generation of data on the health status of the rangelands, the validation of good practices and capacity building;
- **The private and public sectors** with increased mobilization of funding for the rangeland restoration.

This dialogue must be rid of the widespread negative perception of pastoralism as a source of insecurity, resource degradation and greenhouse gas emissions. It should lead to the establishment of regional land restoration strategies that integrate and support pastoral communities as a priority.

The States and their technical and financial partners' inattention and disdain for these paths and pastoral communities have led to increased desertification, loss of biodiversity, but also to population impoverishment and insecurity.



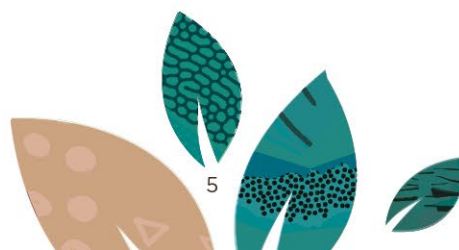
The safeguarding of the rangelands ultimately depends on increased mobilization of stakeholders to enable the necessary investments to scale up proven management and restoration practices.



Pastoral communities are the custodians of pastures and depend on the ecosystem services they provide for their livelihoods and resilience. The rangelands strengthen the links between communities. The restoration of rangelands and the development of sustainable pastoralism is therefore a guarantee of social cohesion and economic development.

«The pastors are above all plant experts, therefore botanists, interpreters of the weather, therefore climatologists, healers with their bare hands, therefore veterinarians, experts in the territories, therefore geographers.»

Patrice Burger, CARI



LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY & LAND TENURE

Restoring land and managing it sustainably involves a multitude of actors. Rural communities, which derive their lifestyles from the land, are the first to be affected. It therefore seems natural that major land restoration projects, like local civil society actions in the territories, should guarantee these communities sustainable and secure access to resources. In reality, a lack of consideration of land issues in the fight against desertification is a factor of failure and inefficiency.

For the first time, land issues will be on the official agenda of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties' discussions at its 14th edition.

The Convention's ownership of target 15.3 of the Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs) on land degradation neutrality (LDN) cannot be achieved if the issue of land tenure security for restored and preserved lands is not seriously addressed. 121 countries around the world have committed to setting targets for LDN, from which actions to prevent and reduce land degradation and restore already degraded land must result. The stakes are high.



To manage land sustainably, land tenure security is essential: without it, restoration efforts will prove futile.

All land and ecosystem restoration projects undertaken must provide a guarantee of sustainable land tenure security: communities' engagement in GDT is only truly effective when they are confident that they can benefit from the benefits of their investment.



States must provide legal frameworks that respect the rights of communities on land and do not exclude customary systems.

- Improve access to land for women and specific groups (young people, poor producers);
- Implement FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Land Tenure Governance;
- Ensure compliance with land tenure provisions, by widely disseminating the texts and ensuring a transfer of responsibilities and resources to local authorities;
- Protect family farms, forests and pastoral areas from all forms of land grabbing (agribusiness, urbanization, etc.).

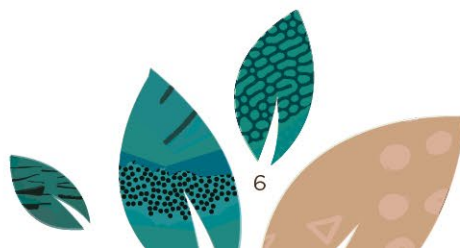


Rural communities must remain the primary beneficiaries of restoration actions carried out by States and all other actors.

- In implementing LDN, it is essential to ensure that actions include the rights and interests of farmers and herders;
- Community-driven initiatives to restore and sustainably manage land must be recognized as strong contributions to achieving neutrality. The good practices developed within these initiatives and the knowledge of rural communities should be integrated into major transformative projects.

Mining activities lead to land degradation and displacement of communities. If mining companies make commitments to compensate for this degradation, civil society organizations call on them to comply with environmental management laws. States, for their part, must put in place transparent control systems to ensure compliance with these texts.

Civil society reiterates its desire to see land tenure security included in land restoration actions and in the implementation of Land Degradation Neutrality!



Water is necessary for all human activities, whether to satisfy our vital needs, for domestic, agricultural, industrial or other uses. We must not forget the water needs of the ecosystems themselves. A great diversity of actors can be found in each of these uses, but they remain very compartmentalized.

The availability of part of the water resources is threatened by climate change

Competition between uses and between water stakeholders tends to increase: As a result, the risks of scarcity and conflict become a reality.

To prevent future conflicts, it is therefore necessary to improve knowledge of water resources and the articulation between multiple uses in order to establish good governance and shared management of the resource.

Knowledge of the availability of water resources and their abstraction is sometimes very limited due to insufficient data or lack of access to such data. Inventories of water withdrawal points and irrigated areas are incomplete and poorly updated.

States, with the support of other actors (research, civil society...) must:

- Identify the data that can actually be used and set up a harmonized data collection framework;
- Develop tools for collecting and disseminating water information in accessible formats (e.g. creation of a regional water resources observatory);
- Strengthen or set up mechanisms for the exchange of information between the various actors involved in the production and use of data.

This data can be used, on the basis of an analysis of real needs at the local level, to inform intervention strategies developed at the national, regional and international levels.

In arid areas, desertification contributes to reducing the availability and quality of surface water (siltation, salinization), which has multiple uses.

Nevertheless, there is local know-how that makes it possible to efficiently develop water resources for agricultural use that concerns the majority of the population. Relying on these skills, such as agro-ecology, is essential for the preservation and rational use of water resources.

Public policy agendas must give high priority to water and promote concerted local management for greater efficiency in the preservation and enhancement of resources.

It is necessary to:

- Strengthen the capacities of local actors (including local authorities and management associations) for a real project management role;
 - Recognise the place and role of CSOs in the development of good water resource management practices.
- Setting up synergies of actors in the sector, from the local to the national and international levels, will support the scaling up of soil water conservation practices, in particular for agricultural and pastoral uses.

This shared management of water resources suffers from insufficient frameworks for consultation between stakeholders and weak governance mechanisms.

It is therefore necessary for States to commit to:

- Boost and strengthen consultation frameworks (local, national, transborder) on shared water management;
- Implement the Paris agreements on the harmonization and coordination of Technical and Financial Partners' interventions in the water sector;
- Promote information, education and communication on Integrated Water Resources Management to the general public;
- Reconsider the central role of women in water governance.

Water and international agendas

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: The Paris Agreement mentions the water sector, which must be at the heart of most adaptation actions and included in mitigation actions.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification calls for the implementation of long-term integrated strategies aimed at the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources.

The Convention on Biological Diversity through the Aichi Declaration aims to ensure that by 2020, at least 17% of land and inland water areas and 10% of marine and coastal areas are preserved.





The Fourth International Summit of Civil Society Stakeholders Désertif'actions was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 19 to 22 June 2019 and brought together more than 380 participants from some 40 countries, representing 230 multi-stakeholder organizations: grassroots communities, NGOs, scientists, local authorities, international organizations, private and public sector actors...

This fourth edition was held for the first time on the African continent, in a country where 19% of the country's land is degraded and which has lost 2.4 million hectares of forests, becoming savannahs in just 11 years.

This situation reflects the reality of the Sahel and more broadly the rapid increase in land degradation worldwide.

In anticipation of the negotiations of the 14th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in India in September 2019, the participants intend to influence decisions and put land back at the centre of attention. To this end, a declaration incorporating the contributions and recommendations resulting from the three days of work was validated at the end of the Summit.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DECLARATION

«Our conviction is that we must all harness, as development actors, the strength present in peasant, pastoral, oasis areas and so many others, who are world citizens by our side: together, we are not the defenders of the land against desertification, but from now on WE are the land that is defending itself.»

(...) Aware of the growing insecurity, we refuse to be intimidated and assert by our presence and our work that we are determined to oppose our resistance to the doom of fate.

(...) We are determined to bring to a successful conclusion the discussions on land, the subject of which is explicitly included for the first time on the official agenda of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties.

(...) In this agenda, our contributions will go to the land / biodiversity / climate links, the land / renewable energy link, the rural / urban link and the land / health link.

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