



THE DESERTIF' ACTIONS 2015 FORUM

Desertif'actions 2015: an unprecedented appeal from civil society to account for land in climate change

Desertif'actions 2015 (D'a15) is the international civil society's forum on land degradation in the face of climate change. Between June 10th and 13th, 2015, it brought together in Montpellier over 300 international development actors, representing 57 countries.

Beginning in April 2015, an initial gathering of desertification combating actors' points of view was performed via 13 country workshops (Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Congo, Ivory Coast, India, Iran, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Middle East and North Africa region, Chad, Tunisia) that brought together over 400 people, and via an e-Forum held in 3 languages (French, English, Spanish) that mobilized 380 registered users representing 46 countries. In total, the D'a15 event directly touched no less than 7000 people. When the awareness raising campaign launched by the United Nation's Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and based upon the D'a15 international Editorial Cartoon Contest is included, this number exceeds 30 000.

The actual Montpellier Forum enabled country workshop contributions to be enriched in the light of the 28 plenary contributions provided by a variety of actors (NGOs, local authorities, scientists, United Nations, financial partners and donors) and of a dozen workshops focused upon three specific 'Lines of Work': « Land Degradation and Climate Change », « Synergy between the Rio Conventions », « Creating a Plural and Organized Civil Society ». This entire work process enabled the elaboration of recommendations and common position statements that were integrated into the final report. A final Montpellier Declaration (see below) was elaborated and collectively validated. It presents the main positions taken by the participants.

A FEW MONTPELLIER DECLARATION EXCERPTS:

« [...] The Desertif'actions 2015 participants highlighted the undeniable link between land degradation, the global environment and the development, with the issues of stability and security at the international level. In the context of current and future impacts of global warming, the concern of land in the climate change negotiations emerged as to be highly prioritized. [...] »

« [...] The D'a15 participants alert the international community to the necessity of having land in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the need to feed an estimated population of 9 billion people by 2050 and the requirement to increase agricultural production by about 70% worldwide and even 100% in developing countries; while land degradation could reduce food production by 12% in the next 25 years, and up to 50% in some areas with the additional effect of climate change [...] »

« [...] The D'a15 participants in Montpellier agree and conclude that to stimulate sustainable land management, land rehabilitation and prevention of land conflicts, good governance of land must be in place. To ensure good governance, the «Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security» and «Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems» developed by the UN Committee on World Food Security should be the basis for governments, investors, donors, the private sector and civil society. [...] »

1. According to D'a15, land and agriculture must remain at the heart of agenda!

HOW CAN THIS ESSENTIAL SYNERGY BETWEEN THE THREE CONVENTIONS BE PROMOTED AND IMPLEMENTED?

Les triplées de Rio et la synergie



D'a15
Montpellier 2015
Desertif Actions

The three conventions that emerged from Rio (UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD) were created to address three major environmental problems: climate changes, biodiversity loss and desertification, each of which are impediments to sustainable development. Therefore, the effectiveness of each individual convention truly depends upon their synergistic implementation. Land¹, central to all preoccupations and therefore at the heart of the agenda, be it in terms of desertification, climate or biodiversity - must be the federating building block that facilitates synergy between the conventions. Land is the fundamental connection between environmental preoccupations, development, food security and poverty reduction.

D'A15 DECLARATION EXCERPTS:

« Participants agree and conclude that more operational cooperation between stakeholders at all levels must be ensured, especially at national level through the establishment of national committees for integrated implementation. »

« Participants take note of, deplore and denounce the irresponsible and persistent undervaluation of land and agriculture in the negotiations on climate change. »

KEY FIGURES

- « Dry and arid lands represent **41 %** of the Earth's land surface, and **10 to 20 %** of these dry and arid lands are already significantly degraded. » (UNCCD)
- « Agriculture, deforestation and land use changes are responsible for **24 %** of greenhouse gas emissions. » (IPCC)
- « In certain African regions already heavily impacted by desertification, climate change threatens to reduce agricultural production by **50 %**. » (IPCC)

IN THE WORDS OF THE PARTICIPANTS:

« You are Stewards of the Land »

Annick Girardin
Secretary of State
for Development and Francophony

« The Niamey Declaration requests that land restoration be addressed in the Paris Agreement, given land's potential in the face of climate change (carbon storage, CC adaptation practices and technologies, etc.). »

Adamou Chaifou,
Niger Environment Minister

Cartoon

The Rio Triplets and Synergy
I am the biggest; I am not the smallest; Yes, but I am taking care of the family's land

¹ The word «land» as used in this context designates ecosystems and agro-systems as a whole, and includes all components of these systems: soil, water, biodiversity; etc., as well as their operational processes, their utilization modes and their forms of appropriation by societies



IN THE WORDS OF AURÉLIE CEINOS (CARE-FRANCE)
LAND'S ROLE IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS

Why are land and agriculture the most overlooked issues in the climate negotiations?

Land and agriculture issues are very sensitive, as they concern both emission reduction and adaptation. Indeed, agriculture is one of the most sensitive sectors to climate change impacts, but also one of the most emitting sectors, particularly when deforestation-related emissions are included. Every country, depending upon its resources, production modes and dietary habits, therefore approaches these questions from different angles. For many of the developing countries, adaptation is thus the priority, while industrialized countries prefer to speak of emission reductions, in great part in order to try to compel emerging countries to move forward on this question. As a result of the difficulties encountered in agreeing upon which specific issues to address, this sector has for many years been set aside.

Which are the latest advances concerning agriculture in the negotiations?

After several years of immobility, the decision was made to launch a work program on agriculture in 2014 in order to unlock the debate. Four workshops were scheduled between 2015 and 2016: (i) Development of early warning systems and contingency plans in relation to extreme weather events and their effects - desertification, drought, etc.; (ii) Assessment of risk and vulnerability of agricultural systems to different climate change scenarios; (iii) Identification of agricultural system adaptation measures & (iv) Identification and assessment of agricultural practices and technologies to enhance productivity, food security and resilience. The first two workshops were held in June 2015 and the next two will be held in June 2016.

On a political level, the first two workshops enabled a certain level of confidence to be restored between governments on this thorny issue. A report summarizing the discussions will be ready in December. Unfortunately, however, recommendations for the Paris Agreement have not been discussed.

On a technical level, several countries (but too few) reiterated the importance and challenges of establishing services/warning systems useful to farmers/stockbreeders. The overriding conversation still insufficiently reflects the needs of family farming in developing countries. For example, there was no discussion on the various agricultural models and their differences in terms of vulnerabilities and adaptation capacities. The question of gender was also forgotten.

What was produced at D'a15 and what must we bring to Paris to address this issue?

Several D'a15 recommendations are extremely relevant to the definition of the Paris Agreement. If I had to highlight only a few, these would be that the Agreement must respect the basic principles defined in the past by various United Nations authorities, and in particular by the Committee on World Food Security:

- Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.
- Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems.

Finally, funding must be provided to small farmers. They are in the front lines, first victims of climate changes and hunger, and therefore the first that must adapt to survive. Climate negotiations must take this into account.

2. Lands, agriculture and climate: a complex reality

CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE (CSA)²

The CSA concept draws simultaneously upon three pillars: food security, climate change adaptation and climate change impact attenuation. Nothing fundamentally new is provided by this 'catch-it-all' concept, yet civil society organizations cannot ignore it: it is increasingly defining development policy orientations. However, let us not forget that what is essential is that the agricultural models of the future be debated, and that this concept must not distance us from grassroots preoccupations.

Of course, agriculture must be smart in the face of climate: however, in drylands, it is thanks to those systems that draw upon agro-ecology principles that it can be smart! And the appearance of CSA on the scene changes nothing to this!

Furthermore, behind the CSA concept itself, the Global Alliance for CSA has been constituted, in order to create a platform for both knowledge and experience sharing and dedicated funding mobilization, and to foster a favorable political environment for CSA. However, there are strong concerns concerning the place taken by agribusiness and multinationals in this Alliance², and many contestations have been articulated. Where will this lead in terms of agricultural models³?

LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY (LDN)

This concept implicitly tells us that land degradation cannot be halted! It therefore proposes that the combat against land degradation be associated with degraded land restoration mechanisms. However, this begs the question of the equivalence between natural environments (degraded and restored). The biggest merit of the concept is that it places the land issue back at the highest level of the international agenda (e.g. Sustainable Development Objective).

The UNCCD is currently working on the creation of an action-funding platform, whose objective is to encourage investment into the restoration of land across the world, without changes to land tenure. Participants remain cautious with respect to this fund, which proclaims itself as a means of combating land hoarding. Does it not at this stage represent a threat for all the land users and entitled persons not in possession of official land ownership titles?

D'A15 DECLARATION EXCERPT:

« Participants agree insist upon the fact that new concepts such as CSA and LDN must first be at the service of local communities [...]. »

IN THE WORDS OF THE PARTICIPANTS:

« These new concepts must not simply amount to green washing concepts! »

**Akambi Is Deen, Eco-Bénin,
Climate and Development Network**



Cartoon

Let's give it all a fresh coat of paint!

² The Climate and Development Commission and the Agriculture and Food Commission conducted a decrypting sheet and promulgated recommendations on GACSA: <http://www.coordinationsud.org/wp-content/uploads/Note-ACSA-CCD-C2A-EN-final2.pdf>

³ For further information : <http://www.climatesmartagconcerns.info/>

⁴ For further information : <http://www.trocaire.org/sites/trocaire/files/resources/policy/cidse-climate-smart-agriculture.pdf>



IN THE WORDS OF LAURENT LEVARD (GRET)

WHAT PLACE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THESE NEW CONCEPTS?

How can we work with these new concepts (CSA, LDN, etc.) without losing sight of the deeper reality of the problems we face?

New concepts can contribute to raising awareness and to mobilizing the international community to action. However, vigilance is required, as these concepts can also be used by certain actors to legitimize development models that have been vigorously criticized (for example, the CSA concept is very vague and agribusiness multinationals have taken hold of it to promote a productivist model based upon GMOs), or in other cases to seize more land from local populations (risk of the LDN concept). Civil society must not give in to the most popular trends but must defend the concepts that it uses and that have proven themselves, such as the concept of peasant and family farming and of agroecology. At the same time, civil society must warn public authorities and international organizations of the potential perverse effects of the promotion of certain concepts.

Can civil society contribute to the clarification and framing of the translation of these new concepts into operational recommendations, and if so, how?

As far as agriculture is concerned, the priority must be to reinforce peasant and family farming and their transition towards ecological agricultural models. This is the fundamental recommendation that must be made. Indeed, this is how we can truly face the challenges of climate change (attenuation and adaptation) and soil degradation, and encourage true economic and social development (food security, income and job creation, decrease of social inequalities) for all those countries in which the farming population is significant, if not to say the majority. The exclusive focalization on one issue (climate change, soil carbon, etc.) while forgetting the others can have but disastrous indirect social and environmental impacts, including upon these very same issues, if, for example, impoverished farming populations migrate towards new regions and deforest the vegetation cover.

How is civil society integrated into GACSA and what position should be held in the face of this Alliance?

Many civil society organizations denounce this alliance in which multinational businesses and their backers detain most of the power, which is being elaborated in the United Nations system sidelines and which is based upon such a vague definition of « climate-smart agriculture » that it could in effect open the doors to green recycling of the productivist model promoted by agribusiness.

3. Pertinent approaches to mobilise in drylands: agroecology and agropastoralism

In drylands, climate change is increasing constraints, climate variability and extreme weather event frequency (droughts, torrential rain...). And these phenomena strongly impact natural resources (water, soil, flora, fauna, landscapes, ecosystems...) and production practices (harvest losses, increased animal mortality, land degradation, etc.).

AGROECOLOGY

Agro-ecological practices enable some of the impacts of climate change to be offset, at least partially, by playing upon:

- Soil water circulation and retention improvement;
- Wind and water erosion protection;
- Soil fertility improvement, etc.

The combination of a variety of different practices acting at different levels (soil, flora, fauna...) and different scales (plot, exploitation, territory) is a significant adaptation factor to climate change, from the technical, social and economic points of view all. It enables farmers to be more resilient in the face of climate changes⁵.

PASTORALISM

Mobile pastoralism's true value must be recognized, as it:

- Enables great resilience in the face of climate change;
- Valorizes dryland ecosystems that cannot be exploited by agriculture;
- Represents a non-negligible fraction of the GDP in many countries.

Mobile pastoralism suffers from:

- The lack of public and private investment and the absence of dedicated policies;
- Of a non-recognition, in particular of land rights, that weakens it considerably.

This must change!

Pastoralism is rooted in agro-ecology principles.

Pastoralism and agro-ecology are interconnected and must be supported and developed to combat climate change, land degradation, poverty and insecurity!

IN THE WORDS OF KATIA ROESCH (AVSF) ON THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN AGROECOLOGY AND PASTORALISM



What great challenges must be overcome in order for agro-ecology and pastoralism to be considered as pertinent models in the face of climate changes and promoted by international policies?

Agroecology and agropastoralism offer major advantages for environmental, economic, social and climate change adaptation. There is therefore a need for both better understanding of these practices and better dissemination to youth and political decision-makers, so that this knowledge and know-how can be recognized, preserved and transmitted. Furthermore, it is urgent that participative governance modes be created at the local level for concerted resource management, as well as access to resources. These must associate all the actors involved and take customary land and territorial rights into account. Finally, none of this will be possible without dedicated funding mechanisms (Ex. Installation subsidies, public investments for access to water and health care services « One health »⁶).

Of the major recommendations produced at D'a15, which must absolutely be carried to COP21?

The recommendation that best addresses this issue in the final declaration is the following: « It is of general interest and urgent to implement public policies that integrate agro- ecology, agro- pastoralism and that protect and encourage family farming by guaranteeing the right to food defined by the United Nations, in particular, by engaging with urgency in the rehabilitation of 500 million hectares of available degraded land ».

⁵ The Climate & Development Commission wrote a note on family farmers for COP20 in Lima: http://www.coordinationsud.org/wp-content/uploads/Agricultures-familiales_EN.pdf

⁶ For further information: <http://www.onehealthinitiative.com/about.php>

4. Insecurity and migrations: the hidden face of land degradation

Environmental degradations, caused by climatic factors and human activities, generate pervasive degradation of natural resources, agricultural production capacities and population living conditions.

Environmental degradations and food insecurity are generating conflicts, which can destabilize entire regions. Furthermore, the loss of land productivity threatens the adaptation capacities of local populations, sometimes pushing them to abandon their natural environment and exodus. These disturbances lead to food insecurity, social insecurity and population migration, and create potential instability in both the regions emigrated from and the regions immigrated to.

KEY FIGURES

- « In 2008, land degradation was linked to **60** foodborne riots in over 30 countries in the world » (UNCCD)
- « It is estimated that **60 million** additional people will add themselves to the 25 million existing and so-called ecological refugees in Africa by 2020 » (UNCCD)

D'A15 DECLARATION EXCERPTS:

« Participants remind of and insist on the collective and long term effects of land degradation on food insecurity and global security. »

IN THE WORDS OF PATRICE BURGER (CARI) ON THE INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN LAND, MIGRATIONS AND SECURITY

How does the land issue impact insecurity and migration problems?

Land, and, more generally speaking, natural resources - of which soil is the foundation and that the term 'soil' actually embraces - is for one third of humanity - amongst them most of the world's poorest populations - at the foundation of their production system and often of their whole way of life. Land degradation is a direct threat to their basic economy's vital resource, with food security in the first lines. Food security degradation then, by a domino effect, leading to disturbances of the social structure and fabric. During important crises (droughts, floods or other social types of catastrophes such as poor land tenure governance), the instability that is created becomes a breeding ground for insecurity; if instability persists and any hope of a future seems compromised, migration then imposes itself as a survival strategy. This is not a new situation, and migrations have always been adaptation strategies in ecological, economic or social environments in which the prospects of future generations appeared to be compromised. In a world organized in such a way that migrations are considered problematic, the issue of land and ecosystems and of keeping them working correctly, is a challenge that must be addressed and that has been neglected for far too long.

With this in mind, which D'A 15 recommendations must we bring to COP 21?

The negative impact of human activities on the land has reached alarming levels. This will simply break the already unstable balance between populations and territories in many places in the world which Sahelian Africa. To fight against these phenomena and therefore limit migration caused by land degradation, it is necessary to re-invest in the fight against the degradation so that restoration to restore, or at least prevent the ruin, founder of natural capital we have, namely land. At the physical level, investment in the fight against land degradation and the restoration of degraded land should be through agroecological techniques capable of restoring fertility and soil life. Such management has the added benefit of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (mitigation contribution) to store much of the excess carbon and increase food security.

A triple win-win-win solution.

Such an action can only be successful if access to production factors and to natural resources is officially and legally guaranteed. This requires land tenure reforms, which themselves cannot occur without a democratic system of governance.

As these actions are of general interest and for the common good, international cooperation and solidarity must play their part, via United Nations instruments such as the Rio Conventions and their declinations into multilateral and bilateral development policies.



The road to Paris (COP21) therefore passes through Ankara (COP12) !



IN THE WORDS OF VANESSA LAUBIN (GERES) & PATRICE BURGER (CARI)
ON THE BRIDGES BETWEEN THE TWO CONVENTIONS

COP21 - to take place from November 30th to December 11th in Paris - constitutes an inescapable step in the combat against climate changes as COP21 must necessarily produce a universal agreement between the 195 Party States with the objective of limiting global warming to +2°C.

It is now recognized that combating climate changes is impossible without involving land, which, in its globality, both generates 30 % of emissions and provides significant potential for emissions reduction and carbon storage, depending upon the type of agriculture practiced. The combat against land degradation is, in effect, an essential element as it is central to many other environmental issues (forest protection, biodiversity protection, food security, etc.). Thus, sustainable development objective 15 (including Target 15.3) will accord a new priority to land in the international debate, and in particular in relation to agriculture, and also establish new obligations.

De facto, COP12 – which will be held from October 12th to 23rd in Ankara - is a decisive milestone on the road to the Paris 2015 Agreement: the UNCCD has used a passage from the Rio+20 Declaration « The Future We Want » that stipulates the countries' consent to a neutral world in terms of land degradation, in order to both promote the LDN concept and attempt to clarify it, whilst simultaneously proposing the creation of a fund destined to finance the investment. A strong decision taken in Ankara would constitute a positive and encouraging message prior to COP21.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

All the documents presenting D'a15 output can be found on the following website:
www.desertif-actions.fr

You will find: A presentation of the D'a15 Forum; A presentation of the international context; A presentation of the D'a15 lines of work; The program; The final report (Fr/En); An illustrated summary; Some key data (Fr, En); Bibliographical resource material for the three lines of work; Reports for each country workshop; The summary of the *E-forum* and country workshops; The final Montpellier declaration (En, Fr, Sp); The slide shows presented during the work sessions; Photographs

Coordination SUD is the French national platform of international solidarity NGOs. Founded in 1994, it brings together more than 160 NGOs active in the fields of humanitarian aid, development assistance, environmental protection, the defense of disadvantaged people's human rights and international solidarity education and advocacy.

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The **Climate and Development Commission (CCD)** of Coordination SUD works to influence the strategies of the development actors, to pass on good practices and to influence international negotiations. It brings together about 20 international solidarity NGOs: 4D, Acting for Life, Action Contre la Faim, AgriSud International, Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières, Association la Voûte Nubienne, ATD Quart-Monde, Bolivia Inti-Sud Soleil, CARE-France, Centre d'Actions et de Réalisations Internationales, CCFD - Terre Solidaire, Electriciens Sans Frontières, Fondation Energies pour le Monde, Groupe Energies Renouvelables, Environnement et Solidarités, Gevalor, GRDR, Gret, Initiative Développement, Institut de recherches et d'applications des méthodes de développement, Médecins du Monde, Oxfam France, Peuples Solidaires-ActionAid France, Planète Urgence, Secours Catholique-Caritas France.

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