

INTERNATIONAL
FORUM

Désertif'actions



**Land degradation and climate change :
time to act !**

**LANDS AT THE HEART
OF THE AGENDA !**

CIVIL SOCIETY GETS MOBILIZED
to combat desertification and
land degradation in the face of
climate change

**"STAND FOR
YOUR LANDS"
NOW!**



2015
International
Year of Soils

« YOU ARE STEWARDS OF THE LAND »

Annick Girardin, Secretary of State for Development and Francophony



Land is an essential resource, ensuring the income and shaping the livelihood of a large majority of the world's population. Land is the capital of the poorest, to whom it provides food and resources for economic development. However, land degradation affects 1 billion people, compromising their future. Providing access to food and ensuring the security of these rural populations are critical if the needs of the growing world population are to be met.

It is land that organically binds environmental preoccupations, development, food security and poverty reduction. Via the adoption of appropriate agricultural techniques enabling carbon storage improvement, land plays a key role in our global warming attenuation and adaptation capacities. Indeed, this is why land is the common root underlying each of the so-called United Nations Rio Conventions to ensure sustainable development - of equal importance to desertification, climate change and biodiversity. Yet, the conventions in question treat land too marginally.



Land is pivotal to the present and future challenges that we face, as both present and future generations need land in order to ensure natural resource renewal, landscape regeneration and resilient development. Land is a resource that must be preserved! To neglect land is to condemn the future.

41% of the Earth's land surface is comprised of dry and arid lands, 10 to 20% of which are already significantly degraded.

50% of the agricultural production of certain African regions already heavily impacted by desertification is threatened by climate change, and exposed to 25 % reductions in current output.

30% of greenhouse gas emissions derive from agriculture, deforestation and land use changes. And yet, simultaneously, it would appear that soils have the capacity to store practically all the surplus annual emissions!



There is still great potential to federate the complex multilateral environment



« Land is both at heart of the problem and at the heart of the solution »

Antoine Cornet,
French Scientific Committee on
Desertification (CSFD - IRD)

Montpellier declaration



« Desertification participants denounce the irresponsible and persistent undervaluation of land and agriculture in the negotiations on climate change. »



THE LAND ISSUE AT THE HEART OF THE RIO CONVENTIONS

The three conventions that emerged from Rio (UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD) were created to address three major environmental problems: climate change resulting from atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, natural biodiversity loss and land desertification and degradation. These three problems are each impediments to sustainable development. The elevated operational costs of the Rio instruments and their excessive compartmentalization are often recognized as non-sustainable.

The effectiveness of the conventions will ultimately depend upon the synergy that is created between them: is it time to consider a more integrated mode of operational implementation?

Land and soil, being at the crux between climate, desertification and biodiversity are fundamental to any attempt at integrated convention implementation. Land and soil are therefore the federating building blocks that must be used to facilitate synergy between the conventions.

« Given land's potential (...) in the face of climate change, the Niamey Declaration asks that land restoration be addressed in the international climate change Paris Agreement »

Adamou Chaifou,
Niger Environment Minister

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Current allotment of the GEF allocations granted to the three Rio Conventions:

46% for the Convention on Biological Diversity

39% for the Convention on Climate Change

15% for the Convention to Combat Desertification



*potential for land to
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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...), as well as their operational processes, their utilization modes and their forms of appropriation by societies.



Montpellier declaration



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

NEW CONCEPTS: VALUABLE IDEAS OR MISCONCEPTIONS?

New concepts emerge regularly, often sowing confusion in international debates. While they are instrumental for moving forward, they must not be permitted to obliterate the complexity of reality, nor be used as an excuse to delay the action that is so urgently needed.

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE (CSA)

The CSA concept was born on the climate debate sidelines. Its objective is the transformation of agriculture to ensure satisfaction of development objectives whilst at the same time taking changing climate into account. The concept builds simultaneously upon the 3 pillars of food security, climate change adaptation and climate change impact attenuation. Despite its persistent vagueness, in particular concerning the type of agricultural model to be favored, the concept cannot be ignored by civil society organizations, as it seems to be increasingly defining development policy orientations. And yet, it is now critical that future agricultural models be debated and that a paradigm shift emerge. We must be vigilant that this ambiguous concept not distance us from the true preoccupations that arise from grassroots realities and lessons learnt from past experience. The Global Alliance dedicated to scaling up the CSA concept, whose secretariat is carried by the FAO, is itself also questionable and, at this stage, contested by civil society. In drylands, it is those systems that draw upon agro-ecology principles that enable agriculture to be climate smart!



André Pijet



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

Akambi Is Deen, Eco-Benin, Climate and Development Network

LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY (LDN)

This concept implicitly assumes that land degradation cannot be halted and that we must attempt to continuously re-establish a balance between land that continues to be degraded and non-degraded land! In practice, the concept proposes that degraded land restoration be linked to the combat against land degradation. However this begs the questions of equivalence between natural environments (degraded and restored), measurement instruments and recommended technical approaches. The concept is recorded in the Rio+20 Declaration « The Future We Want » and can therefore be thanked for bringing the land issue to the international agenda's highest level (for example, to Sustainable Development Objective 15, as well as its Target 15.3). The UNCCD is currently working on the creation of an action-financing platform, composed primarily of private funds. The fund's objective is to encourage a variety of forms of investment into global degraded land restoration, and to do so without modifying land ownership.

Participants recognize the significance of this initiative, but nonetheless call for caution, as while it intends to combat land grabbing, it actually constitutes at this stage an objective threat for all land users and entitled persons not in possession of official land ownership titles.

Montpellier declaration



« Participants insist that the new concepts such as CSA and LDN first be at the service of local communities. »

« We have decided to work towards the creation of a land rehabilitation investment fund, amounting to **30 billion** dollars over 15 years»

Monique Barbut, UNCCD



INSECURITY AND MIGRATION: THE HIDDEN FACE OF LAND DEGRADATION



Christine Traxeler



Local environmental degradations caused by climatic factors and human activities most often generate more widespread natural resource degradation.

The decrease in ecosystem rendered services, including production capacity reduction, negatively affects population living conditions. What begins as an environmental problem ends up generating a development problem.

Indeed, both income decline and food insecurity increase development problems, which in turn stir up numerous sources of tensions, even conflicts, that destabilize entire regions. For example, in a context of land productivity decline, the adaptation capacities of local populations are diminished, even destroyed, which sometimes pushes these populations to abandon their natural environment and exodus. These disturbances increase instability at different levels including at the social level. They feed migration currents, which often results in increased insecurity in both the regions emigrated from and the regions immigrated to.

Security must be addressed at the level of society as a whole, and cannot be reduced to the crisis management of recurrent or chronic instabilities. Amongst other responsible factors, inappropriate governance, food insecurity and natural resource degradation all obliterate development perspectives, and constitute powerful forces feeding migrations and insecurity. Migration and insecurity can only be addressed effectively by working at the level of their root source. To do this, the combat against land degradation is a priority.

60 foodborne
foodborne riots
linked to land
degradation took
place in over 30
countries in 2008

60 million
additional people
will add themselves
to the 25 million
existing and
so-called ecological
refugees in Africa by
2020.



« Degraded lands too often cause degraded lives »

Patrice Burger, UNCCD Civil Society Representative and CARI Director

Montpellier declaration



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



LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIVERSITY

Multi-actor work is now recognized as essential over the long-term, as it facilitates advocacy elaboration and increases the effectiveness of grassroots actions. It enables the collective substance of network elaborations and projects to be fortified. However, the ways in which civil society works collectively must be improved.

What steps must civil society take to reinforce its action whilst simultaneously associating both the private sector and local authorities?

D'a15 participants paid particular attention to:



The need for actors to work in partnership at the local level:

- ✓ Partnerships must be built on trust and reinforce the relationships between actors, in particular those relationships between SCOs and other types of actors; such as local authorities, researchers, and professional organizations;
- ✓ Partnerships created around local actions and projects must reflect collectively defined local priorities and help create an environment that facilitates greater effectiveness;
- ✓ The capacity reinforcement of SCOs (including local authorities) and their professionalization is a priority in order to bring mutually profitable partnerships into being at the local level.



The need to work with the private sector, but to do so by collectively defining action frameworks at the local level to:

- ✓ Limit land grabbing risks;
- ✓ Ensure the respect of current corporate social and environmental responsibility regulations;
- ✓ Ensure the application of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (Committee on World Food Security - 2012).



The need to work with scientists, combining scientific knowledge with local knowledge and know-how, in order to facilitate innovation emergence at the local level.

« Civil society must become a major player in international negotiations »

Bernard Terris,
Danaya, GTD network member

Montpellier declaration



Civil society organizations (NGOs, producer organizations, local authorities) should be recognized as stakeholders in decision-making at local and national level, not just at the stage of implementation of the decisions and action plans.



AGROECOLOGY AND AGROPASTORALISM: VALUABLE APPROACHES IN NEED OF SUPPORT !



« There can be no agroecology without the defense of peasant agriculture!! »

Marc Dufumier,
Agronomist and Professor
Emeritus at AgroParisTech



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

Family farming and its underlying operational principles develop resilience and adaptation capacities. Family farming also provides employment and is best equipped to enhance, extend and leverage the already acquired expertise from adapted practices such as agro-ecology, agro-forestry and mobile pastoralism.



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 already in itself a significant factor of adaptation and resilience in the face of climate change.

MOBILE PASTORALISM

Mobile pastoralism's true value must be recognized:

- Mobility enables great resilience in the face of climate change;
- Mobile pastoralism valorizes dryland ecosystems that cannot be exploited by agriculture;
- Mobile Pastoralism represents a non-negligible fraction of the GDP in many dryland 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.

Montpellier declaration



« It is of general interest and urgent to implement public policies that integrate agroecology, agropastoralism and that protect and encourage family farming. »

The pastoralist system 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.

Désertif'actions



Land degradation and climate change : time to act !

DESERTIF' ACTIONS 2015 : A GLOBAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Desertif'actions 2015 is civil society's International Forum on land degradation in the face of climate change. From June 10th to 13th, 2015, the Forum brought together in Montpellier over 300 international development actors, representing 57 countries.

Civil society organizations, local authorities, farmer organizations, private and public institutions... All came together to debate and build their common positions to combat land degradation, climate change and their consequences in both the North and South.

Beginning in April 2015, an initial gathering of points of view of desertification combating actors was carried out 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 the holding of an e-Forum in 3 languages that mobilized 380 registered users representing 46 countries.

In total, Desertif'actions has directly touched no less than 7000 people. When the awareness raising campaign launched by the UNCCD and based upon the international "Our Land makes our Climate" Editorial Cartoon Contest is included, this number exceeds 30 000.

Sustainable land management plays a crucial role in reaching of Rio Convention objectives

Braulio Dias, United Nations Convention on Biodiversity Executive Secretary

It is essential that civil society have a strong voice on the global scene

Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility

