



Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Views on opportunities to further enhance the effective engagement of non-Party stakeholders with a view to strengthening the implementation of the provisions of decision 1/CP.21

The secretariat of the UNCCD welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on the opportunities to further enhance the engagement of non-Party stakeholders in respect to the Paris outcome to be discussed during the in-session workshop at SBI 46, in Bonn.

The UNCCD Secretariat would like to share its experience involving non-Party stakeholders during the official sessions of its Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies. Decision 27/COP.1 entitled "Inclusion of activities of nongovernmental organizations within the official programme of work of future sessions of the Conference of the Parties settle the basis of the active involvement of non-Party stakeholders the UNCCD process". Its first paragraph "Requests that additional open dialogue sessions organized by NGOs occur within the official programme of work of future sessions of the Conference of the Parties and that the ... Secretariat of the Convention make all efforts to facilitate inclusion of at least two halfday NGO sessions within the official programme of work"

Since 1997 (COP.1) to date the Parties agreed to organize these half-day (3 hours each session) open dialogue sessions with the non-governmental organizations at each one of the sessions of the COP. The agenda of the sessions is fully decided by the representative of the civil society, including the modality of the session and the speakers. The theme that is being discussed is related to the agenda of the COP and it aims at providing input to the discussion. Parties attending the official session take the floor on behalf of their delegation and contribute to the discussion in the same way as is done during other official sessions.

During COP.12 organized in Ankara, Turkey, the civil society organizations were given the possibility to organize shorter open dialogue sessions during the High Level Segment. The host country organized a set of ministerial dialogues with different stakeholders to address topics relevant to the implementation of the convention:

- Dialogue between Ministers and civil society representatives on Land Rights;
- Dialogue between Ministers and representatives of business and industry entities on investment for sustainable land management;
- Dialogue between Ministers and members of Parliament on legislative measures to protect and rehabilitate land.

Furthermore, the Parties decided to facilitate the coordination of the civil society organizations accredited to the COP by establishing a CSO panel (decision 5/COP.9 amended by decision 5/COP.10 and 5/COP.11). The panel is composed by one representative from civil society organizations from countries belonging to each of the five United Nations Regional Groups of Member States (African Group, Asia-Pacific Group, Eastern European Group, Latin American and Caribbean Group, Western European and Others Group). The panel coordinates the input from their respective constituencies and collaborates with the different bureaux and bodies to bring the point of view of the accredited civil society organizations to the different processes. It meets at least twice per year in person and once per month using video or telephone tools. The panel prepares a work programme and organizes fund-raising for their operations. The CSO panel also organizes the process to ensure civil society participation in the different bodies and mechanisms created by the Parties. For instance a CSO representative is a member of the Science – Policy Interface.

The business and industry entities have also the possibility to obtain observer status through the direct accreditation to the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD. Paragraph 4 of decision 5/COP.10 decided "...to grant observer status and participation in official meetings of the governing bodies of the UNCCD to those business and industry entities that: (a) have expressed interest in participating in meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies; (b) have specific expertise in matters relating to the Convention; and (c) participate in the United Nations Global Compact. In the case where an organization does not participate in the United Nations Global Compact, clearance prior to its accreditation shall be requested from the United Nations Procurement Division and the United Nations Ethics Office".

An enhanced process has been established with the convention in order to further involve the business and industry entities. Decision 6/COP.12 entitled "Business engagement strategy and participation and involvement of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification" established the basis for their involvement.

Since then and following the mandate provided by the COP (para 6 of the same decision) the secretariat is facilitating the participation of the business and industry entities providing a platform for channeling their input. The Sustainable Land Management Business Forum, co-organized by the host country brings together business actors in parallel to the COP. The outcomes of the forum are presented within the official programme of the COP in the form of a declaration which is included as an annex to the report of the Conference of the Parties.

The UNCCD secretariat would like to thank UNFCCC secretariat for the opportunity to submit its views and looks forward to actively participate in the discussion on this topic in the workshop during SBI46