



UNCCD
CSO Panel



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



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ECO

daily COP16 update

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ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCH OF THE GEF-FUNDED PROJECT “STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY ROLE IN ACHIEVING LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY”

Launched at a side event held on Wednesday, this partnership between the Drynet network and IUCN will enhance the capacities of CSOs in engaging with policy makers to deliver LDN and increase capacities of CSOs to mobilise funds for LDN initiatives of communities.

Drynet recognises that strong and effective civil society contributions to the UNCCD are essential and recognises that capacities need to be continuously enhanced. The project will draw on the expertise of experienced CSO observers to the UNCCD.

For more information contact Noel Oettle at dryland@global.co.za, Subject line “Drynet LDN CSO project engagement”.

A REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE EMPOWERING FARMERS TO SAVE SOIL IN INDIA

GOOD PRACTICES SECTION

The Conscious Planet - Save Soil initiative has transformed agriculture in Tamil Nadu by equipping farmers with the knowledge and tools to regenerate soil health through sustainable practices.

This innovative approach combines traditional knowledge with modern techniques to enhance soil biology, increase organic matter, and reduce reliance on synthetic inputs.

The initiative begins with awareness campaigns and advocacy, followed by extensive training programs and personalized support. Farmers learn regenerative practices such as agroforestry, organic mulching, crop rotation, and cover cropping.

By integrating tree-based agriculture with natural composting methods, the program helps farmers restore soil organic matter to 3% or higher, improving water retention, biodiversity, and food security.

Adopting a "raindrop model," the initiative focuses on training medium-sized landholders first, who then become volunteer trainers for others.

This community-led approach has created a network of over 250 lead farmers and established 400+ WhatsApp groups connecting 88,000 farmers.

Model farms serve as hubs for learning, showcasing the tangible benefits of regenerative techniques.

The impact is impressive: over 45,000 farmers have been trained in regenerative methods, and 116 million tree saplings have been distributed, fostering the adoption of tree-based agriculture by 229,000 farmers across Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Women's empowerment is a key element, with women-led nurseries providing economic opportunities and strengthening community participation.

Through 33,000 individual farm consultations in 2023, the initiative's 160 field executives have offered soil and water testing, crop management guidance, and region-specific tree recommendations.

The result is a vibrant, self-sustaining community of farmers who have embraced natural farming to secure stable yields, improved soil health, and economic resilience.

This transformative model proves that merging ecology and economy can ensure a sustainable future for agriculture, empowering farmers to heal the land and preserve it for generations to come.

*The Agri-Food Systems Day of COP16: **World Soil Day Celebration** was conducted on 2 December 2024 at Meeting Room 33. The Celebration is the tenth anniversary, remembering the importance of soil and interconnectedness to land degradation.*



Empowering indigenous families through climate adaptation (HEDI Trust)

ADDRESSING LAND DEGRADATION AND CSO COLLABORATION

On December 4, during COP16 to the UNCCD, Future Forest, a Korea-based CSO, and UNCCD Land Ambassador Kwon Byonghyon hosted a side event with over 30 CSO members and indigenous representatives.

Ambassador Kwon emphasized collective action: *“individually, a CSO may be weak, but together, we can make a significant impact.”*

The event launched the Future Earth Mechanism (FEM) and inaugurated the CSO Alliance for Earth, aiming to empower CSOs in combating land degradation. A 2025 pilot project involving K POP fans was introduced, receiving strong support from participants, including India’s APSWDP, who praised the initiative.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO EMPOWER CSOS IN SAUDI ARABIA

This partnership led by the Saudi Green Building Forum (SGBF) and the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture is a strategic step toward enhancing the role of CSOs in promoting sustainable development and environmental stewardship, directly aligning with the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 objectives. Faisal Alfadl from SGBF remarked that *“the SGBF is dedicated to advancing sustainable building practices and supports the Sustainable Development Goals through initiatives like the SGBF saaf® Green Building Assessment System, a Saudi-developed framework tailored to the nation’s unique cultural and environmental context.”*

This formalized partnership seeks to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to contribute effectively to sustainable development efforts, fostering a collaborative approach to achieving Saudi Arabia’s national environmental strategy. Through this collaboration, both organizations aim to lead innovative solutions, enhance community engagement, and advance sustainable practices across multiple sectors.

KEY MESSAGES OF THE DAY

- **Ensure the mobilisation of public financial resources** that keep pace with the escalating negative effects of desertification, land degradation, drought and sand storms, through measures such as taxation and fiscal incentives.
- **Actively contribute to the implementation of Gender Action Plan, and support the UNCCD secretariat to establish a gender team** within the secretariat and the GM to incorporate the recommendations of the independent evaluation of the UNCCD Gender Action Plan, and to support timely delivery of activities named in the Gender Action Plan Roadmap presented at CRIC21.