



Drynet and ReSaD international networks have teamed up via their common partner GCoZa Mali. This move will increase the audiences of both networks: by creating a stronger foundation for Drynet in the Sahel, and a greater visibility for ReSaD in the international arena.

N°2- June 2011

A HISTORIC CORNER IS TURNED AT THE UNCCD'S CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW COMMITTEE 9TH SESSION!

The 9th Session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nation's Convention to Combat Desertification (CRIC9 - UNCCD) was held in Bonn, Germany from February 21st to 25th, 2011. Representatives from 144 countries, 14 intergovernmental organisations and 32 civil society organisations (CSO) attended the session. For the first time, information provided by signatory countries was transcribed into standardised country reports. This transcription exercise demonstrated the need for simplification of the data compilation and validation process, and for evaluation and classification of the good practices inventoried.

Open Dialogue between Civil Society and Party Countries

The Open Dialogue Session turned out to be one of the key CRIC9 events. During this session, 5 civil society actors - from Moldavia, India, Trinidad and Tobago, Niger and France – were able to share their experiences and analyses relating to:

- The need for knowledge and expertise, and how to simplify transmission and exchange between local populations and researchers;
- The combination of the fight against poverty with the rehabilitation of non-productive lands into agricultural lands;
- The role of capacity reinforcement and partnerships;
- The strengths and weaknesses of the UNCCD's 'reporting' Framework (PRAIS web portal);
- The diversity of actions lead by CSOs, as well as the need for concertation with scientists, and coordination with all other actors, in particular within the UNCCD framework.

These presentations - given to an audience that included a great number of country parties, a first! – were received very positively. In the words of one participant, the presentations: "provided a very tangible representation of the actions that need to be taken and replicated". This exercise demonstrated the significant added value contributed when local actors and their field expertise are taken into account within international decision making arenas.



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in Perspective

CRIC9 has marked a turning point for a convention implementation process in which CSOs will truly be able to contribute.

CSOs must now fine-tune their session preparation and project restitution processes, and work in partnership with their country coordination organisms. CRIC9 exchanges will be turned into COP10 decisions from October 10th to 21st at Changwon, Gyeongnam Province, in the Republic of Korea.

"North and South Together must Combat Ecological AIDS (Accelerated and Incessant natural resources Degradation System) in the Sahel" (GCoZA Mali)

Created in August 2004, the Mali Drylands Coordination Group (GCoZA Mali) is a Malian offshoot of GCoZA International, itself based in Norway.

It provides NGOs, NGO networks, state services and research institutions with a framework for exchange, presentations, reflexion and action-taking, so that they may participate in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring-evaluation of food security and natural resource management policies.

GCoZA Mali has 40 members, including national and international NGOs, NGO networks, technical structures and research institutes.

GCoZA Mali's strategy is built around the following axes:

- The improvement of its member structures' ability to intervene and the quality of their interventions;
- The creation of bridges and partnerships between structures with recognised drylands food security and natural resource management expertise, as well as United Nations Convention to Combat Climate Change (UNCCD) expertise;
- The reinforcement of the network's institutional viability by its members (expansion of the network, technical or financial support, implication of member structures in network objective implementation...);
- The development of participative initiatives and programs to combat poverty;
- The safeguarding of policy and strategic orientation elaboration processes profitable to all network members.



Key information

GCoZA Mali's mission is to contribute to Mali's development by reinforcing its members' capacity to participate in activities related to both food security and natural resource management (combat against desertification, bio-security, bio-diversity etc...).

GCoZA Mali's objectives:

- To ensure GCoZA/Mali representation at national and international levels;
- To facilitate the creation and operation of a communication system within the network;
- To reinforce member capacities;
- To contribute to the reinforcement of Malian civil society's ability to address the issues tackled by GCoZA Mali.



Burkina-Faso | TIME FOR TRUE COMPLICITY BETWEEN ACTORS COMBATting DESERTIFICATION

"Though it is possible to live decently in arid zones, no isolated initiative will suffice to overcome desertification" (SPONG Burkina-Faso)

Since its official creation in October 2010, the Sahel Desertification Network (ReSaD) has organised multiple encounters and consultations to address the combat against desertification. Behind all these events, lies the intention of creating true complicity between all actors involved. On Thursday 3rd February 2011, the ReSaD/Burkina National Coordination team met with the Global Environment Facility (GEF)/NGO National Coordinator. This meeting provided ReSaD with the opportunity to present itself, its determination to persevere in the combat against desertification, as well as the activities and actions it has already undertaken in Europe and in Africa.

It was made clear that Technical and Financial Partners will be attentive to ReSaD's work. The GEF/NGO Coordinator made it clear it considers civil society actors still insufficiently able to present projects that are eligible for GEF funding, that measure up to new challenges and that contribute to the definition of new priorities with the Burkina Faso government.

in Perspective



In June 2011, the Burkina Faso ReSaD/SPONG National Coordination team will perform an information collection campaign to evaluate the capacity reinforcement needs of SPONG member organisations and associations working on desertification, land degradation, climate change and biodiversity conservation projects. This study's objective is to improve - in the short to medium term - the success rate of environmental micro-project funding requests made by civil society actors to technical and financial partners wishing to support SPONG and its members.

Findings will be used to prepare the next capacity reinforcement sessions addressing resource mobilisation: they will assist in determining the most pertinent issues to be addressed and in defining the most pertinent objectives.



Niger

CNCOD CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESAD IN NIGER

Since the launch of ReSaD in Niamey in October 2010, the National Committee for the Coordination of NGOs on Desertification (CNCOD) has worked busily at both United Nations conferences and with grassroots organisations. A case in point: from March 25th to 26th, 2011, the Tahoua Chamber of Commerce hosted a Regional NGO Workshop to raise awareness and reinforce capacities pertaining to the integration of climate change and adaptation into desertification-related Local Development Projects and Programs. This training was made possible by the financial and technical support provided by the National Environmental Council for Sustainable Development National (CNEDD) for the realisation of three regional workshops.

Thanks to ReSaD, Tahoua, Dosso and Maradi NGOs have recently been trained in climate change related environmental issues. Some fifty NGO coordinators completed the workshop, and left satisfied, equipped with an understanding of the different climate change mechanisms, and ready to take action in the combat against desertification.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for a presentation of CNCOD's participation at CRIC9 and at the CANCUN conference. It is important to recognise the good practices presented by Niger at CRIC9, as well as the effort needed to improve NGO accreditation procedures.



in Perspective

CNCOD and CARE are working together to define an action plan that will support the execution of a new climate change program.

Following the recent elections in Niger, CNCOD recently met with the Prime Minister's Cabinet Director. Exchanges focused upon the newly elected authorities' determination to work with civil society and also to together define strategies that will tackle desertification and climate change challenges.



France

THE DESERTIFICATION WORKGROUP, A MULTI-ACTOR NETWORK



GTD started 2011 by meeting with the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE)'s Biodiversity and Development Group to discuss 'Ecosystem Services and Food Security'. The opportunity was used to examine this issue from several different angles (scientific, institutional, local actor participation...), as well as to look at future food security to the horizon of 2050. Together, the GTD, MAEE and French Development Agency decided to build upon this first workshop by preparing a joint publication on the "conditions necessary for transition to sustainable agricultural systems"... Work on this publication is in progress, and should be completed before both the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille and RIO+20 in 2012.

The rising insecurity in Southern Algeria, Northern Mali, Mauritania and Northern Niger (repeated hostage-takings, assassinations...) also left its mark on the beginning of 2011. As a consequence of these events, many development projects

in the country's most arid areas have come, progressively, to a standstill. Indeed, French citizens are advised against, even forbidden, by their government to venture into these territories. It is in this climate that the GTD challenged the UNCCD by organising a CRIC9 side-event to address this issue.

Despite the provocative title 'When Insecurity and Development Stagnation get Promiscuous', the event attracted 35 people, including representatives of the Mali and Niger Desertification Focal Points. All participants agreed upon the need, against all odds, for a powerful renewal of commitment to continue strengthening partnerships, and not be destabilised, as it is fully recognised that destabilisation brings actions to a halt. In the current situation, doing nothing is to let things get worse. It is time to invent new forms of partnership.

Coming Soon

- An Advocacy Guide to Combat Desertification
- A Drylands Agroecology Analysis illustrated with field experiences

Events Diary



17th World Day to Combat Desertification

In association with Tiken Jah Fakoly, supporter of the drylands cause, GTD celebrated the 17th World Day to Combat Desertification by organising a roundtable in Paris, in the presence of GTD partnership members. A video of the roundtable will soon be available on the GTD website.

> For Further Information: www.gtdesertification.org

People are talking!

Outcry on Agricultural Land Grabbing!

Land grabbing is the contentious issue of large-scale land acquisitions: the buying or long-term leasing of agricultural land by governments or private companies, on an international scale. In the name of food security, there has been a disturbing development in such acquisitions in the last few years, both in terms of actual land surfaces, as in terms of the number of obscure negotiation processes between governments, businesses and/or speculators. Already, in 2009, the World Bank estimated that close to 46 million ha of agricultural lands in developing countries had been the object of such transactions. A case in point, that of the Malian Government's Office du Niger Authority. GTD recently met with Faliry Boly, Secretary-General of SEXAGON. SEXAGON is the Farmer's Union that defends the interests of peasant farmers in an area where foreign investors (such as Libya for 100 000 ha) have been allocated important agricultural surfaces under questionable contractual terms and with no farmer participation. In the name of SEXAGON, Faliry Boly expressed his disapproval of these practices and denounced the apparent hypocrisy of decision makers who conclude contractual agreements for irrigable agricultural surfaces that do not, in fact, exist. This is nothing short of a swindle. As illustrated by the Arab Spring, and as heard recently at Desertif'Actions, it could be said that "If the States do not take care of farmer preoccupations, then farmers will take care of the States".

RFI Radio 'C'est pas du vent' Special Edition on Combating Desertification

To honour the World Day to Combat Desertification, GTD and ReSaD participated in the recording of a RFI 'C'est pas du vent' ('Not Just Hot Air') radio program.

> Broadcast on June 18th at 11h10 and June 19th at 11h30 on RFI Afrique and podcastable from <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/cest-pas-vent>



Dates in the unccd.int Diary

• High Level Desertification Meeting:

20th September 2011 in New York, at United Nations General Assembly sidelines.

• 10th Conference of Parties – CoP 10:

From October 10th to 21st, 2011, in Changwon, Gyeongnam Province, Republic of Korea.

<http://www.unccd.int/cop/cop10/menu.php>

Publications



Lutte contre la désertification : pratiques et recommandations

Combating Desertification: Practices and Recommendations

Report prepared by CARI, and based upon interviews performed with GTD NGO members. The report was submitted, within the framework of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

implementation, as a civil society report.

Downloadable at www.gtdesertification.org



La pratique de la gestion durable des terres

Sustainable Land Management Practices

In cooperation with FAO and WOCAT, TerrAfrica has published a document providing guidelines and best practices on sustainable land management. The report draws upon 47 practical case studies,

divided into 13 sustainable land management technology categories.

Downloadable at www.terrafrica.org



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DRYLANDS COORDINATION GROUP



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