



OBITUARY FOR HAMA ARBA DIALLO

It is with great emotion and great sadness that we learned of the sudden death of Arba Diallo, mayor of Dori, Burkina Faso and former Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.



He was a great African and a citizen of the world, and we shall miss his contributions. On behalf of the civil society with whom he worked for nearly thirty years as part of the construction and the implementation of the UN Convention to combat desertification from RIO 1992 to RIO 2012 and beyond, we want to pay tribute to a man of conviction and an humanist, fully committed to the cause of the combating desertification and land degradation. We might not always have agreed, but we appreciated his commitment and tenacity in taking the UNCCD forward. He has become a landmark and a compass. For all those who are engaged in the same cause in the framework of the Convention, we lose not only a charming personality, but also a stubborn defender of the participation of civil society and the values of international solidarity that underlying it . He was able to share it with the world. At a time when the accumulating evidence confirms the increasing risk of land degradation in the world, especially in the Sahel, not least because of the impact of climate change, we want to pay their last respects to the man who and leaves us with the echo of his commitments that inspired us. It was a privilege to have been able to collaborate. May you rest in peace Arba.

DESERTIF' ACTIONS 2015, RESONATE THE VOICES OF THE EARTH!

2015 is what we call a “momentum” for lands and climate change. Political discourse changes and the transition from one form of denial to the emergency of the challenge of climate change, place the coming year under an obligation to strong and tough decisions. The commitment of the goals for sustainable development, (among them goal 15 and above 15.3 are dealing with combating desertification and land degradation) the UNCCD COP 12 in Turkey, the UNFCCC COP 21 in France and the International Year of the soils push us for action. The civil society organizes an international forum in June 2015 in Montpellier, and plans the involvement of 350 participants from CSOs, local community groups, scientists, institutions and political representatives. There will be held thematic workshops to produce collective statements and recommendations about hot topics: land degradation neutrality, climate smart agriculture, synergy between the 3 conventions, engagement of the private sector and so on.



In order to resonate as much voices as possible, preparatory meetings in several countries and an electronic forum will be organized. This will allow enriching the discussions during the workshops in Montpellier. The latest IPCC report elaborates on so far undervalued predictable negative impacts on agriculture and

biodiversity are. The impact on land, soil and water management and in general the impact on the natural resources recalls how the very basis of our survival as a biological species will be affected. The three successive extreme weather events of September in Montpellier have to be seen as a reminder ahead of the seriousness of the challenges in 2015. The role of civil society to influence the decision process will be crucial. That is why the panel of CSOs joined CARI, its civil society networks (Drynet, ReSaD, RADD0, GTD) and various other scientific partners, local authorities, donors and the UNCCD to meet in DesertifActions 2015 in Montpellier. This event will be an opportunity for change, through the workshops and cultural events. Let's resonate the voices of the earth!

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WHY FARMERS REJECT SOIL CONSERVATION MEASURES

Farmers have multiple objectives.

Farmers may have several reasons for bunding in a particular way and soil conservation may be one of these reasons. Farmers are most likely to accept improved soil conservation techniques that address their priorities. As a result, the soil conservation technique that is best for the farmer may not be that which conserves the most soil. This usually results in two major differences at the implementation level.



1. The recommended soil conservation structures are positioned on the contour while farmers' choices of technologies are boundary based.

2. The recommended soil conservation practices emphasize long-term productivity benefits from maximum protection of the soil, where as farmers' preferred choices are for technologies emphasizing short-term productivity gains as well as conservation. Both soil conservation professionals and farmers are aware of soil erosion and the need to control it but their perceptions of the problems and approaches differ. It remains a challenge why farmers reject recommended soil conservation techniques in favor of indigenous conservation methods.

Farmers invest in conservation as a by-product of productivity

Conservation methods are likely to be adopted with increased productivity. Soil conservation methods that produce the most rapid return on investment are the favored. Methods to increase productivity include:

-concentrating soil at appropriate locations rather than merely conserve it;

-gully control measures that concentrate soil to increase productivity;

-lining field bunds with fodder grass or other useful plants, both to strengthen them and to provide additional income.

Note:

Farmers recognize the efficiency of contour-based systems for conserving soil but they feel that on rainfed lands, the benefits are not great enough to justify foregoing the other advantages of indigenous, boundary-based systems.

Key words:

Farmers, soil conservation, bunding, contour, productivity, professionals, indigenous, gully control, income, rainfed.

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THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The UN General Assembly held on 22 and 23 September 2014 in New York, USA, organized a high level plenary meeting known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

This Conference had the purpose to facilitate the exchange of practical references on the promotion and protection of the rights of the indigenous peoples.

This Conference was attended by the Heads of State and Governments, Ministers, representatives of Member States and the Civil Society and the General Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to the objectives and principles of the UN Charter.



The General Assembly also reiterated its important and continuing role in promoting and protecting the rights of the indigenous peoples.

The statements delivered during the session addressed the concerns on the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' rights, the respect for social plurality, the protection of the indigenous lands and the importance of the young indigenous people's involvement in the public arena.

During the Conference the participants also organized workshops and meetings to share lessons learned, best practices and experiences and facilitated the discussions in four specific topics:



- 1) The UN system action for the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples;
- 2) The Implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and local level;
- 3) The protection of the Indigenous peoples's lands, territories and resources;
- 4) The priorities of the Indigenous peoples for the Post 2015 sustainable development Agenda.

The discussions during the conference and the related workshops allowed highlighting recommendations for future actions in the framework of the indigenous people's rights as well as in protection of the natural and land resources of the people in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the post 2015 sustainable development agenda.

At the end of the session, the Assembly agreed on the Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (available on: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.1)

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CLIMATE CHANGE COP 20 IN LIMA: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SHARING EXPERIENCES ON SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) entered into force in 1994, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. The Conference of the Parties (COP) was designated as the supreme governing body of the Convention.

From December 1 to 12, 2014, Lima will host the Twentieth Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 20). Peru will receive about 15,000 people, which represent 194 countries and stakeholders from international organizations, civil society, private sector and several mass media, as well as presidents and ministers.

COP20 is a crucial moment to reach a climate change agreement in 2015, and in this framework, it is relevant to share field information able to support evidence-based decisions and result-focused solutions.

The strong link between land degradation and climate change is recognized by the three RIO conventions. Key decisions in relation to desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and climate change include decisions 2-4/COP.8, 8/COP.9 and 9/COP.10 of the UNCCD.

The work of the Parties and civil society for achieving sustainable land management (SLM) have contributed significantly in the reduction of climate change vulnerability of drylands populations, who are the world's poorest and most vulnerable. On the other hand, these efforts are leading to the reduction of the emission of greenhouse effect gases, by fostering low-carbon local economies, avoiding the loss of forests and restoring natural habitats in drylands.

Several challenges remain in this scenario, such as the need to increase references to DLDD-related scientific studies and practical experiences and the need to mainstream SLM into climate change adaptation priorities. Peru, as the host country of the COP 20, will offer a space named "Voices for climate" with the purpose of increase awareness about climate change and communicate world-wide initiatives

around five emblematic issues prioritized in Peru's internal agenda: Forests, Mountains and Water, Oceans, Energy and Sustainable Cities. This initiative will be held in parallel to the COP venue and will convene Parties Delegations and observers, civil society organizations, international cooperation, private companies, universities, academic centers and researchers, press and citizenship in general.

A group of Peruvian organizations led by AIDER (Peruvian Focal Point of RIOD) are organizing an event inside the space of "Voices for climate" for the presentation of experiences on SLM and discussion about its roll in adaptation and mitigation of climate change. The



meeting will be held in the Forests Pavilion with participation of the Ministry of Environment of Peru, RIO conventions representatives, CSO, international cooperation and local governments and communities, among other key actors and

policy decision makers.

CSO representatives attending the COP 20 in Lima are kindly invited to get involved in the organization of this meeting, please write to: lima@aider.com.pe. Information about the date and further details about this event will be shared in the UNCCD web page and the next CSO Panel e-Newsletter.

The Panel members are:

- Mr. Emmanuel Seck (ENDA-TM) - **Africa**
- Mr. Tanveer Arif (SCOPE) - **Asia**
- Mr. Juan Luis Merega, Fundacion del Sur - **GRULAC**
- Ms. Elmedina Krilasevic, (FEA) - **Central and Eastern Europe**
- Mr. Patrice Burger (CARI) - **Western Europe and Others**
- Mr. Richard Byron Cox, **UNCCD Secretariat**
- Ms. Anja Thust, **UNCCD Secretariat**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (November - December)

4-7 November - Social Pre-COP (Caracas, Venezuela)

29-30 November - Global DNA Forum (Lima, Peru)

1 - 12 December - COP20 Climate Change (Lima, Peru)