

IYRP Working Group on UNCCD

First Virtual Meeting, 7th July 2022

Attended:

Hossein Badripour, Dept Natural Resources and Watershed, Iran
Barbara Bendandi, WWF
Eric Chavez, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, FAO
Nicole Hariri, WOCAT
Mounir Louhaichi, ICARDA
Chris Magero, IUCN
Bora Masumbuko, IUCN
Nahid Naghizadeh, CENESTA
Phemo Kgomotso, UNDP
Maryam Niamir-Fuller, IYRP

Short summary

There have been many good efforts to raise awareness about rangelands and pastoralists within the UNCCD process, but the dominant narrative among government officials still remains negative. Policies foster an environment of benign neglect, and this has led to continued marginalization of pastoralists. The UNCCD Decisions rarely distinguish rangelands and pastoralists and do not explicitly address their needs, which is very often different from the needs of farmers and other land users.

Some root causes were identified:

- ◇ Pastoralists are often minorities in their countries (even sometimes when rangelands are dominant);
- ◇ There is a lack of knowledge and awareness of the value of pastoralism and that rangelands are not degraded forests;
- ◇ Specifically to the UNCCD, some countries are cautious about discussing rangelands because they want to treat them as productive landscapes, rather than face Decisions that require them to be placed under the same protection/conservation status that forests have.

Going forward, **two critical issues** were identified for raising awareness within the UNCCD process:

1. The value of rangelands and pastoralism, specifically in terms of: a livelihood and food security strategy, a sustainable land-use, a contributor to economic growth and stability, a provider of ecosystem services, and a way achieve the goals of LDN, other Rio Conventions and the SDGs. It is very important that we balance development and environmental issues.
2. The growing trends of unnecessary conversion of rangelands (to crops and other land –uses) and indiscriminate tree planting in the guise of restoration will degrade rangelands further and prevent achievement of global goals.

Indicator of our success:

- UNCCD Decisions better address the needs of rangelands and pastoralists
- To be further discussed = something else to concretely come from COP 17 ?

Opportunities for dissemination and raising awareness:

- ✓ COP 16 in Saudi Arabia, 2024 - Dialogues, Side Events
- ✓ COP 17 in Mongolia, 2026 -
- ✓ The CSTs of both meetings – CSOs and International organizations should be more active in participating in CST meetings and sharing knowledge and scientific evidence
- ✓ The Global Grasslands, Savannahs and Rangelands Coalition recently launched by WWF and IUCN in COP 15 can continue to hold Dialogues during these meetings
- ✓ CRICs – to be further determined
- ✓ It would help if a small group of countries could be identified who could promote our key messages

AGREED ACTION: This Working Group will develop a Policy Brief that would address the UNCCD process and help to raise awareness about rangelands and pastoralism.

- **Mounir and Bora**, with input from Maryam, would develop the first draft/outline by September 2022 for review by the Working Group
- A few other stakeholders should be added to the Working Group for the preparation of this Policy Brief:
 - **Nicole** to approach UNCCD focal points from Ecuador and Uzbekistan,
 - **Barbara** to approach UNCCD Focal point of Saudi Arabia
 - **Maryam** to approach Mongolia
 - **Nahid** to ask Dana+20 whether the Workshop in September 2022 can include an agenda item where the gathered pastoralists can discuss what key messages they wish to convey to the UNCCD through this Policy Brief and other ideas on raising awareness
- Work done in the past by the Regional Action Programmes of UNCCD (especially RAP 3) can be integrated into the Brief; **Hossein** to follow up
- Work to be done by the IYRP Afforestation Working Group can help provide evidence and material for this Policy Brief
- The Policy Brief can then become the basis for other communication materials, such as posters, powerpoints, flyers, etc. , as well as disseminated via meetings, workshops, webinars, etc. The IYRP ISG partners' communications teams can help with this.

The next meeting of this Working Group will be on 14th September 2022, at 9-10 am via Zoom.