



Issa Bado, IFDD (far left) greets the audience at the start of “Francophonie Day - Support for Francophone Negotiators” as (listed from left to right) Marcos Montoiro, UNCCD; Bernard Dubois, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF/IFDD); Randrianantenaina Fenohery Rarivoarivelo and Wafa Essahli listen and await their turn to address the audience

“Francophonie Day - Support for Francophone Negotiators” began with a greeting from Mr. Issa Bado from Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable (IFDD). He began, “We are on the right path of combating desertification. We are going to have a better use of tools. As for realizing land degradation neutrality (LDN), we must use resources better to provide suggestions to decision-makers.” The day was organized by the IFDD and hosted by the Rio Conventions Pavilion.

Marcos Montoiro of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) spoke on behalf of the UNCCD Executive Secretary, Ms. Barbut, and stressed the importance of scientific documents. He further communicated that the secretariat hopes decision makers and social forces can become better connected during the UNCCD thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13).

Chair of the meeting and Madagascar’s Minister of Forestry and Environment, Mr. Randrianantenaina Fenohery Rarivoarivelo, opened the morning workshop. He said he

traveled to UNCCD COP 13 in Ordo, China to attend the ministerial meeting and went on to mention that IFDD has developed tools to facilitate negotiations and has also developed discussions on ecology and biology. The Minister said he and others have witnessed the achievements of combating desertification and encouraged sharing the IFDD's *Guide to the Negotiations: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, 13th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP13, CRIC16 and CST13)*.

During the morning session, standards of negotiation and important points of UNCCD COP 13 were discussed. During her presentation concerning specific themes of UNCCD COP 13, Ms. Wafa Eshali of UNISFERA discussed the need to make policies straightforward and easily comprehensible so everyone can understand one another's promises and achievements. She went on to say the UNCCD COP 13 could help strengthen cooperation.

Eshali pointed out the importance of UNISFERA as the biggest contributor to IFDD's *Guide to the Negotiations*. She mentioned that the Guide covered the background, history and development path of the Convention; various topics related to the COP; as well as milestones, such as the official implementation of the Strategy from 2008-2018. While the Guide is an excellent resource, Ms. Eshali lamented that it had not been published earlier.

A seminar on the implementation of LDN was held in the afternoon. Mr. Jean-Luc Chotte, Institute of Research for Development (IRD) presented research on combating desertification in IFDD countries. He said that to achieve LDN, the first priority is to stop degradation then to restore degraded land. The IRD is researching how to protect land and soil, and Chotte stressed that all indicators are interconnected. He said that while carbon storage is an important indicator, weather and local conditions should also be considered. Further, he suggested each country should consider all conditions before choosing an indicator system. Mr. Chotte also discussed LDN indicators as he answered questions from the audience. He stressed that every case would be different and might have different indicators, as each area has different local conditions of weather and land use. In summary, data that depends on local conditions must be collected to provide answers, but the key issue is not indicators themselves but unifying the data. In other words, the result is not as important as the approach.

In a later session, Ms. Aurélie Lhumeau, Representative of the UNCCD Global Mechanism discussed the LDN Target Setting Programme (LDN-TSP) in detail. She mentioned 110 countries currently engage in the program. Lhumeau also described how LDN-TSP works: the base assessment of the country, who the parties of the LDN-TSP are, and how to achieve LDN targets. She summarized by saying the LDN-TSP needs four pillars to function: government, civil society, consulting services and financial institution partners.



Ms. Aurélie Lhumeau, Representative of the UNCCD Global Mechanism (left) and Mr. Maxime Thibon, French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (right) discuss Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme (LDN-TSP)

During a following presentation, Mr. Jean Muneng, RDC of Madagascar said LDN should be regarded as a principle. He continued by saying, in order to live by this principle, we need to have the vision, reference and mechanisms to coordinate all the solutions and methods. Additionally, he suggested governments should consider the return on investment that comes with achieving LDN, but he also stressed that they need to empower civil society organizations and get support from international organizations. He said a roadmap from the UNCCD for the basics of the project is necessary, and he hopes more countries will create LDN plans. Additionally, Muneng suggested the land issues must be dealt with on an international level.

“Francophonie Day - Support for Francophone Negotiators” organized by IFDD at the Rio Conventions Pavilion UNCCD COP 13 was a success, as a large audience was engaged from start to finish.

“Francophonie Day - Support for Francophone Negotiators” Pictures







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