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Desertif'actions 2019 official statement – Land, biodiversity and climate « We are the land fighting desertification »

The fourth international civil society summit Désertif'actions took place from the 19th to the 22nd of June 2019 in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). More than 380 participants coming from more than forty different countries, and representing 240 organizations, attended the event : basic communities, NGOs, scientists, as well as local communities, international organizations, public and private actors...

This fourth edition was held for the very first time on the African continent, in a country where « 19% of the national territory's land is degraded, and which lost 2,4 million hectares of woods, leaving the land transformed into a savannah landscape in only 11 years » (SPONG). This situation shows the reality of the Sahel, and more broadly the rapid progression of land degradation across the world.

In the light of the negotiations taking place around the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification's (UNCCD) upcoming 14th Conference of the Parties, which will take place next September in India ; participants are willing to influence the decision making and put land questions back at the center of the debate. In order to do so, a statement, including the contributions and recommendations elaborated during the 3 days of work of Désertif'actions, has been validated at the closing session of the event.

Here are some extracts of the statement:

« We are convinced that we, development actors, must raise awareness among forces present in the farming, pastoral, and oasis environments, as well as in many others, as we are all together citizens of the world : together, we are not defenders of the land fighting desertification, we ARE the land defending itself ! »

(...) Aware of the growing insecurity, we refuse to let it scare us and through our work and our presence, we want to show that we are determined to fight against the fatality of destiny »

(...) We are determined to properly address land property questions, a subject that has been, for the first time this year, officially brought to the UNCCD's Conference of the Parties's agenda. »

(...) In this agenda, we will contribute to the debates regarding the links between land, biodiversity and climate, as well as the discussions on the links between land and renewable energies, between rural and urban and between land and health.

An official agenda opened to the general public :

Convinced that « all degradation of culture is taking us a step closer towards oppression », and that culture represents a basis for resilience, Désertif'Actions chose to open the debate to the general public, by organizing several side events: conferences, debates on agroecology and youth employment, an international drawing contest, and a concert by Malian singer Mariam Kone, who is known to be highly involved in the fight against desertification.

Statement available soon at : <https://desertif-actions.org/>

What is Désertif'actions?

Désertif'actions is an international civil society summit focusing on 3 main themes : land, biodiversity and climate. This original event allows actors from around the world who are involved in the fight against desertification to meet every two years.

For this fourth edition, the summit has been organized by french association CARI (the NGO which initiated this summit in 2006) and the association's platform SPONG (Burkina Faso), with the support of the United Nation's Convention to Combat Desertification.

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