

FACING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME,
DÉSERTIF' ACTIONS 2022
SOUNDS THE ALARM
AND PROPOSES THE PATH OF AGROECOLOGY !



Desertifactions 2022

Organised for the fifth time in three stages over 10 months, involving many different actors

Over 350 people from 17 countries participated in national workshops

8 factsheets and 3 position papers created

29 associations representatives from 13 countries brought the D'a22 recommendations to the COP15

5 side events organised at the COP15

270 participants from 39 countries contributed to the International Civil Society Summit

Over 100 stands and 50 speakers during the Land and Seeds Festival (Festival des Terres et des Graines)

MAJOR CHALLENGES, TODAY AND TOMORROW

AROUND THE WORLD AND IN DRYLANDS !

With less than 10 years to go before the deadline for the SDGs, the world's agriculture seems to be faced with an insurmountable challenge: providing enough food for all human beings.

The recent FAO report shows that 8.9% of the world's population, i.e., 690 million people, do not have access to sufficient food and suffer from a near-permanent state of famine. In addition to these are those people who experience the same situation periodically. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the spread of hunger around the world, combined with factors such as climate change, land degradation, and conflicts.

LAND DEGRADATION

Has reduced the productivity of the Earth's surface by **23%**

Each year

12 MILLION HECTARES become degraded

LOSS of SPECIES and ECOSYSTEM SERVICES from this land is thought to represent

10% OF ANNUAL GLOBAL GDP²

“ By 2050, 16 million km² more land could become degraded, which is equivalent to the surface of South America.

IBRAHIM THIAW, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD

”

2.3 billion people (38% of the estimated world population) live in drylands, and desertification has a direct impact on the livelihoods of 250 million people.

According to the most recent IPCC forecasts, climate change will have the greatest impact on drylands, due to increased scarcity of water resources and greater frequency of climate events such as drought and flooding. It could reduce agricultural production by around 50% in some regions of Africa.

In terms of its effect on development, evaluations carried out by economists point to economic losses of around 40 billion dollars per year linked to desertification - due to the reduction in productivity and fertility of land that it causes - which could represent up to 10% of agricultural GDP in some countries.



MAJOR BUT SURMOUNTABLE CHALLENGES IF WE TAKE THE RIGHT ACTION!

Has a positive impact on the **ENVIRONMENT**, including soil fertility, biodiversity, water quality, etc.

Lowers **OPERATING COSTS** via a reduction in inputs and self-production of soil improvers and plant treatments.

Enables creation of **HIGH ADDED VALUE** per productive surface unit.

Promotes **LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS** and diversification of diets.

The farms which have progressed furthest in the **AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION** are the **MOST RESILIENT**.



Recent scientific studies have identified agroecology as an effective measure for adaptation of agriculture in drylands which are particularly affected by climate change. Agroecology can also contribute to mitigating climate change by promoting carbon storage in soils and biomass.

Finally, agroecology provides opportunities to overcome poverty and the degradation of livelihoods in rural, suburban, and urban areas, as shown by recent studies. The agroecological transition helps with maintaining families in rural areas and creating jobs.

The recent health and geopolitical crises have shown how fragile our food systems are and the urgent need for this agroecological transition, not as a niche phenomenon, but as a global change. In all types of agriculture, from agri-business to subsistence farming, a paradigm shift is needed to move towards diversified agroecological systems, and ultimately achieve different economic, social, environmental, climate, health-related, and cultural goals at the same time.

¹FAO, 2021. The state of food security and nutrition in the world

²France's international strategic guidelines for combatting land degradation and desertification (2020-2030)

³Preliminary conclusions from works and studies of FAO (Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation – TAPE), GTAE (Guidelines for the evaluation of agroecology) and CARI (AVACLIM project)

AGROECOLOGY IN POLITICS

PROGRESS TO CONSOLIDATE

Agroecology has gradually gained recognition in political and institutional discourses over the past few years, but this has not yet been translated into practical action. Agricultural budgets and policies still lean towards promotion of conventional and industrial farming, while its damaging effects on the environment and consumer health is widely documented. However, promising progress can be observed:



● In 2017, the recognition of the unique potential of agriculture to combat climate change within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was a historic decision (Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, KJWA).

● At the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) supported agroecology as a nature-based solution to transform food systems for greater sustainability and resilience.

● In its world framework for biodiversity after 2020, and more specifically, with target 10 on sustainable use of biodiversity, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) sets a pathway for agroecology to become part of agricultural development models.

“When several countries will have political frameworks in favor of agroecology and will be able to showcase results, the international recognition will move forward.”

MARTIAL BERNOUX, FAO

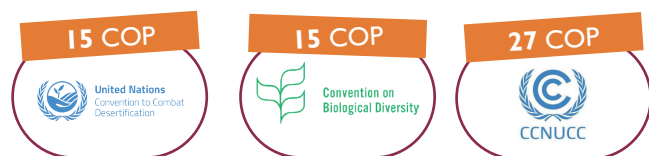
The UNCCD's commitment to agroecology is still shaky. At the COP15, there was no reference to agroecology in the recommendation for implementation of approaches to improve the drought resilience of communities and ecosystems, even though the COP14 decision on drought encouraged the parties to use agroecological approaches to face drought and improve the resilience of agroecosystems. There is still much progress to be made.



The Science-Policy Interface (SPI) will review existing scientific evidence on sustainable land use systems and their potential to counter desertification, land degradation, and drought, whilst contributing to achieve many of the SDGs. Agroecological systems should be considered as a priority, using data from evaluation of the results and effects of these systems.

Reflecting on the number of COPs which have been held since 1992, the panorama of the last three decades is bleak.

This is a vast undertaking which still requires work from all of us, and to which the Désertif'actions approach makes significant contributions.



“What have we got wrong? If our conferences had been successful, we wouldn't be suffering so much from the effects of drought, climate change, and biodiversity loss.”

ALAIN-RICHARD DONWAHI,
UNCCD COP15 PRESIDENT



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CONSERVING THE PLANET !

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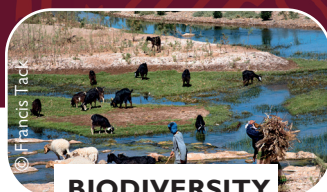
Around 3.2 billion people, and almost half of the world's wealth, are affected by the degradation of the planet. Productive resources (land, water, genetic resources), landscapes (ecosystems), knowledge and expertise (skills, jobs) are all affected by the phenomenon of degradation, and this is sometimes irreversible. This has major consequences on populations' food security and wellbeing.

Agroecology helps conserve the planet in a number of different ways. A look at the actions and initiatives implemented by development actors (NGOs, researchers, international institutions) in over 40 countries shows some of the technical advantages of employing agroecological practices :



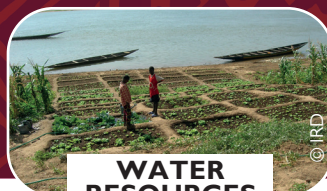
FERTILITY

Improving soil fertility by enriching it with locally produced organic matter (manure, compost, mulch, green manure, etc.) and by introducing leguminous plants into crop rotations.



BIODIVERSITY

Increasing the functional biodiversity of soils (soil fauna), using natural biodiversity (pollinating insects, specific and spontaneous diversity) and cultivated biodiversity (species, varieties, and organisms adapted to the local area). These improve the resilience of ecosystems.



WATER RESOURCES

Preserving water resources by maintaining a microclimate and soil humidity (multi-level cultivation, techniques to combat desertification, etc.) and by protecting groundwater from pollution (reduced fertiliser use, improved soil structure, etc.). Enabling economical and resource-efficient management.



PROTECTION

Protecting the soil from strong winds, drought, and erosion with the use of different types of hedgerows, agroforestry, permanent soil cover, etc. The principle of intensification limits the expansion of agriculture to natural areas, whilst boosting secondary production of goods such as firewood and aromatic and medicinal plants.

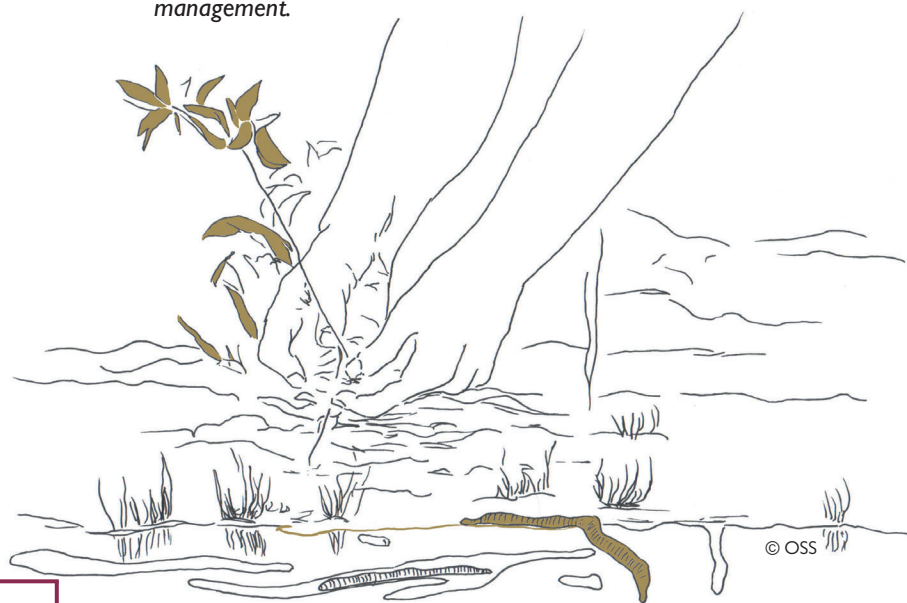
LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY

In discussions on implementation of land degradation neutrality, there is a significant risk of limiting ourselves to a mere compensation mechanism, restoring degraded land in order to maintain a balance and achieve neutrality, whilst continuing to let land become degraded elsewhere. However, science shows that loss of natural capital can never be restored identically to its previous state and is therefore irreversible.

It is **VITAL**
for **STATES** to

Attach equal importance and urgency to avoiding and reducing land degradation as to restoring land in their strategies to reach the neutrality targets.

Incorporate agroecology in the relevant models considered to reach their neutrality targets and include agroecology in the transformative projects under development.



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UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

The United Nations Decade on ecosystem restoration (2021 – 2030) is a call to all of the world's countries to unite for stopping ecosystem degradation and restoring ecosystems in order to reach global objectives.

According to the UN, only with healthy ecosystems can we improve populations' living conditions, combat climate change, and end biodiversity loss. Agroecology should be considered as one of a set of inspiring solutions, as it enables a balanced transformation of landscapes, can be adapted to regional development processes, and preserves resources and populations' access to these.

The
UNITED NATIONS
must



© Ramses Morales Izquierde

GOUVERNEMENTS
must

Ensure that their public policies are coherent, by getting rid of incentives and subsidies for agricultural practices that are harmful to ecosystems.

Take advantage of this opportunity to promote and encourage conservation of agroecosystems – with a particular focus on vulnerable systems such as oases, rangelands etc. – based on agroecological principles.

BIODIVERSITY

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) considers combatting land degradation as a priority to protect biodiversity and fundamental ecosystem services for all life on Earth in relation to the SDGs. In drylands, this guarantees not only the future of ecosystems, but also the sustainable development of communities that directly depend on them. Agroecology presents many advantages to help with reducing biodiversity loss and contributing to the development of efficient agriculture in drylands.

It is **VITAL**
for **STATES** to

Guarantee to farmers an easy access to a wide range of varieties suited to their local conditions, boosting natural genetic diversity and circulation of farmers' seeds.

Boost support for wider use of organic pesticides and inputs.



© GSS



© IRD

“

Agroecology, both in terms of its fundamental principles and its practical application, should be a source of inspiration for public policies at national and international level, considering everything it does for the environment, humankind, and the planet.

NAHID NAGHIZADEH, CENESTA, IRAN

”

CONSTANTLY ADAPTING

Agricultural and food systems around the world are witnessing a rapid change in their environment, and are faced with a multitude of crises which can affect them.

These crisis situations are multifactorial, they put to trial the farmers' capacity to manage uncertainty and the resilience of the agricultural and food systems. Against this backdrop, resilience to crises is characterised by the maintenance of the productive capacities of agroecosystems: food production in the areas concerned and incomes from farms.

The principles of agroecology and their ecological, economic, and social effects are credible means of strengthening the resilience of agricultural systems. They help secure agricultural production, reduce dependency on inputs, better manage resources, and develop types of collective organisation for solidarity and social equity in the regions concerned.



Health crises
covid, etc



Climate crises
droughts, etc.



Conflicts with worldwide repercussions
such as the war in Ukraine, etc.



“

The planet's emergencies are interconnected. The climate crisis and resource crisis threaten to severely exacerbate them. The solutions provided by agroecology are imperative to avoid the worst-case scenario.

PATRICE BURGER, PRESIDENT OF CARI

”

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ECONOMIC CRISES

Economic crises are often linked to a collapse of markets and a drastic increase in the cost of raw materials, inputs, and energy. Farmers are particularly vulnerable when they are part of a value chain in which they sell their produce on the market but have little influence over prices.

In these situations, dependency on inputs (fertiliser, pesticides, seeds, etc.) directly linked to their level of operating costs represents the weakest link in their production systems. An economic crisis leading to an increase in prices on the global markets and therefore a rise in input prices for farmers represents a major risk.

FACED WITH THESE RISKS IN AN ECONOMIC CRISIS SITUATION, AGROECOLOGY ALLOWS :

- To limit external inputs and to recycle farming by-products according to a circular economy approach: recycling, integration, composting, fertilisation with manures, integrated waste management at farm level
- Better economic resilience of farmers with the reduction of risks and the improvement of economic performance, through diversification of crops and activities.

To enable the deployment of production systems based on the principles of agroecology, an appropriate support is essential.

STATES
must

Ensure that their policies are coherent, by adopting economic policies which protect farmers from global competition and by reducing subsidies to chemical inputs which make farms vulnerable and fragile.

Implement seed and fodder stock safeguarding programmes and take charge of fertility management at local/regional scale.



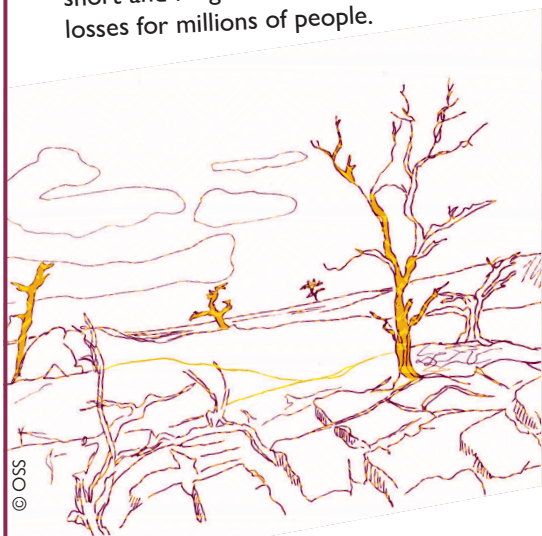
We must intensively use resources which are free, such as solar energy and CO2 for biomass production, or atmospheric nitrogen captured by leguminous plants to fertilise the soil, etc. Farmers should even be paid for doing this.

MARC DUFUMIER, CARI



ADAPTING TO DROUGHT AND CLIMATE VARIATIONS

Drought is one of the most serious natural disasters in the world and causes short and long term economic and social losses for millions of people.



+ 2 BILLION people live in countries which experience a high level of water stress. Other more pessimistic estimations give the figure of 4 billion people-i.e., more than half of the world's population - who already face severe water stress for at least one month per year (Global Land Outlook, 2017).

In 2017, drought caused the **WORST** humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, when **20 MILLION PEOPLE** throughout Africa and the Middle East were left on the **BRINK OF FAMINE** (UN-OCHA).

700 MILLION PEOPLE

are at risk of being displaced due to drought by 2030 (UN/World Bank).

Although drought affects all climate zones, the world's drylands are particularly vulnerable—rainfed agriculture and mixed farming depend heavily on seasonal rains.

Since its adoption in 1994, the UNCCD has recognised that drought represents a worldwide problem, as it affects all regions of the world, and that concerted action from the international community is required. Most countries and regions are organising themselves to deal with the risk of drought with approaches ranging from drought crisis response, to early warning and monitoring, or mitigation of the risks caused by drought.

However, anticipation and mitigation measures are not sufficiently implemented. The UNCCD has recently stepped up its efforts to support countries via a new drought initiative, based on (i) preventative measures concerning alert systems and response mechanisms and (ii) adaptation measures aiming at strengthening resilience: cultural practices, better-suited varieties, water cycle management, as well as social mechanisms for resilience of populations.

The **UNCCD & INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS** must

Acknowledge and adopt in official documents, agroecological transitions as a solution to implement resilient agriculture and food systems able to cope with drought.

DONORS & FINANCIAL PARTNERS must

mobilise funding facilities for drought adaptation, to subsidise the initial investment and transition phase for small-scale farmers engaged in an agroecological transition.



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Tomorrow's world is being built day by day, by men and women, farms, regions, and countries. The many actors involved, the sectors concerned, and the issues encountered at different levels can make this a difficult task. Much imagination and innovation is required for sustainable development, which encompasses economic, social, and environmental issues. But above all, we must be able to build initiatives led by diverse actors and stakeholders. Development interventions take place in environments which are inhabited, managed, and governed by political commitments and cultural norms, and are organised in different ways. Developing territories, whether these are local (municipalities, departments, etc.), national, or international, requires us to build coalitions and work together towards shared objectives.



Agroecology is part of a global drive to redesign food systems, from farm to fork, to achieve ecological, economic, and social sustainability. Good governance, mobilisation of expertise, responsible use of natural resources, and ecological processes are at the basis of this holistic approach. Investing in the future with agroecology is crucial to ensure that the actions implemented are sustainable, with a view to achieving the SDGs. But 2030 is rapidly approaching, the future is being created now, and sectoral policies are still struggling to consider the necessary link between environmental, agricultural, socioeconomic, and other issues.

STATES & INSTITUTIONS
must

Harmonise their public policies and make them coherent, considering the strong linkages between the different dimensions of development (agriculture, environment, economy, etc.), and prioritising inclusive strategies via dialogue and multi-actor collaboration.

INCORPORATING AGROECOLOGY INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GREAT GREEN WALL IN THE SAHARA AND THE SAHEL

Faced with demographic growth, food emergencies, and famine risk, African agriculture must produce more. It must also produce better, to combat climate change, and to meet the legitimate demand for protection of the environment. There is also a need to respond to a socio-economic emergency by providing and diversifying low-emission economic opportunities, adapted to the region, type of soil, land, traditions, and culture.



The agroecological transition in the Great Green Wall (GGW) regions could help overcome these **challenges** !

The GGW, designed as a collective response to these challenges, aims at transforming vast expanses of arid land into rural hubs for sustainable production and stable economic development. The decentralised approach in each region promoted as part of the GGW is consistent with agroecological principles, which are applied to local contexts and needs in an inclusive manner.

On the ground, the projects led by civil society as part of the GGW already include agroecological principles, via the implementation of integrated farms, or by using land restoration techniques such as Zaï, and promoting agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration. For example, hanza (*Boscia Senegalensis*) is a shrub which regenerates easily during drought. Its fruits are a good source of protein and minerals. Hanza farming can therefore be a source of income for women who collect the fruit, and also improves their household's nutrition.

DONORS & FINANCIAL PARTNERS
must

Identify projects which contribute to reaching the GGW objectives and prioritise funding for them over a sufficient time period to support the transitions.

GGW DECISION MAKERS
must

Be aware of agroecology and acknowledge its relevance and suitability for achieving their objectives by 2030.

THE MUCH-NEEDED RISE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Development approaches based on multi-actor cooperation and planning at sub-territorial scales are increasingly favoured and recognised for their effectiveness. In its most recent report, the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface showed how integrated land-use planning and integrated landscape management can bring an effective support to achieving land degradation neutrality. In the second edition of its “Global Land Outlook”, published in 2022, the UNCCD also highlights the role of local authorities in securing populations’ livelihoods, whilst positively and sustainably adapting their relationship with nature: protecting fertile land, limiting waste and pollution, etc. These local authorities take different forms and operate on different scales for devolved or decentralised management of regions. They form a group of actors who intensify their efforts in all areas of development. Their growing awareness and their drive to take action to face these issues has led to urban local authorities signing the Milan Pact.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES *must*

Incorporate agroecology and Sustainable Land Management as fundamental building blocks in their local planning (including their Territorial Food Projects).

THE MILAN PACT



- 3** commitments
- CONSERVE**
agricultural land
 - PROMOTE**
local supply chains
 - AVOID**
food waste



Cities have always been the birthplace of revolutions. Will they also be the origin of the agroecological revolution?

GILLES MARTIN, FAO



The UNCCD *must*

Acknowledge local authorities, make space for them in negotiations on issues linked to desertification, and allow them to be heard.

These issues of preserving natural resources, adapting practices to new climate realities, and building sustainable food systems are addressed by international negotiating bodies, but local representatives and leaders remain underrepresented in these discussions.

Within the UNCCD, local authorities are not considered parties to the Convention, but they can act as observers. They are on the front lines of applying the recommendations set at international level, so they should also contribute to debate based on their practical knowledge and engage with the negotiators.

⁶ SPI, 2022. *The Contribution of Integrated Land Use Planning and Integrated Landscape Management to Implementing Land Degradation Neutrality: Entry Points and Support Tools*



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A MULTI-FACETED MOBILISATION

SUCCESS OF THE PRESS CARTOON CONTEST

Using humour, ridicule, irony, or enthusiasm, the aim was to highlight the paradoxes, inconsistencies, ignorance, disregard, and arrogance which humans show in the way they treat lands and soils in urban and rural environments, as well as the hopes, commitments, courage, initiatives, and solutions provided by agroecology. The latter represent the seeds of change which have been planted for a viable world and future.

4TH CONTEST

Topic : Land and Drought

238 press illustrators from **58** countries

400 illustrations received → 33 selected → 2 winners



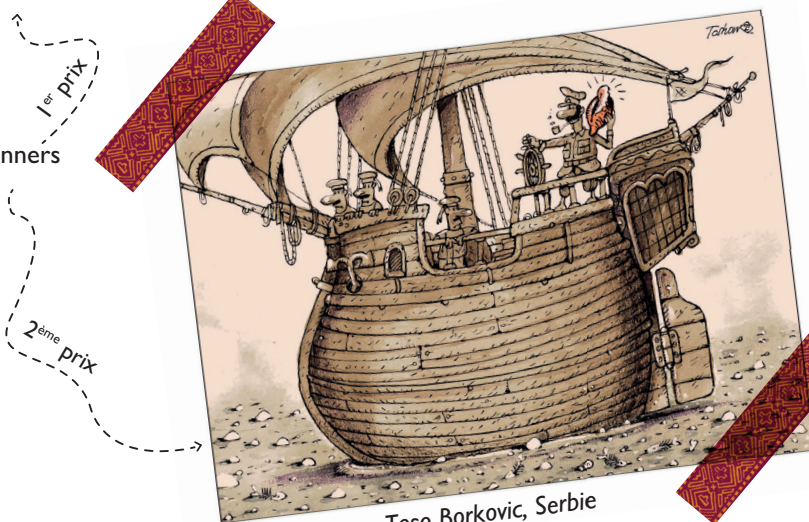
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MARCOS MONTOIRO, VICTOR SOLIS
AND PATRICE BURGER

& LAND DROUGHT



Victor Solis, Mexique



Toso Borkovic, Serbie

Launched by : CARI, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory

A CONCERT WITH MUSICAL INFLUENCES FROM AROUND THE WORLD!

3 bands with influences from around the world played at a festive evening event: Le chauffeur est dans le pré, with Eastern Europe influences, Jungle Box, with African rhythms, and Onda Ya, drawing inspiration from Colombia.

LE CHAUFFEUR EST DANS LE PRÉ



JUNGLE BOX



ONDA YA



LAND AND SEEDS FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 8TH OCTOBER

Around 100 stands

50 speakers

Participants : local artisans, local and international associations, etc.

2000 attendees from **58 countries**

5 discussion tents*



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**D'a
Desertif'
Actions**

**Le sommet
international
de la société civile**

« Des solutions agroécologiques pour inspirer la transition »

A MARCH FOR LANDS AND THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

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* The **RESIS'TENT** for resilient food systems

5 round tables on agroecology.

The **IMPAC'TENT** for practical actions

4 round tables and 1 conference on initiatives implemented in the field.

The **TENT' ACTIONS** for sharing ideas and ongoing activities

Several organisations presented their projects.

The **OSS TENT** Sahara and Sahel Observatory)

Members of the OSS team attended to present their initiatives.

The **EXHIBITION TENT** for the press illustration competition and the Oasis exhibition.

Jean-Michel Renault (president of jury) and Victor Solis (winner of first prize in the press illustration competition) were present to talk to festivalgoers. The tent also contained Francis Tack's photos from the Fits exhibition

Désertif'actions

Agroecological solutions to inspire the transition

D'a
Désertif
Actions
2022

“ AGROECOLOGY
RIGHT
NOW! ”

CO-ORGANISERS



CARI (Centre d'Actions et de Réalisations Internationales) implements actions on the ground alongside rural populations and engages in international advocacy for sustainable agriculture based on agroecological principles in the oases and drylands of Africa.



OSS (Sahara and Sahel Observatory) is an international organisation focused on Africa. It was created in 1992 and has been based in Tunisia since 2000. The OSS launches and manages partnerships on joint challenges linked to shared management of water resources, and implementation of international agreements on desertification, biodiversity, and climate change in Africa.



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

The UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification), adopted in 1994, is the only legally binding international agreement linking the environment and development of sustainable land management.

PARTNERS



avaclim



www.desertif-actions.org



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desertif.actions

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