

Mr. Chair, Madame Secretary, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen!

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity. My name is Bhawani Shanker Kusum from India. I am speaking on behalf of the CSOs.

We are honoured to be able to use this opportunity to express our views on the UNCCD's Scientific Knowledge Broking Portal on behalf of CSOs engaged in the implementation of the convention. There may be no doubt that many of the solutions to the challenges of sustainable land use lie in the knowledge economy, which is so closely linked to broadening and deepening the knowledge of everyone with responsibilities for sustainable land management, from the high-level decision makers to the farmers in the fields.

We would like to thank the Secretariat for its initiative in this regard, the Parties for requesting and supporting the development of the SKBP, WOCAT for offering access to its invaluable knowledge management tools and the Swiss Government for funding their development.

According to the website, "the UNCCD Knowledge Portal SKBP aims to be the knowledge broker betweenknowledge repositories, facilitating the transfer and exchange of knowledge from where it is abundant to where it is needed." We believe that in order to do this well, the portal will have to be acutely aware of where the knowledge is needed, as well as who needs it, and how they will best be able to access it. Only if it this is addressed in an on-going way will the gap between knowledge creators and users could be bridged effectively.

Whereas the draft portal available on the website provides access to the knowledge products of a number of networks and organisations via hyperlinks, it does not do so in a very intuitive manner, and is best suited to researchers and professionals, rather than the not farmers and practitioners. We propose that the portal should be designed in a more intuitive manner to easily direct the user to appropriate knowledge products, similar to the CBMP site. Specifically, we would like to see:

1. Access to information via the portal must be more users friendly, and there should be a direct link to the WOCAT site, as this is the designated repository of UNCCD knowledge products related to SLM and DLDD. Currently the site simply offers links to a range of knowledge sites, without providing any guidance as to what they offer. Some of them are look like that they are not designed to serve farmers. For example, the AGRIS site provides a useful search tool, which offers scientific papers on various important issues. however, these are only accessible to registered, paid up members: if you try to access them you get the message "You are required to sign in to access this article under your institution's agreement with Elsevier". There needs to be a simple path to guide users to different sorts of information designed for different audiences. The WOCAT video series is a good example of the sort of material that farmers can easily relate to and learn from.
2. More of the many success stories on best practices implemented by CBOs/CSOs and the individuals should be made accessible through the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.

3. Programs/plans for training for the community people/land users should be disseminated in such a manner that members of more marginalised groups such as youth and women can access and benefit from it. Direct links to relevant training materials are needed here.
4. Adequate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and training materials related to these themes should be accessible via the CBMP site in UN languages so as to be useful for land users. The site could also facilitate translation into local/national languages to make it more useful for the community people at grassroots level.
5. Contact details of the Universities hosting UNCCD courses, organizing competitions, exhibitions etc. should be made available for the users on different forums/networks, websites etc. so that the students or the **people** from any segments of the society could get full advantage of them.
6. In order to effectively popularize 'World Day to Combat Desertification' and involve people from all walks of the society in the various events to be organized on the day resources must be allocated to CSOs rooted in land using communities. **When governments spend money on political events they have no impact to speak of.**
7. We appreciate the crowd funding and donation page, as this can help CSOs to raise funds on the basis of the stories about their work, including the challenges and the successes that they have achieved. **But it needs to be modified as more users friendly.**

Thank you Mr. Chair!