

Mr.Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen!

My name is Sophiko Akhobadze from Georgia. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the CSOs accredited to the UNCCD and engaged in the implementation of the Convention.

At the outset we would like to thank the Government of Kenya for organizing the CRIC15 in such an excellent facility and we would like to thank the Swiss Government for their generous funding support, which has enabled the CSO panel members and other CSOs to attend the CRIC 15. May I take this opportunity to encourage all parties to follow their inspiring example.

Land is the basis of life for all humanity. We are here to ensure that the voices and concerns of the people affected by land degradation and desertification are heard. We would like to join hands with Parties to act together to respond to their needs adequately.

As CSOs have already been engaged in various activities at the ground level contributing to LDN, we welcome and support the LDN target setting process. We urge Parties to integrate the indigenous peoples, local communities and women to add value and legitimacy to this process. If the role of CSOs as key partners in designing and implementation of LDN is recognized, transformative projects based on the experiences and expertise of CSOs will flourish.

We believe that the new strategy should be driven by LDN in the context of target 15.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. CSOs can contribute to the development and implementation of the new strategy of the UNCCD, ensuring that synergies with the other Rio conventions are properly reflected.

'Reporting process at the national level must be designed to ensure participation of all the key stakeholders especially those members of, including civil society whose views are often overlooked, such as women and indigenous peoples. Extensive stakeholder participation will make reporting more authentic and comprehensive.

In the light of the need of an efficient financing mechanism for the implementation of the new strategy of the UNCCD and LDN process, we need to make sure that human rights and land rights are secured while financing large-scale projects. Such

projects would need to involve local small landowners, land-users and local CSOs incorporated with a bottom-up approach.

We recognize the efforts made by the UNCCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism to access new financing streams, including private capital, to achieve the LDN targets. We believe that LDN projects should adhere to the highest human, social and environmental standards. More importantly, participatory and transparent governance, decision making process and effective monitoring systems must be embedded in the management structures of the new funds.

We welcome the sustainability, stability and security (SSS) initiative. We must understand the links between degradation, migration, instability and insecurity and address them in a sustainable way. Creating sustainable jobs must result in creating stability and security. However, job creation that is of a temporary nature can do more harm than good in this regard, providing incentives for people to abandon their livelihood strategies and possibly leaving them more exposed to insecurity than before.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates

We must work together to see more active and equal participation of CSOs, indigenous people, women's groups as key allies in the work of the convention to ensure realization of LDN and SDG15.3 Target by 2030.

We wish you all a wonderful meeting and stay in the beautiful city of Nairobi.

Thank you