

# From Scarcity to Prosperity: Brahma Kumaris at the UN Convention to Combat Desertification COP15 in Abidjan



The UNCCD COP15 (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification – 15th Conference of Parties) theme was ‘Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity’ and it took place in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire from 9 to 20 May 2022. It was a call to action to ensure land, the lifeline on this planet, continues to benefit present and future generations. It drew nearly 7,000 participants, including heads of state, ministers, delegates from the UNCCD’s 196 Parties and the European Union, as well as members of the private sector, civil society, women, youth leaders, and media.

The Brahma Kumaris delegation was present there as a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and was active in daily coordination meetings, where statements and interventions for all the COP groups were prepared.

One of the highlights, within a very unique formula among all Rio Conventions, was the open dialogue session of the CSOs and parties, entitled “Lands we use, lands we protect, lands we own – Opportunities & solutions to equity and equality”. The BKs ended the session with a ten minute meditation that led the delegates through a peaceful and powerful experience of silence and reflection.

Catholic Youth Network for Environment Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA) and Brahma Kumaris organised a side event on the Values and Legacy of Natural Living. We shared our approach, experience, research studies, and best practices of applying values in land restoration and regeneration through education, youth empowerment, the Great Green Wall program, yogic agriculture, plant-based diet, and innovation in renewable energy.

Agroecology is a way to achieve prosperity by 2030, as stated and practised by some CSOs. It combines social and ecological aspects of agriculture, and in the subtle agroecology, as demonstrated by the BKs, there is one more aspect added, which is the

impact of metaphysical energy: thoughts, vibrations, sound etc on matter. Today more than 80% of global farmland, being mostly chemical-based farming, is used to raise animals which provide only 18% of calories eaten. A gradual change to a plant-based diet and organic, natural, and yogic farming would free vast areas and reduce the pressure on soil and water.

The BKs organised several get-together events to honour Mother Nature and celebrate the dedication of friends of the Earth. The BKs met also with the Executive Secretary of UNCCD and members of the UNCCD Secretariat and discussed the need for a greater role of faith-based organisations in the future.

A united global pledge to boost drought resilience and invest in land restoration for future prosperity concluded the COP15 of the UNCCD in Abidjan. The CSOs called for more and faster actions on land tenure, gender equality, agroecology, and land regeneration plus CSO involvement in the UN processes. A clear statement was made on the need to humanise droughts, give drought a human face, and better understand the impacts of this disaster on the lives of children, women, farmers, indigenous peoples, and local communities.

The BK message on restoring the land through restoring core values was recognised and appreciated by the delegates.

Aneta Loj, the BK Focal Point at the UNCCD