

## Key S4HL Advocacy Talking Points for UNCCD COP16

### Secure Women's Land Rights

Strengthening women's land rights is a cornerstone for achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), mitigating desertification, and fostering community resilience. Recent research on the relationship between stronger and more equitable rights to land and natural resources for women and action on land restoration calls for swift efforts to ensure implementation of gender-equal land rights. **We advocate for Parties to:**

- Promote gender-equitable land policies at national and subnational levels that address legal, social, and economic barriers to land ownership and control. This can be done through the joint UNCCD/FAO initiative on [integration of land tenure](#) with LDN initiatives. If a Party has not already applied for a national consultation on this initiative, they can contact the UNCCD Secretariat for more information.
- Raise awareness about the socio-economic benefits of women's land rights. Research shows that when women have secure land rights, agricultural productivity can increase, malnutrition declines, and household welfare improves. The recent [UNCCD paper on awareness-raising](#) can also provide guidance on how to structure efforts to increase knowledge and action on equitable and inclusive land tenure rights.
- Highlight the links between secure tenure, women's empowerment, and sustainable land management. See key recent evidence on women's land rights in the context of [climate action](#) and [poverty reduction](#).
- Support the implementation of [COP14 Decision 26](#) on land tenure. Parties can advocate for strong language on gender equality and social inclusion in the context of land tenure in the COP16 follow-on decisions on [gender](#) and [tenure](#), and advocate for the inclusion of language in these decisions encouraging additional action by the Secretariat and other key actors on continued resourcing, technical capacity, and awareness raising to take forward the goals of Dec 26/COP14, as well as follow-on decisions at COP15.

### Gender-Responsive Land Restoration

Integrating gender-responsive approaches into land restoration efforts, including strengthening gender-equal tenure rights, is critical to reversing land degradation. When women own land they also know how to value it - it is therefore critical to ensure that women and marginalized groups participate in the design and implementation of restoration projects, land tenure interventions, land use planning, and other key policy interventions related to land restoration. **We advocate for Parties to:**

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- Align restoration projects with the UNCCD Gender Action Plan, with a focus on the four Priority Action Areas for women: 1) increased decision-making; 2) economic empowerment; 3) land and resource rights; 4) enhanced access to information and technologies.
- Support women-led conservation and sustainable land management initiatives. The new UNCCD report on women-led [solutions for drought resilience](#) includes numerous examples of good practices. This report and the associated case studies and initiatives will also be the focus of several events at COP16.

## Inclusion in Decision Making

Meaningful inclusion of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities in decision-making is essential for effective policy implementation. **We advocate to parties to:**

- Support multi-stakeholder platforms at national and local levels to facilitate inclusive dialogue and decision-making.
- Eliminate barriers that prevent women's meaningful participation in planning and decision-making processes related to land<sup>i</sup>
  - Address social norms and practices that exclude women and girls from these processes or deny them rights to inherit, possess or use land.
  - Review policy and legal frameworks on gender equality to secure tenure right may help identify policy provisions or legislation that do not ensure women and men to benefit from equal access to secure tenure rights.
  - Special policy provisions or affirmative actions to ensure participation of women and other groups that may be further disadvantaged.
- Ensure gender parity in land governance bodies.
  - Advocate for gender-responsive land policies that ensure women's right to participate in governance structures.
  - Align national policies with international frameworks like the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure \(VGGT\)](#)
  - Track and report the level of women's participation in decision-making and governance bodies to measure progress and address gaps.
  - Set quotas or targets to ensure equal participation of women in land governance bodies at local, regional, and national levels.
    - Example: Senegal's village assemblies implemented a gender parity policy that increased women's involvement in land-related decisions. [FAO/UNCCD Technical Guide on the integration of the VGGTs in LDN implementation](#), Pathway 3, Page 38.

## Capacity Building and Resource Mobilization

Sustained financial and technical support is needed to empower women and marginalized groups. **We advocate to duty bearers to:**

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- Allocate resources for capacity building, particularly for women and youth in sustainable land management practices.
- Advocate for the inclusion of gender-responsive criteria in funding mechanisms for land restoration projects.
- Recognize and fund the movement for women's land rights efforts, particularly of grassroots and local organizations as a key pathway for addressing land restoration and land degradation neutrality efforts.

## Enhanced Data and Monitoring

Data disaggregated by gender and other social categories is vital for monitoring progress and informing policy. **We advocate to duty bearers to:**

- Advocate for the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data on land tenure and degradation impacts, including citizen-led and participatory data collection efforts that emphasize women's leadership.
- Integrate gender-specific indicators into LDN Target Setting Programme (TSP) 2.0 efforts, including the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators related to gender and land (15.3.1, 1.4.2, 5.a.1, 5.a.2, 11.1.1)

## Policy Integration and Alignment

Promote policy coherence and integration between UNCCD objectives and other global frameworks, including SDGs and other Rio Conventions. **We advocate to duty bearers to:**

- Support cross-sectoral policy coherence between land restoration, climate action, and gender equality.
  - Harmonize national land restoration policies with global frameworks like the SDGs, UNFCCC, and the UNCCD.
  - Strengthen the knowledge exchange between national institutions and authorities responsible for land use and management and land tenure governance.
  - Increase data coordination among stakeholders.
    - National multi-stakeholder platforms could include mechanisms to improve data coordination, standardize information exchange, data sharing, and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Advocate for intersectional approaches in policy implementation. Considering the interconnected nature of other social identities (such as age, ethnicity, gender, caste, and class), can help address the differentiated needs of other vulnerable groups and result in wider community benefits and joint measures to address the overlapping and interdependent systems of experience, discrimination, and/or disadvantage.<sup>ii</sup>
  - Adopt Gender-Responsive Policies that account for how different identities experience systemic barriers.
  - Ensure equitable participation of marginalized groups.

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- Build capacity on intersectional analysis and data collection to identify gaps and address them in policy implementation.
- Use participatory approaches to involve women, youth, and other vulnerable groups in designing and implementing land governance policies.
- Develop gender-disaggregated data systems and intersectional impact assessments to monitor the inclusivity of policies.
- Align land restoration programs with the [UNCCD Gender Action Plan](#) and the [VGGT Technical Guide on Land Tenure and LDN](#).

## References

- UNCCD Policy Brief: 'Her Land, Her Rights: Advancing Gender Equality to Restore Land and Build Resilience'. Available at: [Her Land, Her Rights: Advancing gender equality to restore land and build resilience | UNCCD](#)
- FAO/UNCCD Technical Guide on the Integration of VGGT into LDN Implementation. Available at: [Technical guide on the integration of the voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests | UNCCD](#)
- COP16 Draft Decisions. Available at: [COP 16, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2024 | UNCCD](#)
- CSO Group Key Messages. Available at: [Key messages ENG - Google Docs](#)
- [UNCCD COP16 - Stand for Her Land/Landesia Talking Points and Resources - Google Docs](#)
- UNCCD Gender Action Plan. Available at: [Gender Action Plan | UNCCD](#)

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<sup>i</sup> [Technical Guide on the Integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation Neutrality, pg34](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Technical Guide on the Integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation Neutrality, pg14](#)