

## CSO Closing Statement

*Delivered by Mandukhai Tsogtbal (Green Mongolia Hub NGO)*

### **Distinguished Chair, distinguished delegates, and esteemed colleagues,**

On behalf of Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples, and as a representative of a CSO from Mongolia — the host country of COP17 in August 2026, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of Panama and the UNCCD Secretariat for hosting CRIC23 with utmost hospitality, and to the partners, who made our participation possible. Throughout CRIC23, we have witnessed remarkable initiatives emerging on issues of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, farmers, and community, the very people who live on degraded lands and whose knowledge and experience shape real solutions. Their innovations are visible and need to be supported and integrated into national and global decisions.

As we adopt the report of this session, civil society respectfully calls on parties to take into consideration our following key recommendations:

- Prioritize long-term institutional capacity building for the UNCCD staff, CSOs, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities;
- Reflect civil society and Indigenous Peoples' inputs in national reports;
- Invest in nature-based solutions and strengthen community resilience.
- Support long-term, direct, and accessible financing for CSOs, Indigenous Peoples organizations, women- and youth-led, and community-based initiatives;
- Secure equitable land rights and strengthen legal recognition for all.

We strongly believe that civil society and Indigenous Peoples' recommendations shared during this CRIC23 are relevant for the effective implementation of the Convention, so we call for partnership with Parties to ensure collaborative delivery of results on the ground.

CRIC23 reminded us that drought, water scarcity, and climate stress are no longer distant threats — they are lived realities. Water is the lifeblood of every nature-based solution, from LDN and SLM to afforestation, restoration, and climate adaptation. It is also the foundation of human dignity: our livelihoods, our food systems, and our communities depend on it. Without reliable and fair access to water, no restoration effort can succeed, and no community can thrive. This must be at the heart of our shared agenda.

As we conclude this session, civil society and Indigenous Peoples reaffirm our deep commitment to working with Parties, the Secretariat, the Science-Policy Interface, and all partners to deliver solutions that are inclusive, science-based, community-led, and equitable. We stand ready to help make COP17 a historic milestone — one that elevates rangelands and pastoralists, strengthens drought resilience, advances water security, and accelerates land degradation neutrality worldwide.

**Thank you once again to the Government of Panama, to the Secretariat, delegates, Civil Society, Indigenous Peoples, Volunteers, and the support staff. We look forward to welcoming you to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in August 2026.**

**Thank you.**