Hi, I am Seydou KABORE from Burkina Faso, West Africa and working in a local association called Association Zoram Naagtaaba in the village of Guiè. It’s a pleasure to share my impressions on the Youth Forum, held as a side event of the CoP 13 in Ordos, Inner Mongolia. First of all, I’ll tell about the event itself. Secondly I’ll give my impressions, and finish with my expectations for the future of the Youth Forum.

1. The Youth Forum event:

I arrived in Ordos on the 6th of September, and had been housed in The Taxation Garden Hotel with my fellow youth from various countries across the world.

On the 7th we were given the YF booklet and other information about the event and then we went to the Convention Center for the registration process. After that we could enter the Convention Center to discover the meetings rooms and prepare for the next day for the forum.

The forum itself was held on the 8th. I would like to stress something Monique BARBUT said during her speech, that I found very inspiring. She said that «from caring comes courage». Our courage to continue to combat desertification will come from the fact that you care about the issue.

It was an honor for me to be part of the youth people chosen to do a presentation of their work. This was a big opportunity for me to show and explain to my fellows youth people and the assistance the concept of bocage we are carrying in Burkina Faso. I was also pleased to see what others were doing in their countries, too. The reaction of the public were also good and encouraging.

The group discussion was a challenge for us to find ways to engage more young people in SLM. I think all the groups did a great work on it as we gave some solutions to the issue.

2. The Side events:

On the 9th, we had the choice to attend to some side events. I attended two: the CSO’s open dialogue and the Global Environment Facility’s meeting on small grant program.
At the Open dialogue I was with some delegates from my country, and we were able to share our thoughts about combating desertification in our country. We had very good exchanges, and I hope we will continue the discussions back home.

At the GEF’s meeting I saw a presentation of the small grant program, and the discussions after the presentation were really interesting as we realised how hard but not impossible it can be to apply for a grant at GEF.

3. The field trip
It took place on the 10th. We went to see the Kubuqi desert and its comprehensive treatment. This was trip was very inspiring for me, as I saw along it the way people achieved the fixation of sand, using local materials and plants. It was amazing to know that with just with about 200 to 400 mm of rain people could do all these plantations and they work! in my area of work we have about 750 mm, so it’s really possible to achieve such big things!

This field trip showed that reversing desertification is indeed possible. It just needs real involvement of all the stakeholders.

4. My Impressions
Before all, I would like to thank the UNCCD and the Chinese government for accepting the organisation of this first Youth Forum. It has been a very important opportunity for us to
exchange with other people from allover the world. I have been able to talk my fellows youth and learn from their experience in their country. The events were also very important, even if I could not attend many of them.

I have really appreciated the organisation of the events and the involvement of the youth volunteers during our stay in Ordos. Their presence in almost all the city has facilitated our communication with other chinese people.

5. *My Expectations*

In order to improve the YF for the future, I would to share these suggestions:

- it would be very interesting if the youth representative can have some exchange event with the executive secretary and some of the UNCCD staff;

- for the presentations, it could be good if the presenters can stand in front of the assistant and make the presentation;

- the YF could be held in more than just one day. Actually in one day it is almost impossible to address the issue correctly as far as we are pressed by the time. I suggest at least two days for the forum;

- the forum can be scheduled during the last days of the CoP. This can allow the youth representatives to read their statement during the closing ceremony;

- the youth representative can be dispatched so that there can be one in each side event, as we have our word to say in each.

In conclusion, I would like to thank once again the YF organizers for allowing us to share our experiences among other youth people. I had a very nice stay in the beautifull city of Ordos, and I wish that there will be others YF so that other young people could attend! many thanks for the great opportunity we had at the CoP13!