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COMMUNITY OF LEARNING AND PRACTICE ON DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

Creating a space for peer-to-peer learning and the exchange of knowledge between actors is key to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought in Latin American countries.

Many issues concerning the effects and uncertainties surrounding the drought in the region were raised at the UNCCD/CLP event launch (30 January 2024).

There are several voices regarding what this phenomenon means. Especially the several concepts of drought that are

prevalent in the area. There are only two major ones at this time—the hydrological drought and the meteorological drought. In light of this brief meditation and the setting of a people that is so spread and diverse in terms of culture in Latin America. Between the audience members, it was debated whether it was appropriate to come up with the phrase "anthropogenic drought" [I confirm that human choices and actions are always the source of disasters].

Now is the right time to use the metaphor of the half-empty or half-full glass. It relies on when a situation turns into an unmanageable issue, or how much the bill will finish up costing us to fix this issue. Nothing new, but the same question for everyone in the region towards the governments in power. I rescued the idea that free water should be a cultural asset in our region from "Water Governance in a Cultural Context" because it speaks to our values and beliefs about the cost of water. In real life, however, this is not the case, and we are in no way comparable to a just and equitable democracy in operation (too much political thinking, I believe, but a valid argument finally). Other valuable feedback provided by the participants focused on the need to further explore early warning actions for droughts in Latin America. It is essential to engage in extensive discussions with both forecast generators and the local communities to effectively manage the population and their understanding of this matter. Additionally, the implementation of rainwater harvesting plays a significant role in developing water storage as part of the overall management strategies. The utilization of water harvesting technologies is vital in addressing drought-related challenges and enhancing resilience.

¡The right to be different is also the right to keep being the same!

Maintaining cultural tradition, the use of the (machete) to cut the grass to produce new crops, perhaps could be abominable. Because it produces a high risk of starting a wildfire. However, we should be cautioned to pretend that everybody will understand and follow the rules to prevent fires during a drought-prone period. If we wanted a bottom-up approach to be used in this initiative, we have to agree that water is an important social function in Latin American culture. That Drought is not the new enemy, It is and was already there. We, the water professionals, the academics, the policymakers, and the individuals, can learn how the societies in these regions have evolved to survive without water in different environments.

It matters little whether the "evidence" comes from observation or experimentation in general. We propose that active engagement with critical social science can help to further theorize drought risk by focusing on the social aspects of drought. El Niño/La Niña ends, but drought exposes deeper problems for the region. Despite efforts to minimize losses caused by drought, it is clear that Latin America and the Caribbean cannot do it all, highlighting the need for more comprehensive solutions. For this, the UNCCD, Learning and Practice Community in Latin America and the Caribbean (CLP LAC). Is an opportunity to reduce this knowledge gap: Creating a space for peer-to-peer learning and the exchange of knowledge between actors is key to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought in Latin American countries.

I conclude that the need for more collaborative arrangements demonstrates how policy design and implementation are traditionally top-down and the need for lower perspectives. By collecting experiences and narratives from affected populations, we were able to interpret how climate change influences the country's political agenda and mitigate the drought that leads, irreversibly, to water scarcity.

“Positive changes in the way of use land have enormous potential to help the world achieve truly sustainable development that is resilient to climate change. **We have the power to bring the land back to life and turn degradation into restoration**”.

(Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD Executive Secretary)