



UNCCD COP17 Green Zone

Panel Title

From Science to Action: Operationalizing the WEFE Nexus for Land Restoration and Drought Resilience

Date: 25 August 2026 – Water Day

Time: 09:00–10:30 (GMT+8)

Duration: 90 minutes

Venue: Ögedei Hall

1. Session Concept Note

Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality requires integrated solutions that simultaneously address water, food, energy and ecosystem challenges while ensuring inclusive governance and resilient livelihoods. This session will explore how the Water–Energy–Food–Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus can move from a conceptual framework to an operational approach supporting land restoration and drought resilience. Building on the DIONYSUS project and experiences from the Mediterranean and Mongolia, the session will present innovative governance approaches, decision-support tools and practical solutions that bridge scientific knowledge with policy implementation. Particular attention will be given to stakeholder participation, digital innovation and trans-regional cooperation as key drivers for scaling up restoration efforts. Through keynote presentations followed by a moderated panel discussion, participants will identify transferable lessons and policy recommendations contributing to the implementation of the UNCCD Strategic Framework and the Riyadh–Ulaanbaatar Action Agenda.

2. Detailed Session Agenda (90 minutes)

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:05	Welcome, introduction of speakers and objectives of the session
09:05 – 09:15	Keynote 1: From Science to Action: Operationalizing the WEFE Nexus for Land Restoration and Drought Resilience – The DIONYSUS Vision (Dr. Georgios Kleftodimos, CIHEAM-IAMM)
09:15 – 09:25	Keynote 2: The DIONYSUS Project: Building a Science–Policy Interface for WEFE Nexus Governance (Prof. George Vlontzos, University of Thessaly)
09:25 – 09:35	Keynote 3: DIONYSUS-INOV: A Decision-Support Platform for Integrated Land and Water Management (Dr. Seyed-Ali Hosseini-Yekani, Leibniz Centre for Agricultural

	Landscape Research - ZALF)
09:35 – 09:45	Keynote 4: Dryland Restoration Challenges and Opportunities in Mongolia: A Local Perspective (Prof. Mend-Amgalan, Mongolian University of Life Sciences)
09:45 – 10:15	Moderated High-Level Panel Discussion
10:15 – 10:25	Questions and discussion with the audience
10:25 – 10:30	Key messages and closing remarks

3. Key Questions / Topics for Discussion

The panel discussion will address the following questions:

1. **How can the WEFE Nexus become an operational framework for achieving Land Degradation Neutrality and drought resilience?**
2. **What governance mechanisms are needed to transform scientific evidence into effective land restoration policies and investments?**
3. **How can digital decision-support tools improve integrated planning and support policy decision-making under increasing climate uncertainty?**
4. **What lessons can be exchanged between Mediterranean and Mongolian dryland systems to strengthen trans-regional cooperation?**
5. **How can farmers, local communities, women and youth become active actors in the co-design and implementation of restoration pathways?**
6. **What partnerships and financing mechanisms are needed to scale up successful WEFE Nexus solutions and accelerate implementation of the UNCCD Strategic Framework?**