



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY NADIA M. OSMAN,
MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
THE SUDAN TO THE UN, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA FOR
THE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON DROUGHT DURING THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE SEVENTEENTH
SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
New York, 25 February 2009**

Madam Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary General for his comprehensive reports on the thematic area of “drought”, before the Commission, which will help guide our discussions during this important session.

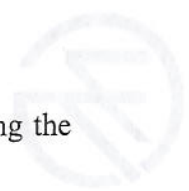
Madam Chairperson,

2. The Group reiterates the interlinkages between the 6 thematic clusters of this cycle, which requires a holistic and integrated approach. Although drought is a natural phenomenon, human activity and anthropogenic climatic variations may exacerbate water scarcity and lead to severe and prolonged periods of drought. Drought is also strongly linked to the other topics that we have on the CSD’s agenda for the current cycle, since drought may be a precursor to soil degradation and desertification.

3. The strategies for drought prevention and management should thus incorporate sustainable agricultural practices, soil and water conservation, crop diversification and integrated water basin management, as well as integrated agricultural management to maintain soil productivity and fertility.

4. Drought poses a serious threat to the development prospects especially for developing countries and affects the social, environmental, and economical life of the affected regions. Around 2 billion people live in arid zones, most in the developing world and usually these are the regions that tend to have lower development rates. Hence drought should be integrated into national, regional and global sustainable development strategies and plans. The support given to developing countries in this regard is crucial.

5. It should also be noted that there is a complex interrelatedness between drought, food security and sustainable development. In this regard, due to the devastating effects of this phenomenon, it is important that we agree during this session on concrete policy options that can effectively mitigate the effects of drought to enable the developing countries achieve meaningful



sustainable development as well as the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

Chairperson,

6. There are strong predictions of more frequent and more severe droughts in some of the most vulnerable countries of the world, particularly in Africa and it is therefore important that we develop mechanisms that would effectively address drought risk reduction. The impacts of drought can be reduced through the implementation of both drought adaptation and drought mitigation strategies and measures to improve preparedness. We emphasize the need for a wide range of risk management techniques including improved monitoring and early warning systems.

7. The Group supports the efforts undertaken by the UNCCD incorporating drought risk reduction strategies in its plan of action, but more needs to be done. There are a wide range of unfulfilled commitments under UNCCD, particularly in the provision of adequate, timely, predictable resources and cost effective, proven and appropriate technologies to developing countries to reverse and prevent land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.

8. As the devastating consequences of drought are likely to worsen under the increase of climate change, therefore international cooperation in the area of scientific research also needs to be promoted in order to address this challenge.

9. Though the SG's report shows that considerable progress has been made in the area of drought monitoring, mitigation and preparedness policies and practices, it is worth noting that more pro- active risk based management approaches allowing for better drought monitoring, prediction and adaptation should be developed at both national and regional levels.

Madam Chairperson,

10. As we had mentioned, the means of implementation remain the area which must be the focus of the policy session. We call upon developed countries to assist developing countries in the areas of capacity building, technology transfer, ODA, and the support of R and D. Indeed policies towards critical areas such as drought risk management require the building of capacity in order to assist in putting in place competent institutions and informed constituency that could best handle pre drought mitigation and preparedness actions. International assistance is also required to introduce climate resilient crops which would have great tolerant to stresses of drought.

Madam Chairperson,

11. The Group would like to reiterate that policies related to drought should be integrated into national, regional and global sustainable development strategies and plans, and it is crucial that adequate support should be given to developing countries in this endeavour.

12. Investment in early warning systems, as well as networks and control systems and enhanced international, regional and interregional planning is essential because early response interventions and measures are key to the prevention of severe periods of drought, which is often a precursor to desertification.

13. The Group would also like to highlight the value of traditional knowledge and practices, such as traditional methods of water management and conservation, rainwater catchments and storage; these are relevant and enrich the efforts by the developing countries to manage their drought periods.

Madam Chairperson,

14. In conclusion, the Group calls upon developed countries to fulfill their obligations under the UNFCCC because climate variations exacerbate drought cycles which lead to devastating effects on development. We also call for greater efforts to reduce the vulnerability of the agriculture sector to climate variations and extreme weather events, in accordance to the JPOI, and the need for accurate and updated climate and meteorological information so as to improve our understanding of long term climate variability and thus, improve the developing countries' plans for drought mitigation. It is our hope that this meeting will eventually culminate in a successful CSD 17 and it is our responsibility to make this preparatory meeting a success.

Thank you for your attention

