



**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 DURING
THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT: DESERTIFICATION
(New York, 26 February 2009)**

Madame Chair:

Excellencies:

Distinguished delegates:

Ladies and gentlemen:

1. It is my pleasure and great personal privilege to deliver this statement on behalf of Group of 77 and China on the theme of desertification during the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting of CSD-17 in New York.
2. The Group of 77 and China reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on desertification with great interest. We agree with the Secretary General that desertification is a serious issue with implications on poverty eradication, socio-economic stability and sustainable development. We share the Secretary General's concern that poor people living in areas under desertification are facing multiple challenges including that of income loss, food insecurity, weakening health, insecure land tenure systems, access rights to natural resources, and lack of access to markets.

Madame Chair;

3. The Group agrees with the Secretary General in stressing the inter linkages between desertification and the other clusters which must be addressed in an integrated manner, especially when devising policy options.
4. Deserts cover one third of the lands on Earth. Desertification and land degradation continue to affect adversely agricultural activities, rural and urban development, land use, water resources, and the efforts for eradication of poverty and hunger and promotion of health and well-being in desert and adjacent arrears. We, therefore, believe that desertification and land degradation are global and multi-dimensional challenges. They require global coordination and coordinated response by all member states, and any failure in this regard will undermine the global endeavors to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.
5. The Group stresses that poverty eradication remains a global priority and an overarching objective of sustainable development and that it would not be achieved unless sustainable agriculture and rural development were realized and efforts to combat drought and desertification were scaled up through changing production and consumption patterns and reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

6. The Group acknowledges that desertification which poses serious threats to the achievement of sustainable development and to the eradication of poverty and hunger is a global problem that requires a global response through concerted efforts among all member states and concerned stakeholders. The Group calls on all relevant UN agencies that deal with issues related to desertification, drought and land degradation to cooperate under the aegis of the UNCCD in order to provide a holistic and integrated response to the threats to sustainable development posed by these issues.

Madame Chair,

7. The increased frequency and severity of droughts resulting from projected climate change is likely to further exacerbate desertification. In this regards, the group recognizes that combating land degradation and desertification has implications for addressing critical issues of global interest, such as natural disasters and climate change.

8. The group reiterate the need for enhanced cooperation among the UNCCD, UNFCCC, and the CBD (the three Rio Conventions) while respecting their individual mandates, concerned by the negative impacts that desertification, land degradation, loss of biodiversity and climate change have on each other, and recognizing the potential benefits of complementarities in addressing these problems in a mutually supportive manner and synergic approach.

9. The group underline that the acquisition, transfer and development of modern technology, capacity building and the promotion of traditional knowledge to improve land and water management policies are essential to reverse land degradation and its consequences. Improving soil and water use can positively impact land productivity and the resilience of farming systems. Much greater attention to desertification and land degradation by the global community is needed. This includes, inter alia, supporting the establishment and development of information centers specialized in the monitoring and combating of desertification, particularly in affected developing countries, and providing assistance to these countries to facilitate the incorporation of strategies and priorities to combat desertification into their national sustainable development policies. Greater investment by donors and development banks and greater cooperation among UN agencies and the Rio Conventions is needed to promote sustainable land and water management.

Madame Chair,

10. We emphasize also the potential of the UNCCD to contribute to addressing food security, particularly by protecting land from becoming degraded, we pledge our commitment to implementing the Ten Year Strategy and Framework and call on donors to enhance financial support for UNCCD, including its fourth strategic objective, and further call for substantial, additional resources for the land degradation focal area during the fifth replenish period of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

11. The Group calls on all relevant UN agencies that deal with issues related to desertification, drought and land degradation to promote their activities and cooperate under the aegis of the UNCCD in order to provide a holistic and integrated response to the threats to sustainable development posed by these issues.

12. We emphasize also the need for adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources, technology transfer and political will, as well as commitment to innovative ways

of applying energy efficient, environmentally sound, cost-effective and socially acceptable technologies and systems.

13. The Group acknowledges the role being played by the GEF in assisting countries in their efforts not only to combat desertification but also to reclaim degraded land.

14. The Group emphasizes its support to the Ten-Year Strategy, and which the Group believes can constitute a strong base for global cooperative efforts to combat desertification and land degradation. Indeed the adoption of the Strategy, the Group believes, has also created a new momentum and has served as a new bridge between Parties to the Convention. In this regard, the Group also commends the Executive Secretary of the Convention for his efforts to continue the administrative renewal, reform and streamlining of the functions of the secretariat in order to fully implement the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and bring them into line with the Convention's ten-year strategic.

15. Last but not least, the Group hopes that the CSD-17 will pay adequate attention to the theme of desertification and setting policies in this regard by inclusion of the elements in this statement in the draft of Chair's negotiating text.

Thank you

