



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY AMBASSADOR ISHTIAQ ANDRABI OF ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN IN THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (CRIC-5) (Buenos Aires, 12 March 2007)**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my pleasure and great personal privilege to make this contribution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the UNCCD (CRIC-5).

I would like to take this opportunity to convey our profound gratitude to the Government and people of Argentina for hosting this important meeting and for their welcome and generous hospitality.

I would like to commend you, Mr. Chairman, for successfully leading the process.

I would also like to pay tribute to Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, the Executive Secretary of the Convention for his efforts to further the objective of combating desertification and land degradation.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Desertification and land degradation continue to pose a serious threat to sustainable development at national, regional, and global levels due to such factors as; overgrazing, deforestation, and overexploitation of land due to demographic pressure, compounded with climate change, which are turning our fertile soil into unproductive and barren patches of land. Our efforts to combating desertification particularly in large areas bring encouraging results at global level. In view of this, efforts should be made by the international community to adequately bear the incremental costs of combating desertification.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) occupies a prominent place in the global environmental framework from the developing countries' perspective on account of its emphasis on the promotion of sustainable development and fight against poverty, in the context of addressing desertification issues as are recognized in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation also.

The strength of the UNCCD accrues from the need to address the problem of desertification at universal level. We are encouraged by the decision of COP-5 to make CRIC a subsidiary body of UNCCD aimed at assessing the implementation of the Convention. This session of the Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-5) provides us an opportunity to assess the progress made in implementing the Convention in non-African country Parties. We stand ready to review and evaluate the implementation of our commitments as well as to find ways to solve the global problem of combating desertification through full implementation of this Convention. We will also be considering the 'Report on the status of celebration of International Year of Desertification'.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We are fully cognizant of the important issues highlighted in the implementation reports for this session which include; lack of adequate and sufficient financial resources for capacity building and on-ground project implementation, lack of human resources and institutional weaknesses in the government sectors.

While we recognize the allocation of funds for the focal area of land degradation in the fourth replenishment of the GEF, however, we have noted that the envelope of allocated funds of 300 million US dollars do not commensurate with the funds needed for combating desertification and land degradation. In this regard, we reiterate our invitation to the Facility to strengthen the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, and invite the donors and Council of the Facility to allocate more financial resources to this focal area in the next replenishment.

It is our view that any investment in land degradation activities would help us preparing our countries for better mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Both CRIC and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), we believe, play an important role in the implementation of the Convention. We are, therefore, hopeful that with the help and support of all Parties, it can make an important contribution in improving the delivery of services that we all need and appreciate greatly. In the context of climate change, policy advocacy under UNCCD and resources for measures addressing the threats to the most vulnerable ecosystems and communities are perhaps more urgently needed now than ever before.

A strengthened Secretariat with improved coordination within and with other key players and stakeholders including GEF and the Global Mechanism can play an important and pivotal role in this regard.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The establishment of inter-sessional intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG) through decision 3/COP.7 is an important step to enhance the implementation of the Convention by developing a Ten-year Strategic Plan. We will carefully examine and analyze the first draft presented by the Working Group during the course of this session. We hope that the work of the IIWG will contribute to laying the foundations of a new phase for the work of the Convention.

We also attach great importance to the formulation of a strategy to promote the mobilization of adequate, timely and predictable financial resources, including new and additional funding from the GEF, a concern that was consistently raised by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations in its report.

In order to achieve the goals of poverty eradication as well as sustainable development, the Convention must be fully implemented through increased cooperation and through the provision of adequate financial, technical and technological resources to affected country Parties, particularly developing countries for carrying out priority activities identified in the national action programs (NAPs).

We therefore call upon developed countries to fulfill their obligations in supporting the implementation of the UNCCD and also urge multilateral financial institutions to facilitate access to the funds required to effectively combat desertification.

It is imperative to strengthen North-South, South-South as well as triangular cooperation, with the aim of enabling the developing countries to develop capacities for the implementation of the UNCCD.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We also need to strive for results oriented efforts in order to mitigate the risks of desertification and serious droughts, poor land management, as well as the land degradation caused by impact of climate change and loss of biodiversity. There is an urgent need for strategic guidance and targets in order to foster the implementation of the Convention.

We stand ready to support you, Mr. Chairman, in ensuring that this session delivers concrete results.

I thank you.