

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY KATINDA E. KAMANDO, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE RESUMED SESSION OF THE 10TH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA (INCD)

Geneva, 22 August 1997

Mr. Chairman,

It is a singular honour for me to take this opportunity on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to make a few closing remarks as we are coming to the close of the resumed session of the 10th INCD which is actually the last meeting of the INCD process.

Indeed, we have come a long way in these negotiations which have taken more than four years. The amount of effort put into the INCD process by various delegations is a clear testimony of the importance we attach to the convention. Furthermore, the relevance of this convention, is evidenced by the impressive number of 108 countries which have so far ratified the convention, as well as various initiatives of implementing the convention.

Mr. Chairman,

In the same vein, progress has been achieved at sub regional and regional levels with active participation by affected countries and with the support of the bilateral and multilateral donors and UN agencies. In this regard, I would like, on behalf of the Group to commend those donor countries and agencies who have increased support aimed at addressing the scourge of desertification and drought.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the achievement made so far in preparing for the COP-1, there are pending issues which we could not finalize during the INCD process. Issues such as the housing of the Global Mechanism, the country to host the Permanent Secretariat, the programme budget and to some extent, the nominees for the bureau of the 1st COP are among those to be finalized in Rome.

Mr. Chairman,

While we have been able to put up a decision on arrangements to house, host or co-host the Global Mechanism, problems still prevail on its functions. Furthermore, even though the outstanding paragraphs particularly para 4(b) (d) and (e) have not been agreed, it is our view that all parties have a better understanding now of what the obstacles are, of what is expected, and how to move forward in Rome.

Mr. Chairman,

In the course of the resumed session, the Executive Secretary of the Interim Secretariat has communicated on the status of the various preparations that have been undertaken to ensure a successful 1st session of the COP. At this juncture we are pleased to note the ongoing preparations and on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the host country, Italy, and to all those countries and organizations whose contribution have facilitated the participation of the developing countries and NGOs in our meetings.

Mr. Chairman,

If this committee has been successful in its work, it is due in large part to your able leadership, and we wish to thank you for your tireless efforts and skills in steering the affairs of this committee to a successful end. We also express sincere appreciation to the Executive Secretary and the Interim Secretariat for their good work without which we could not have achieved the objectives of the Committee.

May I also express our thanks to all our partners and representatives of other regional groups who have collaborated with us in the elaboration of the convention. We have sometimes had tense and difficult moments in our negotiations, but in the midst of it all, we have been able to co-operate and reach consensus on many issues and we are grateful to them for their co-operation. It is our hope that this spirit of co-operation will continue into COP-1, and will enable us to achieve satisfactory results on all outstanding issues.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to meeting again in Rome, and to a particularly successful session, despite the difficult outstanding issues. It is our hope that together, we shall, through COP-1 and future meetings, achieve the important goals of the convention to combat desertification and drought. I wish you a Bon Voyage and I look forward to see you in Rome.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.