



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. ANDRÉS CORDOVA, SECOND SECRETARY OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ECUADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE CLOSING PLENARY OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (Ordos, China, 15 September 2017)

Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

As we close this COP13 session, the Group expresses its appreciation and congratulations to China, one of our members, for having successfully hosted this Conference. All of us have experienced the genuine human qualities and hospitality from the Inner Mongolian people. The Group wishes also to thank the Executive Secretary and her staff for assisting both in producing reports and acting as our institutional memory keeper, attending our information and clarification needs.

Mr. President,

In the past days we have recalled that there is an urgent need for concrete and prompt actions to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, reduce inequalities within and among countries, and generate opportunities for sustainable development for all in harmony with nature.

During this COP we have made progress discussing and taking action on several aspects related to the global challenges of desertification, land degradation and drought. We welcome the interaction with all the international community and encourage effective partnerships and synergies, including between the three Rio Conventions.

The Group stands ready to address challenges ahead for the sustainable development of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. We are pleased that land issues are reaching a higher momentum as recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We acknowledge the work undertaken by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD as a valuable platform to foster investments on programs and projects within the scope of this Convention. The Group welcomes the adoption of the new Strategic Framework which timeframe coincides with that of the 2030 Agenda; we are pleased with its objective to deal specifically with drought; and we look forward to strengthening linkages between the indicators used for the strategic framework of the Convention and those used in the LDN initiative.

The Group commends Brazil, India and Liberia, three of the members of our Group, for voluntarily committing during this COP to the Land Degradation Neutrality target-setting program, raising the number to 113 Parties involved in an initiative that has evolved from a concept to a reality. We stress once more the importance of the programs linkages with the execution and implementation of National Action Plans.

We welcome the official launch of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund during this COP and emphasize the importance of having concrete discussions on the consideration of the aspects, programs and projects of this fund before the provision of funding. We stress that important

challenges still remain since land degradation neutrality requires new, additional and substantive financial resources.

Mr. President,

The Group recognizes the three Ministerial round tables held during the high-level segment as a valuable setting for the exchange of knowledge and experiences. Desertification, Land degradation and Drought are challenges to sustainable development which will always need political will and engagement. The Group is preoccupied by the severity, the scope and the frequency of droughts, sand and dust storms, and calls for innovative and proactive measures taking into account different realities at the national and regional level. We recall that the achievement of the SDG's and targets, including Goal 15 and target 15.3, would serve as an accelerator to ending poverty and hunger, tackling inequality, empowering women and stimulating economic growth.

We also emphasize the importance of involving local communities in the processes taken at national level to combat land degradation as well as the need to further enhance the development of better policies to increase the exchange of good practices and following participatory approaches including by a strong scientific basis, the participation of the private sector and civil society, and a collaborative engagement of early warning systems.

We look forward to the 2018 High Level Political Forum where Sustainable Development Objective 15 and target 15.3, will be reviewed, as we see it as an opportunity to share experiences and inspire others regarding advances related with the implementation of the UNCCD.

The Group believes that the outcomes of this COP should be taken for consideration of the work undertaken by the UN General Assembly which opens its general debate early next week. We, as the Group of 77 and China, will also take on board issues related to DLDD at our upcoming Ministerial Meeting to be held in New York next week.

Mr. President,

The G77 and China is committed to the implementation of the decisions adopted at this 13th Session of the COP, and we are hopeful that the Ordos Ministerial Declaration will further enhance international commitment and cooperation.

As we head back to our homes, let us continue to join efforts during the inter-sessional period to take concrete and effective actions to address the global challenges of desertification, land degradation and drought, so we can ensure the wellbeing of our peoples and the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Thank you.