



**STATEMENT BY MS. CHERRYL GORDON, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF SEVENTY-SEVEN AND CHINA TO THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (Bonn, 3 May 2005)**

(VERBATIM)

Mr. Chairman  
Mr. Executive Secretary  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, allow me at the outset, to express sincere appreciation to the host country Germany, for providing these wonderful facilities for the convening of this third session of the Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC).

Let me pause to convey the full recognition of the Group of 77 and China of the work being undertaken by the Executive Secretary and Staff of the UNCCD Secretariat and at the same time congratulate Ambassador Diallo on his re-appointment.

The Group also wants to welcome to the UNCCD family, Mr. Christian Mersmann, the newly appointed Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, and pledges to support him in his important task.

Mr. Chairman,

With the establishment of this Committee, we have been given an opportunity to examine more in depth the process of implementation of the UNCCD.

From observations and reports, it is clear that there have definitely been greater efforts by affected Parties to ensure compliance with meeting the goals of this Convention.

We are now into CRIC 3, and the G-77 and China looks forward to this current review exercise, in the clear recognition that the viability of the CRIC process has been clearly demonstrated.

Mr. Chairman,

The UNCCD has been recognised by the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a major international instrument to contribute to the eradication of poverty. It is our firm belief that its timely and effective implementation would easily help to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

The G-77 and China welcomes the decision by the international community to increase the allocation of resources to the Convention, including through the establishment of an Operational Programme developed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as well as through the Monterrey Consensus. The Group will take these elements into account when we come to review the CRIC process at COP 7 later this year.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group is pleased that the GEF is now a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, and that the Council of the GEF has opened a new window to fund its implementation. We look forward to the presentation, to the COP 7, of the Memorandum of Understanding between the GEF Council and the UNCCD that will formalise the collaboration between the two institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

It has been ten years since the coming into force of this Convention, and we have made some progress, although the road has not been an easy one. We have seen some improvements, and the establishment of Operational Programme 15 is a very important step in this regard.

However, in all of this, we still need to address some significant issues, in particular, that of funding, as well as the

actualisation of the commitments on technology transfer.

Mr. Chairman,

There are challenges here - serious challenges - but we firmly believe that together we have the ability to overcome them. Irrespective of the difficulties that we have had, Mr. Chairman, the Group of 77 and China believes that we have to work together if we are to achieve success in combating land degradation.

Critical to this process is the need to redress the fact that the levels of funding to this Convention have been lower than those earmarked for the other two 'Rio Conventions'.

Mr. Chairman,

The UNCCD was adopted to provide a mechanism and a forum for co-operation between those with a concern for the issue of desertification and drought. It has brought together those who need help and those who can help.

It is our genuine conviction that we need to return to the spirit and letter of the Convention, and make every effort to implement its objectives and goals in accordance with that spirit and that letter.

The G-77 and China is convinced that we all mean well. That is why we are Parties to this Convention.

The Group is especially convinced that all the good that we intend, can be achieved once we act with well-meaning and genuine commitment as our basic principles.

Mr. Chairman,

The General Assembly has provided us all with a chance; a new opportunity to put this goodwill into practice on a universal scale, with the declaration of the year 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

This CRIC is the first major activity under the auspices of this Convention since that declaration. It is therefore incumbent upon us all to begin to prepare ourselves to make full use of the year and the opportunities that will become available from having Desertification under the international spotlight.

We in the G-77 and China are fully conscious of our own obligations as regards this Convention and the peoples in whose names we come to these meetings.

We are aware that much more needs to be done from all sides; that there is a need for renewed commitment.

The countries of the G-77 and China are therefore determined to continue to ensure the democratization of the implementation process at the national level as we, through this CRIC process, have become more conscious of the necessity for universal stakeholder participation.

In the same way Mr. Chairman, we look forward to seeing this democratization demonstrated at the international level, particularly as regards the realization of OP 15 under the GEF, for it is crucial that this process be driven by a bottom-up approach, so that the countries determine when, how and why, these resources are spent. Consequent upon the replenishment of OP 15, it is the expectation of the G-77 and China that these resources be appropriated in accordance to needs identified by the countries concerned.

The Group is encouraged by the recent involvement of the GEF in providing catalytic funding, which bears genuine hopes in our respective countries in the strengthening of the implementation of the Convention. The Group appreciates the work already performed by the GEF and its implementing Agencies in this respect. In this regard, the Group supports fully UNDP in the implementation of the Targeted Umbrella Project for SIDS and LDCs as well as TerrAfrica supported by the World Bank.

The Group of 77 and China looks forward to the assistance of the GEF in the preparation of national reports from the Asian and Latin American and Caribbean regions, in time for their submission to the CRIC.5 in 2006. In this regard, and building upon the positive experience gained in funding the preparation of reports from African countries, the G-77 and China invites the implementing agencies of the GEF, in particular the World Bank, to assist in developing similar projects in the countries of Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In order to demonstrate genuine commitment to this endeavour, the Group would appeal to the GEF and its implementing agencies to work with the countries concerned to ease the bureaucracy and avoid additional conditionalities involved in accessing the funding necessary to realise these and future projects.

