

**Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China by Mrs. Brenda Pangrazi, Chargé d' Affaires a.i., Embassy of the Argentine Republic, at the Fifteenth Session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (Nairobi, 18 October 2016)**

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Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the outset, allow me to express the Group's deep appreciation to Kenya for hosting this important meeting and to the UN Office in Nairobi for availing these superb facilities.
3. We would also like to commend the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) for her able leadership in steering the international efforts to combat the scourges of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD).

Mr. Chairman,

4. As you know, the Group of 77 and China have been the cradle for this Convention born at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Since its inception to today, the world has changed tremendously. The international community is now fully cognizant that without addressing DLDD issues, it will be impossible to achieve sustainable development. This is what our leaders meant when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through which they committed to combat desertification, drought and floods, and to strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world by 2030.
5. The Group are pleased that DLDD issues are now part and parcel of the SDGs. As stated in Ankara at UNCCD COP12 last year, the Group welcomed this milestone. The Group would like to reiterate what it said last year: striving to achieve SDG target 15.3 is a strong vehicle for driving implementation of the UNCCD, within the scope of the Convention. In this respect, the Group welcome efforts made by the secretariat in the context of laying the ground for the implementation of the sustainable development target 15.3. With over 100 countries subscribing to the land degradation neutrality target setting project, the Group are confident that we are on the right trajectory as we plan a review of this project in 2018. We therefore encourage remaining countries, as appropriate and according to their national priorities, to set land degradation neutrality voluntary targets and invite donors and international organisations, including UN entities as well as international financial institutions, regional banks including the private sector to provide funding to the implementation of the Convention, including this project.
6. The Group also appreciate that the secretariat of the Convention has already taken required action in leading and coordinating two global partnership processes relevant to that target, namely the national level voluntary target setting programme aimed at assisting countries in translating and implementing this global target at the national level to be coordinated with the national Governments and taking into account their national priorities and an inter-agency advisory group FAO, CBD, UNFCCC, UNEP and UNSD created to develop the methodology and data options for monitoring SDG indicator 15.3.1 aimed to be a contribution to the work of the IAEG-SDGs indicators. We look forward to the strengthening of this kind of partnership thus contributing to the integrated approach in the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Recurrent, frequent and more droughts planned to strike, impede sustainable development efforts of our countries. Drought is one of the most economically disruptive of all extreme weather events, especially in the most vulnerable countries. It bears a heavy cost on our countries' economies, including the most developed of them and entrenches poverty and hunger. For instance, the 1999-2000 droughts in Kenya, one of the worst in the country's history, led to a 1.4 percent fall in GDP and a 2.2 percent rise in inflation.

8. Droughts have a disproportionate impact on the poor, especially women and children. Reductions in income or consumption caused by drought frequently have negative knock-on effects on other aspects of human welfare and development. In countries where the socio-economic status of women is low, drought disasters can intensify existing patterns of discrimination that make women more vulnerable.

9. We recognize that the traditional approach of "responding" to drought is not viable any more. It has proved to be ineffective far too often. The Group of 77 and China are pleased that one of its members, Namibia, has recently hosted last in Windhoek the African Drought Conference. The Group welcome its outcome especially the common strategic framework for Drought Resilient and Prepared Africa (DRAPA) and the Windhoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Drought in Africa based on the outcome of the recently held African Drought Conference. The Group also supports the approach put forward by the Executive Secretary of UNCCD at that Conference calling on countries and partners to proactively address the main pillars of drought preparedness and planning, namely: drought monitoring and early warning, vulnerability assessment and drought risk mitigation measures. The same can apply to dust storms and sand storm. The Group therefore echoes the call by the General Assembly affirming the need for cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, forecasting and early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as to dust storms and sandstorms, at the global, regional and sub-regional levels, and in this regard invites States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems.

10. In closing, the Group of 77 and China wish to reiterate the importance of the reviewing exercise through the CRIC process. The Group are encouraged by the work undertaken by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the future strategic framework of the Convention (IWG-FSF). The Group are of a belief that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will heavily impact the future strategic framework under the Convention and its implementation.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.