



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. FARHAT AYESHA 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) ON THE THEMATIC TOPIC 5: MEASURES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF DEGRADED LAND AND FOR EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT (Buenos Aires, 15 March 2007)

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

It is my pleasure to thank the Panelists on behalf of Group of 77 and China for their succinct and useful presentations. The keen insights and perspectives provided by distinguished Panelists would indeed enrich our deliberations during this session.

The Group of 77 & China is convinced of the importance of addressing the thematic topic of “Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought” in the context of combating desertification.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development recognized the three overarching objectives of sustainable development as: protecting natural resources, eradicating poverty, and changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns. It is in this context, and while reaffirming the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development, that we call for policies and actions that will enable the developing countries to bridge the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor.

The rehabilitation of degraded land and adoption of measures for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought are critical in achieving the goals of sustainable development, poverty eradication and achieving the MDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to meet the challenges that we face in the thematic area of “Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought”, Group of 77 and China suggests the following recommendations to be endorsed by CRIC-5:

First, while recognizing the land degradation as a cross-cutting issue, we encourage addressing the areas identified in the Bonn Declaration to be multi-sectoral, and multi-disciplinary in nature.

Second, as difficulties are encountered in data gathering and management, and information sharing at national levels, it is suggested that the UNCCD Secretariat may identify options available through international institutions to facilitate provision of information technology to the affected country Parties.

Third, there is need to promote sustainable agricultural practices, through strengthening existing national legislative framework, and the development of the capacity of institutions to implement these measures.

Fourth, a spectrum of initiatives should be aimed at promoting sustainable use and management of rangelands including, among others, the promotion of secure livelihoods in the pastoral livestock sector, support through research programmes in effective stock breeding of pasture animals and the balanced offering of incentives and disincentives aimed at reducing the number of herders in pasturelands.

Fifth, there is need for identification of the major aspects of land degradation arising in the various eco-geographical zones and measuring their severity in order to find appropriate solutions. This could be done by developing natural resource management information system though combining the traditional knowledge of local communities with the new technology as well as a comprehensive participatory monitoring and evaluation system.

Sixth, the view of participatory natural resources management is a key solution to prevent land degradation. In this regard promoting the customary land tenures of local community, strengthening and legalizing their traditional institutions as well as facilitating their access to financial resources are recommended.

Seventh, in order to reduce the pressure on forest resources, as a main domestic energy source for the greater part of the population of the affected region, emphasis on the development of new and renewable energy sources such as bio-fuels, and private sector investments in these areas is also recommended.

Eighth, in order to rehabilitate land degradation, priority should be given to preventive policies and activities in the areas of agriculture and forestry, land tenure and promotion of agricultural trade, to designing specific project initiatives that directly address agriculture, forestry and rangeland issues.

Ninth, in order to promote sustainable agricultural practices, there is need to build the capacity as well as strengthen the existing institutions at the national level.

Lastly, but most importantly, developed country Parties should fulfill their obligations under UNCCD and provide adequate, timely, predictable resources and cost effective, proven, and appropriate technologies to developing countries to reverse and prevent land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought by establishing early warning systems.

Mr. Chairman,

Implementation remains the biggest challenge for development. Unfortunately, our declarations and commitments have not sufficiently translated into local action on the ground.

It is our hope that discussions during this session and the Report of the CRIC-5 will finally lead to the implementation of policy options. We are willing to approach the CRIC-5, with a view to find sustainable solutions to the development challenges that we continue to face.

I thank you.