



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY THE DELEGATION OF SOUTH AFRICA DURING CLOSING PLENARY OF TWELFTH SESSION OF THE THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (Ankara, Turkey, 23 October 2015)

Mr President,

It is our privilege as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, to, on behalf of the Group, express our sincere appreciation to our generous hosts, the Government and People of Turkey, for hosting this Conference of the Parties in such a warm and efficient manner.

Collectively, the 134 Members of the Group constitute over 80% of the world's population. COP12 took place at an auspicious moment in the history of our world, with the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the important target 15.3 on the challenges of desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD). Our members all share the common feature of facing pressing socio-economic challenges and acute vulnerability to these challenges.

For its part, the Group of 77 and China is fully committed to the implementation of the important decisions adopted at this 12th Session of the COP here in Ankara. We can do this only with the continued support from our developed country partners. The Group is satisfied that the outcomes of this COP, including the Ankara Initiative and the Ankara Ministerial Declaration, will further enhance international cooperation and collaboration, under the Convention, to ensure better livelihoods for populations and communities in affected areas and improve the conditions of ecosystems.

We also welcome all the many and diverse engagements with Civil Society and other international organizations during this COP, which can only contribute to this global collaboration.

Mr President,

Our appreciation also to the Executive Secretary and her secretariat for assisting Parties to conclude another successful COP of this Convention. Our thanks also to all the interpreters and local support staff for their dedication and professional assistance.

We wish all participants a safe journey home and all of the best with their work during the inter-sessional period.

I thank you.