STATEMENT

BY

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AGENDA ITEM 19: “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SUB-ITEMS (A) TO (J)”

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Mr Chairman,

Namibia aligns itself with remarks made by Fiji on behalf of the G 77 and China and Ethiopia on behalf of African Countries and we also wish to express our appreciation for the Secretary General’s various reports under this agenda item. Namibia welcomes the opportunity to make a few national comments.

Achieving more sustainable and balanced global growth will require close coordination of macroeconomic policy decisions with other areas of global governance, including those related to the multilateral trading system; aid architecture; poverty eradication and sustainable development, including climate change. A strengthened United Nations framework for enhancing coordination should be at the centre of efforts to bridge this gap, building consensus on efficient and effective solutions for global economic, social and environmental issues.

There is no doubt that climate change is one of the most serious global challenges we face as mankind. In this regard, it is important to highlight that developing countries, particularly in Africa continue to suffer the most from the adverse impacts of climate change.

It is for this reason that the protection of the environment and the prudent utilisation of our natural resources, are enshrined in our Supreme Law, the
Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. Article 95 of our national constitution obliges the state, to actively promote the welfare of the people by adopting policies that are aimed at the maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity of Namibia.

The state is also obliged to utilize the living natural resources of the country in a sustainable manner for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future. This has laid the foundation for integrating sustainability in our development plans and policy making processes. Namibia has also identified climate change adaptation as a priority for action in our current medium-term Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4).

Mr Chairman,

Namibia welcomes the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable development which replaces the Commission on Sustainable Development. The lessons learned from the Commission of Sustainable Development should be the starting point for giving shape and content to the High-level Political Forum. Namibia believes that the Forum should provide a leadership role to complement the functions and roles of UN bodies, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in the field of sustainable development and contribute to the enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels.
The Forum should also implement the Rio+20 mandates and follow-up on the fulfillment of commitments, especially those related to the means of implementation: finance, technology and capacity building and address sustainable development challenges with poverty eradication as its overarching objective.

Mr Chairman,

Climate change is a global problem and requires a global response from all of us, both in the developed and developing world. Africa has been singled out for being the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We therefore have to attach great importance to the multilateral platforms, where these issues particularly under the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC, are discussed. As such, we have to ensure that Africa becomes one of the active members in the UNFCCC negotiation process.

The government of Namibia has identified land degradation as a serious problem which demands remedial intervention and has recognised that integrated sustainable land management strategies are needed, to effectively address the underlying causes.

As approximately 70% of Namibia’s population is directly dependent on subsistence agriculture and livestock husbandry, therefore, land degradation poses an acute challenge to livelihoods. As a result, Namibia
has taken a proactive approach to combating desertification since the 1990s, and has been implementing activities on the ground since then. Various attempts have been implemented to halt, and reverse, desertification in the context of the United Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in the form of Government’s establishment of a programme and strategic framework for action known as Namibia’s Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCOD).

Another follow up programme, the Country Pilot Partnership for Integrated Sustainable Land Management (CPP-ISLM) was launched in 2007 to be the umbrella of Land Degradation reversal in Namibia. As a partnership of 9 ministries, developmental partners, civil society and the private sector in Namibia, the Programme’s overall goal was to combat land degradation using integrated cross-sectorial approaches to achieve MDG #7, environmental sustainability.

In addition, there are other ongoing initiatives underway by the government through international cooperation and multi-lateral environmental programmes which include the integration of desertification and land degradation into Vision 2030 and the 5-year National Development Plans.

The CPP served as Namibia’s second strategy and action plan to implement the UNCCD’s 10-year (2008-2018) Strategic Plan and Framework. The Plan embraces the outcomes on Land Degradation from the Rio+20
Conference in particular to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality and to ensure Zero Net Land Degradation by 2030. Namibia commits with this Action Plan to achieve land degradation neutrality as a prerequisite for assuring water, food and energy security, alleviating poverty and to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Namibia recently hosted the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification 11th Conference of the Parties (UNCCD COP11) in Windhoek, from the 16-27 September 2013. In this regard, I wish to thank all Member States for their rich contributions and for the good spirit in which negotiations were carried out during COP which was held with a view towards “A Stronger UNCCD for a land degradation neutral world”.

Namibia applauds all Parties for moving towards the establishment of a science policy interface at COP11, which will help facilitate a much needed two way science-policy dialogue. Similarly, the collocation of the GM in Bonn will enhance cooperation and coordination and bring about a more efficient use of the Convention’s resources. It is our collective responsibility to ensure delivery of better service to the Parties through the GM to help us address the substantive matters facing the Convention.

Namibia is encouraged by the positive actions that are being undertaken around the world to reverse land degradation and to increase the resilience of communities to drought. These are signs that the UNCCD
is having an impact on-the-ground and we must strengthen our partnerships and coordination to upscale these interventions.

Desertification, land degradation and drought should remain an important component of the United Nations development agenda. Now as we elaborate on the post-2015 development agenda and the formulation of sustainable development goals, we should ensure that desertification, land degradation is fully mainstreamed into the emerging new development agenda.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me also to inform this august house that on 5th September 2013, the Permanent Representatives of Namibia and Iceland to the United Nations including other 16 Member States, launched the Group of Friends on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) here in New York. The Group’s main objective is to act as an informal interest group and forum for informal discussions, with the aim to maintain the momentum generated by Rio+20, around desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of Post-2015 development agenda, and also to draw the attention of Member States to the importance of having a sustainable development goal (SDG) on DLDD in the set of goals in the new emerging development framework in 2015.

On behalf of the the Group of Friends on Desertification,
Land Degradation and Drought, I wish to extend an invitation to all Member States who wish to join the group to do so in the spirit of sharing experiences and maintain momentum of the importance of desertification, land degradation and drought.

Mr Chairman,

Namibia also welcomes the appointment of the new Executive Secretary of UNCCD, Ms Monique Barbut and pays tribute to the outgoing Executive Secretary, Mr Luke Gnacadja for his exceptional role and dedication in advancing the cause of the convention during his tenure of office.

In conclusion, Namibia looks forward to the up-coming COP 19 Conference in Warsaw, Poland, from 11-22 November 2013 and we stand ready to positively contribute to the deliberations.

I Thank You