STATEMENT
by the Delegation of Ukraine
on agenda item 19 of the 68th session of the UN General Assembly
«Sustainable development »

(5 November 2013, New York)

Madam Chair,

The delegation of Ukraine would like to join previous speakers in welcoming the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. This is an important step forward in implementation of the outcomes of major UN summits and conferences on sustainable development. In our view, this structure is well placed to provide better leadership and guidance for the sustainable development as well as improved responsiveness to new challenges. We believe that together with revitalized General Assembly and strengthened ECOSOC it will constitute the strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development.

The delegation of Ukraine would like to commend the work done so far by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on sustainable development financing. We stress the need for coherence and coordination between these processes and for timely and productive completion of their work.

For its part, Ukraine has been actively engaged in formulating the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, particularly through conducting national consultations on these issues. This year we also reviewed the progress made by Ukraine towards MDGs and prepared the third national report which was presented to large public in September during high-level events in UN headquarters.

Madam Chair,

In our view, UN Convention to Combat Desertification should play a key role in implementing our Rio+20 commitments on sustainable land management. Achieving a land-degradation neutral world is vital for making progress on other issues, including water, energy, food security and eradication of extreme poverty.

The eleventh session of the UNCCD, recently held in Namibia, made a number of breakthroughs, particularly on mobilizing science for policy development, improving assessment of implementation of Convention, enhancing collaboration with the Global Environment Facility and other environmental instruments.

However, Ukraine takes this opportunity to emphasize that UNCCD activities should address all types of land-degradation and desertification in all parts of the world, not restricting only to some of them. Focusing on particular lands will divert us from achieving global goals towards land degradation neutrality, including those linked with climate change mitigation and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The imperative of the universal application of the Convention should guide the preparation of a new Strategy for the implementation of the Convention to 2018 as well as the activities of the Intergovernmental working group mandated to develop options to achieve land-degradation neutrality. We also wish to stress the importance of addressing the issue of balanced land management and combating land-degradation and desertification in our work on the Sustainable Development Goals.

For its part, Ukraine is committed to effective implementation of the UNCCD. An appropriate legal base was established to ensure the sustainable use of lands, including the
Land Code, laws on land protection, management and monitoring, land cadastre. A number of programs are being implemented at national and regional level to ensure protection and conservation of land, water and other natural resources. The Program to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation consistent with UNCCD is also scheduled to be put in place.

Turning to the issue of biological diversity, my delegation welcome ambitious decisions adopted by the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Hyderabad, particularly those on capacity-building and financial support for parties to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. I am pleased to note that many of the goals of the Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 on CBD implementation as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets have been integrated by Ukraine into National Plan of Action. In 2012 Ukraine also signed the Nagoya Protocol on Access to genetic Resources to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary protocol to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Improving social and economic conditions and ecological health in mountain areas plays crucial role in achieving sustainable development as a whole taking into account that mountains are home to an important part of the world’s population and provide essential goods and services to more than half of humankind. Despite welcome progress achieved in promoting sustainable mountain development at all levels, we would like to stress the need for further efforts to increase awareness on the importance of mountain ecosystems and communities which continue to be one of the world’s most vulnerable.

The Government of Ukraine is strongly committed to promoting sustainable mountain development. We were one of the initiators of development of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and protocols thereto. The implementation of the Carpathian Convention is successfully continuing. We note with satisfaction that the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Carpathian Convention took into effect last month. Concerted efforts are being made by the countries of the region to elaborate other protocols, particularly on transport and infrastructure as well as on the cultural heritage of the Carpathians.

Madam Chair,

Finally, I would like to say a few words about Ukraine’s efforts towards mainstreaming environmental dimension of sustainable development.

The Law of Ukraine entitled “Strategy of the State Environmental Policy up to 2020” provides a legal framework in the field of environmental protection and aims to adapt national environmental standards to European and international standards. It also prioritizes balanced approach to environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainable development.

Further to the Strategy, a National Plan of Action for Environmental Protection for 2011-2015 has been put in place. This document provides guidance on mainstreaming environment into relevant national policies and strategies.

I would also like to note that last October the President of Ukraine signed a Decree stipulating the measures to improve ecological monitoring, including the adoption of a relevant National program.

I thank you, Madam Chair.