

Oral Statement by the Secretariat in connection with draft
resolution A/C.2/65/L.65, entitled "Implementation of the
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those
Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification,
Particularly in Africa"

1. This oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

2. In operative paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 11(i), 11(v) and 11 (vi) of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would:

(a) "Decide to convene a one day high-level meeting on the theme: "Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication". The high level plenary meeting shall be held, on Tuesday 20 September 2011 prior to the General Debate of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly;

(b) Decide to hold the general debate at its sixty-sixth session from Wednesday 21 September 2011, on the understanding that these arrangements shall in no way create a precedent for the general debate at future sessions;

(c) Convinced that the high-level meeting should contribute to raising the awareness of desertification, land degradation and drought at highest level, reaffirm the fulfillment of all commitments to the UNCCD and its ten-year strategic plan (2008-2018), ensuring a higher priority of DLDD on the international agenda, and contribute to the preparation to the Rio plus 20 Summit;

(d) Decide that the meeting will be organized within existing resources and structured around an opening plenary meeting followed by one interactive panel in the morning, on the same theme as the high level meeting, followed by a second interactive panel in the afternoon, followed by a closing plenary;

(e) Request the Secretary-General to prepare a background paper for the high-level meeting, in consultation with Member States; the document will be available no later than June 2011; and

(f) Decide also that the meeting will be chaired by the President of the General Assembly who will present a summary of the discussions based on the report of the co-Chairs to be presented at the closing plenary and for transmission, under his authority, to the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held from 10 to 21 October 2011 in Changwon City, Gyeongnam Province, Republic of Korea, and to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)".

3. Pursuant to operative paragraph 10 of the draft resolution, it is the understanding of the secretariat that the general debate of the sixty-sixth

session of the General Assembly will run for eight working days in September 2010, i.e, on 21, 22, 23 (Wednesday to Friday) 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 September 2011 (Monday to Friday) and these arrangements shall in no way create a precedent for the general debate at future sessions.

4. Attention of the Second Committee is drawn to General Assembly resolution 57/301, in which the General Assembly decides to amend rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to read: "The General Assembly shall meet every year in regular session commencing on the Tuesday of the third week in September, counting from the first week that contains at least one working day"; (operative paragraph 1 of resolution 57/301) and also decides that the general debate in the General Assembly shall open on the Tuesday following the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly and shall be held without interruption over a period of nine working days (operative paragraph 2 of resolution 57/301).

5. Pursuant to operative paragraphs 9, 11, 11(i), 11(v) and 11 (vi) of the draft resolution, it is envisaged that the one day high-level meeting to be held on 20 September 2011, comprising an opening plenary meeting followed by one interactive panel in the morning and a second interactive panel in the afternoon, followed by a closing plenary, would use the entitlements of the General Assembly for two meetings from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. with interpretation services in all six official languages and verbatim records for the plenary portion of the high-level meeting, provided that there are no parallel meetings of the General Assembly during the same time period. Therefore, to service the high-level meeting would not require additional resources.

6. Further, it is estimated that documentation services are required to translate 2 documents totaling 9,500 words into all six official languages. Although resources amounting to \$59,100 would be required under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management to process these documents, the Secretariat will seek to identify areas from which resources can be redeployed to meet the requirements within the provisions approved under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management for the biennium 2010-2011.

7. Attention is also drawn to the provisions of section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, and reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The attention of the Second Committee is also drawn to paragraph 67 of the first report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, in which the Committee noted that the use of the phrase "within existing resources" or similar language in resolutions had a negative impact on the implementation of activities; therefore, efforts should be made to avoid the use of this phrase in resolutions and decisions.