

Thank you Madam Chair

The Science and Technology Community believes that climate change will play a critical role in future desertification. Climate change affects the atmospheric circulation patterns that are responsible for the global distribution of large deserts. It also affects local scale processes that accelerate land degradation such as unplanned migration of livestock and people, and the reduction of water resources in arid and semi-arid regions arising from the construction of dams and reservoirs and expanding water use in upstream areas.

The Science and Technology Community has developed models to assess the effects of climate change on drought and desertification. Also, it is expanding its capability to monitor land conditions and to disseminate this information freely on a worldwide basis. For example, as part of its efforts to strengthen services in vulnerable areas, the Group on Earth Observations is launching an African Water Initiative that will study droughts and desertification among other issues.

To address these issues, the Science and Technology Community believes that it is necessary to:

- 1) Integrate land and water considerations in its strategy for dealing with desertification.
- 2) Launch an interdisciplinary multi-scale study of deserts and vulnerable land degradation areas to understand their causes and the mechanisms that lead to their onset, expansion and mitigation of desertification processes with a view to more effectively targetting mitigation strategies,
- 3) Using the new elements of the Global Earth Observing System, develop an early warning system to identify areas where desertification has potential to begin or intensify.
- 4) Build partnerships among Science and Technology groups and regional policy, education and aid groups to develop appropriate technologies to reverse or mitigate desertification processes and their impacts.
- 5) Strengthen support for capacity building to ensure the benefits of scientific information and Earth observations are fully realized by those most affected by land degradation and desertification.

Thank you.