The 13th COP to the UNCCD is taking place in Ordos, Inner Mongolia between 6-16 September. In this context, I was invited to participate in the Youth Forum organised by the UNCCD Secretariat and the Chinese Academy of Forestry. I took a flight from Santiago to Beijing on 5th September. I first travelled 14 hours from Santiago to Paris, with AirFrance Airline. The first stretch of my journey was very comfortable. I was impressed about the airplane size. It was huge, full with hundreds of people of different nationalities, dreams and beliefs. And there I was. Sitting next to the window-I always choose the windows seat so that I can contemplate the beauty of the landscapes- with my carry-on baggage and many expectations about the Youth Forum, the chinese culture and the city of Ordos. I had a six-hour layover in Paris and then took a flight to Beijing. After 10 hours of travel, I landed in Beijing. My first moments un China were scary. I could barely understand Chinese and the security at the public places was very strict. However, some youngsters from the Chinese Academy of Forestry were waiting for me at the airport and helped me to change some money. At the airport I met some of the other Youth Delegates: Magali from France, Elzira from Kazakhstan, Lorena from Bolivia, Areg from Armenia and so on. We spent great time together at the airport, in fact, I had my first experience with the chinese cuisine in there. Our last flight to the city of Ordos was two-hour long. When I arrived in this amazing city, I was blown away with what I was seeing: colorful, thriving gardens, with numerous animal-shaped bushes, enormous ancient monuments depicting warriors, horses and heroes, impressive buildings of futurist architecture, among other peculiarities. After we arrived in Ordos, we headed to the hotel and prepared for the next day. The first day of the Youth Forum was very enriching and encouraging. We learnt about innovative methodologies to raise environmental awareness and foster youth engagement in the fight against desertification, land degradation and drought, by listening to some successful stories of our youth fellows. The second day was also very motivating and productive. It focused on the role of civil society organisations in the process of achieving land degradation neutrality, combating desertification and motivating climate change. What I learnt from the CSOs Open Dialogue was:

- Youths play an irreplaceable and fundamental role in the process of achieving LDN, combating DLDD and adapting to climate change.
- The government must provide youths with the necessary tools, enough resources and democratic platforms to address DLDD issues, so that their participation, expressed in fresh ideas, innovative projects and land-based initiatives are ensured.

The third day of the Youth Forum consisted in a field trip to the surroundings of Ordos: The Kubiqi Desert and the Yinketala Desert. The field trip allowed me to experience firsthand that SLM is not a unachievable goals. We saw on the ground how the Chinese
government is successfully reverting desertification and greening the arid Kubiqi and Yinketala deserts, at the time that ecotourism, green jobs and agroecology are promoted.

Everything that I can say up to now is that I am very grateful for having this amazing opportunity to know such a fascinating culture and awesome people from all around the world. I just want to point out that the Youth Forum could be improved by allowing Youth delegates to attend more side events and conferences, especially the High-Level segment, Land for Life Awards, Land Degradation Neutrality Day and so on. This is important because young people must take part in the policy-making process and besides, participate in different campaigns that promote sustainable land management and aim at achieving a neutral world. I believe that the sowing of friendship, closeness and faith amon the youth of today will harvest peace in the future. My adventure in China was not too long, however, I will bring into my life remarkable people and memories that will last for a lifetime.